WAVERLEY NOVELS

VOLUME III.

THE

WAVERLEY NOVELS

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

NEW POPULAR EDITION, COPYRIGHT

VOLUME THIRD

THE ABBOT

KENILWORTH

THE PIRATE

FORTUNES OF NIGEL

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK

LONDON: ADAM & CHA[illegible]

THE ABBOT

BEING A SEQUEL TO THE MONASTERY

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART



WOODCOCK THE FALCONER

LONDON: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
1891



THE FIRST MEETING OF CATHERINE SEYTON AND ROLAND GRAEME.—PAGE 33

Introduction, 1831.

From what is said in the Introduction to the Monastery, it must necessarily be inferred that the Author considered that romance as something very like a failure. It is true, the booksellers did not complain of the sale, because, unless on very felicitous occasions, or on those which are equally the reverse, literary popularity is not gained or lost by a single publication. Leisure must be allowed for the tide both to flow and ebb. But I was conscious that, in my situation, not to advance was in some degree to recede, and being naturally unwilling to think that the principle of decay lay in myself, I was at least desirous to know of a certainty whether the degree of discountenance which I had incurred was now owing to an ill-managed story, or an ill-chosen subject.

I was never, I confess, one of those who are willing to suppose the brains of an author to be a kind of milk, which will not stand above a single creaming, and who are eternally harping to young authors to husband their efforts, and to be chary of their reputation, lest it grow hackneyed in the eyes of men. Perhaps I was, and have always been, the more indifferent to the degree of estimation in which I might be held as an author, because I did not put so high a value as many others upon what is termed literary reputation in the abstract, or at least upon the species of popularity which had fallen to my share; for though it were worse than affectation to deny that my vanity was satisfied at my success in the department in which chance had in some measure enlisted me, I was, nevertheless, far from thinking that the novelist or romance writer stands high in the ranks of literature. But I spare the reader further egotism on this subject, as I have expressed my opinion very fully in the Introductory Epistle to the Fortunes of Nigel, first edition; and although it be composed in an imaginary character, it is as sincere and candid as if it had been written 'without my gown and band.'*

In a word, when I considered myself as having been unsuccessful in the Monastery, I was tempted to try whether I could not restore, even at the risk of totally losing, my so-called reputation, by a new hazard—I looked round my library, and could not but observe that, from the time of Chaucer to that of Byron, the most popular authors had been the most prolific. Even the aristarch Johnson allowed that the quality of readiness and profusion had a merit in itself, independent of the intrinsic value of the composition. Talking of Churchill, who, I believe, had little merit in his prejudiced eyes, he allowed him that of fertility, with some such qualification as this: 'A crab-apple can bear but crabs after all; but there is a great difference in favour of that which bears a large quantity of fruit, however indifferent, and that which produces only a few.'

Looking more attentively at the patriarchs of literature, whose career was as long as it was brilliant, I thought I perceived that in the busy and prolonged course of exertion, there were no doubt occasional failures, but that still those who were favourites of their age triumphed over these

* See Appendix to Fortunes of Nigel, in the present edition.

miscarriages. By the new efforts which they made, their errors were obliterated, they became identified with the literature of their country, and after having long received law from the critics, came in some degree to impose it. And when such a writer was at length called from the scene, his death first made the public sensible what a large share he had occupied in their attention. I recollected a passage in Grimm's Correspondence, that while the unexhausted Voltaire sent forth tract after tract to the very close of a long life, the first impression made by each as it appeared, was, that it was inferior to its predecessors; an opinion adopted from the general idea that the Patriarch of Ferney must at last find the point from which he was to decline. But the opinion of the public finally ranked in succession the last of Voltaire's Essays on the same footing with those which had formerly charmed the French nation. The inference from this and similar facts seemed to me to be, that new works were often judged of by the public, not so much from their own intrinsic merit, as from extrinsic ideas which readers had previously formed with regard to them, and over which a writer might hope to triumph by patience and by exertion. There is a risk in the attempt;

> *If he fall in, good-night, or sink or swim.*

But this is a chance incident to every literary attempt, and by which men of a sanguine temper are little moved.

I may illustrate what I mean, by the feelings of most men in travelling. If we have found any stage particularly tedious, or in an especial degree interesting,—particularly short, or much longer than we expected, our imaginations are so apt to exaggerate the original impression, that, on repeating the journey, we usually find that we have considerably overrated the predominating quality, and the road appears to be duller or more pleasant, shorter or more tedious, than what we expected, and, consequently, than what is the actual case. It requires a third or fourth journey to enable us to form an accurate judgment of its beauty, its length, or its other attributes.

In the same manner, the public judging of a new work, which it receives perhaps with little expectation, if surprised into applause, becomes very often ecstatic, gives a great deal more approbation than is due, and elevates the child of its immediate favour to a rank which, as it affects the author, it is equally difficult to keep, and painful to lose. If, on this occasion, the author trembles at the height to which he is raised, and becomes afraid of the shadow of his own renown, he may indeed retire from the lottery with the prize which he has drawn, but, in future ages, his honour will be only in proportion to his labours. If, on the contrary, he rushes again into the lists, he is sure to be judged with severity proportioned to the former favour of the public. If he be daunted by a bad reception on this second occasion, he may again become a stranger to the arena. If, on the contrary, he can keep his ground, and stand the shuttlecock's fate, of being struck up and down, he will probably, at length, hold with some certainty the level in public opinion which he may be found to deserve; and he may perhaps boast of arresting the general attention, in the same manner as the Bachelor Samson Carrasco, of fixing the weathercock La Giralda of Seville for weeks, months, or years, that is, for as long as the wind shall uniformly blow from one quarter. To this degree of popularity the Author had the hardihood to aspire, while, in order to attain it, he assumed the daring resolution to keep himself in the view of the public by frequent appearances before them.

It must be added that the Author's incognito gave him the greater courage to renew his attempts to please the public, and an advantage similar to that which Jack the Giant-Killer received from his coat of darkness. In sending the Abbot forth so soon after the Monastery, he had used the well-known practice recommended by Bassanio:—

> *In my school days, when I had lost one shaft,*
> *I shot his fellow of the self-same flight,*
> *The self-same way, with more advised watch,*
> *To find the other forth.*

And, to continue the simile, his shafts, like those of the lesser Ajax, were discharged more readily that the archer was as inaccessible to criticism, personally speaking, as the Grecian archer under his brother's sevenfold shield.

Should the reader desire to know upon what principles the Abbot was expected to amend the fortune of the Monastery, I have first to request his attention to the Introductory Epistle addressed to the imaginary Captain Clutterbuck,* a mode by which, like his predecessors in this walk of fiction, the real Author makes one of his dramatis personæ the means of communicating his own sentiments to the public, somewhat more artificially than by a direct address to the readers. A pleasing French writer of fairy tales, Monsieur Henri Pajon, author of the History of Prince Soly, has set a diverting example of the same machinery, where he introduces the presiding genius of the land of romance conversing with one of the personages of the tale.

In this Introductory Epistle, the Author communicates, in confidence, to Captain Clutterbuck, his sense that the White Lady had not met the taste of the times, and his reason for withdrawing her from the scene. The Author did not deem it equally necessary to be candid respecting another alteration. The Monastery was designed, at first, to have contained some supernatural agency, arising out of the fact that Melrose had been the place of deposit of the great Robert Bruce's heart. The writer shrunk, however, from filling up, in this particular, the sketch as it was originally traced; nor did he venture to resume, in the continuation, the subject which he had left unattempted in the original work. Thus, the incident of the discovery of the heart, which occupies the greater part of the Introduction to the Monastery, is a mystery unnecessarily introduced, and which remains at last very imperfectly explained. In this particular, I was happy to shroud myself by the example of the author of Caleb Williams, who never condescends to inform us of the actual contents of that Iron Chest which makes such a figure in his interesting work, and gives the name to Mr. Colman's drama.

The public have some claim to inquire into this

* [See Appendix to the Monastery, p. 832, and p. [illegible] of the Abbot.]

matter, but it seemed indifferent policy in the Author to give the explanation. For, whatever praise may be due to the ingenuity which brings to a general combination all the loose threads of a narrative, like the knitter at the finishing of her stocking, I am greatly deceived if in many cases a superior advantage is not attained, by the air of reality which the deficiency of explanation attaches to a work written on a different system. In life itself many things befall every mortal, of which the individual never knows the real cause or origin; and were we to point out the most marked distinction between a real and a fictitious narrative, we would say that the former, in reference to the remote causes of the events it relates, is obscure, doubtful, and mysterious; whereas, in the latter case, it is a part of the author's duty to afford satisfactory details upon the causes of the separate events he has recorded, and, in a word, to account for everything. The reader, like Mungo in the Padlock, will not be satisfied with hearing what he is not made fully to comprehend.

I omitted, therefore, in the Introduction to the Abbot, any attempt to explain the previous story, or to apologise for unintelligibility.

Neither would it have been prudent to have endeavoured to proclaim, in the Introduction to the Abbot, the real spring by which I hoped it might attract a greater degree of interest than its immediate predecessor. A taking title, or the announcement of a popular subject, is a recipe for success much in favour with booksellers, but which authors will not always find efficacious. The cause is worth a moment's examination.

There occur in every country some peculiar historical characters, which are, like a spell or charm, sovereign to excite curiosity and attract attention, since every one in the slightest degree interested in the land which they belong to, has heard much of them, and longs to hear more. A tale turning on the fortunes of Alfred or Elizabeth in England, or of Wallace or Bruce in Scotland, is sure by the very announcement to excite public curiosity to a considerable degree, and ensure the publisher's being relieved of the greater part of an impression, even before the contents of the work are known. This is of the last importance to the bookseller, who is at once, to use a technical phrase, 'brought home,' all his outlay being repaid. But it is a different case with the author, since it cannot be denied that we are apt to feel least satisfied with the works of which we have been induced, by titles and laudatory advertisements, to entertain exaggerated expectations. The intention of the work has been anticipated, and misconceived or misrepresented; and although the difficulty of executing the work again reminds us of Hotspur's task of 'o'er-walking a current roaring loud,' yet the adventurer must look for more ridicule if he fails, than applause if he executes, his undertaking.

Notwithstanding a risk, which should make authors pause ere they adopt a theme which, exciting general interest and curiosity, is often the preparative for disappointment, yet it would be an injudicious regulation which should deter the poet or painter from attempting to introduce historical portraits, merely from the difficulty of executing the task in a satisfactory manner. Something must be trusted to the generous impulse, which often thrusts an artist upon feats of which he knows the difficulty, while he trusts courage and exertion may afford the means of surmounting it.

*It is especially when he is sensible of losing ground with the public, that an author may be justified in using with address such selection of subject or title as is most likely to procure a rehearing. It was with these feelings of hope and apprehension that I ventured to awaken, in a work of fiction, the memory of Queen Mary, so interesting by her wit, her beauty, her misfortunes, and the mystery which still does, and probably always will, overhang her history. In doing so, I was aware that failure would be a conclusive disaster, so that my task was something like that of an enchanter who raises a spirit over whom he is uncertain of possessing an effectual control; and I naturally paid attention to such principles of composition as I conceived were best suited to the historical novel.**

Enough has been already said to explain the purpose of composing the Abbot. The historical references are, as usual, explained in the notes. That which relates to Queen Mary's escape from Lochleven Castle is a more minute account of that romantic adventure than is to be found in the histories of the period.

ABBOTSFORD, *1st January* 1831.

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* [Speaking of the Abbot, Mr. Lockhart says—'Whatever ground Sir Walter had been supposed to lose in the Monastery, part at least of it was regained by this tale, and especially by its most graceful and pathetic portraiture of Mary Stuart.'

In a little book printed for private circulation, the late Chief-Commissioner Adam, of Blair-Adam, says—'The castle of Lochleven, renowned and attractive above all the others in my neighbourhood, became an object of much increased attention, and a theme of constant conversation, after the Author of Waverley had, by his inimitable power of delineating character—by his creative poetic fancy in representing scenes of varied interest—and by the splendour of his romantic descriptions, infused a more diversified and a deeper tone of feeling into the history of Queen Mary's captivity and escape.']

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE

FROM THE AUTHOR OF 'WAVERLEY,' TO CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK, LATE OF HIS MAJESTY'S —— REGIMENT OF INFANTRY.

DEAR CAPTAIN,—I am sorry to observe, by your last favour, that you disapprove of the numerous retrenchments and alterations which I have been under the necessity of making on the Manuscript of your friend the Benedictine, and I willingly make you the medium of apology to many, who have honoured me more than I deserve.*

I admit that my retrenchments have been numerous, and leave gaps in the story, which, in your original manuscript would have run well-nigh to a fourth volume, as my printer assures me. I am sensible, besides, that, in consequence of the liberty of curtailment you have allowed me, some parts of the story have been huddled up without the necessary details.† But, after all, it is better that the travellers should have to step over a ditch, than to wade through a morass—that the reader should have to suppose what may easily be inferred, than be obliged to creep through pages of dull explanation. I have struck out, for example, the whole machinery of the White Lady, and the poetry by which it is so ably supported in the original manuscript. But you must allow that the public taste gives little encouragement to those legendary superstitions, which formed alternately the delight and the terror of our predecessors. In like manner, much is omitted illustrative of the impulse of enthusiasm in favour of the ancient religion in Mother Magdalen and the Abbot. But we do not feel deep sympathy at this period with what was once the most powerful and animating principle in Europe, with the exception of that of the Reformation, by which it was successfully opposed.

You rightly observe that these retrenchments have rendered the title no longer applicable to the subject, and that some other would have been more suitable to the work, in its present state, than that of THE ABBOT, *who made so much greater figure in the original, and for whom your friend the Benedictine seems to have inspired you with a sympathetic respect. I must plead guilty to this accusation, observing, at the same time, in manner of extenuation, that though the objection might have been easily removed, by giving a new title to the work, yet, in doing so, I should have destroyed the necessary cohesion between the present history and its predecessor* THE MONASTERY, *which I was unwilling to do, as the period, and several of the personages, were the same.*

After all, my good friend, it is of little consequence what the work is called, or on what interest it turns, provided it catches the public attention; for the quality of the wine (could we but insure it) may, according to the old proverb, render the bush unnecessary, or of little consequence.

I congratulate you upon your having found it consistent with prudence to establish your tilbury, and approve of the colour, and of your boy's livery (subdued green and pink).—As you talk of completing your descriptive poem on the 'Ruins of Kennaquhair, with Notes by an Antiquary,' I hope you have procured a steady horse.—I remain, with compliments to all friends, dear Captain, very much

Yours, etc. etc. etc.

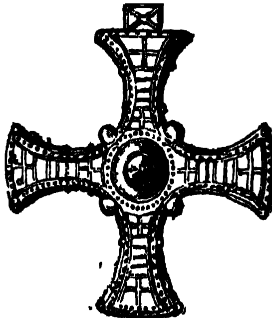
THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY.

* [See Appendix to the Monastery, p. 836.]

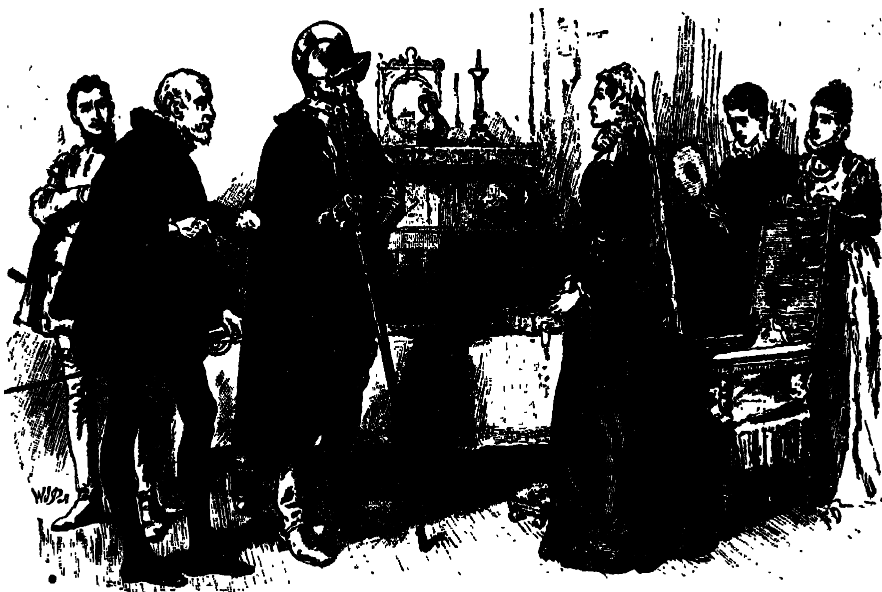
† [It would seem (says Dr. Laing) as if, from the exuberance of his imagination, the Author was led to wind up his stories and dismiss his characters rather hastily, that he might indulge in some new creations: in the words of Milton, —

To morrow to fresh fields and pastures new.

'A remark made by Sir Walter to myself on this head may be worth recording. How the conversation originated I cannot say, but at the time (having good reason to be satisfied regarding the authorship of the Waverley Novels) I was much struck with his words, when he jocularly said, "*If ever I should write a novel, I would like well enough to write the first two volumes, and leave any one who pleased to finish the third.*"']



SAINT CUTHBERT'S GOLD CROSS.



THE QUEEN RECEIVING LORD LINDESAY AND SIR ROBERT MELVILLE.—PAGE 88.

Chapter I

Domum servavit—Lanam fecit.
ANCIENT ROMAN EPITAPH.

She keepit close the hous, and birlit at the quhele.
GAWAIN DOUGLAS.

THE time which passes over our heads so imperceptibly, makes the same gradual change in habits, manners, and character, as in personal appearance. At the revolution of every five years we find ourselves another, and yet the same—there is a change of views, and no less of the light in which we regard them; a change of motives as well as of actions. Nearly twice that space had glided away over the head of Halbert Glendinning and his lady, betwixt the period of our former narrative, in which they played a distinguished part, and the date at which our present tale commences.

Two circumstances only had embittered their union, which was otherwise as happy as mutual affection could render it. The first of these was indeed the common calamity of Scotland, being the distracted state of that unhappy country, where every man's sword was directed against his neighbour's bosom. Glendinning had proved what Murray expected of him, a steady friend, strong in battle, and wise in counsel, adhering to him, from motives of gratitude, in situations where by his own unbiassed will he would either have stood neuter, or have joined the opposite party. Hence, when danger was near—and it was seldom far distant—Sir Halbert Glendinning, for he now bore the rank of knighthood, was perpetually summoned to attend his patron on distant expeditions, or on perilous enterprises, or to assist him with his counsel in the doubtful intrigues of a half-barbarous court. He was thus frequently, and for a long space, absent from his castle and from his lady; and to this ground of regret we must add, that their union had not been blessed with children, to occupy the attention of the Lady of Avenel while she was thus deprived of her husband's domestic society.

On such occasions she lived almost entirely secluded from the world, within the walls of her paternal mansion. Visiting amongst neighbours was a matter entirely out of the question, unless on occasions of solemn festival, and then it was chiefly confined to near kindred. Of these the Lady of Avenel had none who survived, and the dames of the neighbouring barons affected to regard her less as the heiress of the House of Avenel, than as the wife of a peasant, the son of a Church vassal, raised up to mushroom eminence by the capricious favour of Murray.

The pride of ancestry, which rankled in the bosom of the ancient gentry, was more openly expressed by their ladies, and was, moreover, embittered not a little by the political feuds of the time, for most of the Southron chiefs were friends to the authority of the queen, and very jealous of the power of Murray. The Castle of Avenel was, therefore, on all these accounts, as melancholy and solitary a residence for its lady as could well be imagined. Still it had the essential recommendation of great security. The reader is already aware that the fortress was built upon an islet on a small lake, and was only accessible by a causeway, intersected by a

double ditch, defended by two drawbridges, so that, without artillery, it might in those days be considered as impregnable. It was only necessary, therefore, to secure against surprise, and the service of six able men within the castle was sufficient for that purpose. If more serious danger threatened, an ample garrison was supplied by the male inhabitants of a little hamlet, which, under the auspices of Halbert Glendinning, had arisen on a small piece of level ground, betwixt the lake and the hill, nearly adjoining to the spot where the causeway joined the mainland. The Lord of Avenel had found it an easy matter to procure inhabitants, as he was not only a kind and beneficent overlord, but well qualified, both by his experience in arms, his high character for wisdom and integrity, and his favour with the powerful Earl of Murray, to protect and defend those who dwelt under his banner. In leaving his castle for any length of time, he had, therefore, the consolation to reflect that this village afforded, on the slightest notice, a band of thirty stout men, which was more than sufficient for its defence; while the families of the villagers, as was usual on such occasions, fled to the recesses of the mountains, drove their cattle to the same places of shelter, and left the enemy to work their will on their miserable cottages.

One guest only resided generally, if not constantly, at the Castle of Avenel. This was Henry Warden, who now felt himself less able for the stormy task imposed on the reforming clergy; and having by his zeal given personal offence to many of the leading nobles and chiefs, did not consider himself as perfectly safe, unless when within the walls of the strong mansion of some assured friend. He ceased not, however, to serve his cause as eagerly with his pen, as he had formerly done with his tongue, and had engaged in a furious and acrimonious contest, concerning the sacrifice of the mass, as it was termed, with the Abbot Eustatius, formerly the Sub-Prior of Kennaquhair. Answers, replies, duplies, triplies, quadruplies, followed thick upon each other, and displayed, as is not unusual in controversy, fully as much zeal as Christian charity. The disputation very soon became as celebrated as that of John Knox and the Abbot of Crosraguel, raged nearly as fiercely, and, for aught I know, the publications to which it gave rise may be as precious in the eyes of bibliographers.* But the engrossing nature of his occupation rendered the theologian not the most interesting companion for a solitary female; and his grave, stern, and absorbed deportment, which seldom showed any interest except in that which concerned his religious profession, made his presence rather add to than diminish the gloom which hung over the Castle of Avenel. To superintend the tasks of numerous female domestics was the principal part of the lady's daily employment; her spindle and distaff, her Bible, and a solitary walk upon the battlements of the castle, or upon the causeway, or occasionally, but more seldom, upon the banks of the little lake, consumed the rest of the day. But so great was the insecurity of the period, that when she ventured to extend her walk beyond the hamlet, the warder on the watch-tower was directed to keep a sharp look-out in every direction, and four or five men held themselves in readiness to mount and sally forth from the castle on the slightest appearance of alarm.

Thus stood affairs at the castle, when, after an absence of several weeks, the Knight of Avenel, which was now the title most frequently given to Sir Halbert Glendinning, was daily expected to return home. Day after day, however, passed away, and he returned not. Letters in those days were rarely written, and the knight must have resorted to a secretary to express his intentions in that manner; besides, intercourse of all kinds was precarious and unsafe, and no man cared to give any public intimation of the time and direction of a journey, since, if his route were publicly known, it was always likely he might in that case meet with more enemies than friends upon the road. The precise day, therefore, of Sir Halbert's return was not fixed, but that which his lady's fond expectation had calculated upon in her own mind had long since passed, and hope delayed began to make the heart sick.

It was upon the evening of a sultry summer's day, when the sun was half sunk behind the distant western mountains of Liddesdale, that the lady took her solitary walk on the battlements of a range of buildings, which formed the front of the castle, where a flat roof of flag-stones presented a broad and convenient promenade. The level surface of the lake, undisturbed except by the occasional dipping of a teal-duck or coot, was gilded with the beams of the setting luminary, and reflected, as if in a golden mirror, the hills amongst which it lay embosomed. The scene, otherwise so lonely, was occasionally enlivened by the voices of the children in the village, which, softened by distance, reached the ear of the lady, in her solitary walk, or by the distant call of the herdsman, as he guided his cattle from the glen in which they had pastured all day, to place them in greater security for the night, in the immediate vicinity of the village. The deep lowing of the cows seemed to demand the attendance of the milk-maidens, who, singing shrilly and merrily, strolled forth, each with her pail on her head, to attend to the duty of the evening. The Lady of Avenel looked and listened; the sounds which she heard reminded her of former days, when her most important employment, as well as her greatest delight, was to assist Dame Glendinning and Tibb Tacket in milking the cows at Glendearg. The thought was fraught with melancholy.

'Why was I not,' she said, 'the peasant girl which in all men's eyes I seemed to be? Halbert and I had then spent our life peacefully in this native glen, undisturbed by the phantoms either of fear or of ambition. His greatest pride had then been to show the fairest herd in the Halidome; his greatest danger to repel some pilfering

* The tracts which appeared in the Disputation between the Scottish Reformer and Quentin Kennedy, the last Abbot of Crosraguel, are among the scarcest in Scottish bibliography. See M'Crie's *Life of Knox*, p. 258. [This discussion, which related to the mass, was published by Knox in 1563, and reprinted by Boswell in 1812, and again in Knox's Works, vol. vi. 1864.

snatcher from the Border; and the utmost distance which would have divided us, would have been the chase of some outlying deer. But, alas! what avails the blood which Halbert has shed, and the dangers which he encounters, to support a name and rank, dear to him because he has it from me, but which we shall never transmit to our posterity! with me the name of Avenel must expire.'

She sighed as these reflections arose, and, looking towards the shore of the lake, her eye was attracted by a group of children of various ages, assembled to see a little ship, constructed by some village artist, perform its first voyage on the water. It was launched amid the shouts of tiny voices and the clapping of little hands, and shot bravely forth on its voyage with a favouring wind, which promised to carry it to the other side of the lake. Some of the bigger boys ran round to receive and secure it on the farther shore, trying their speed against each other as they sprang like young fawns along the shingly verge of the lake. The rest, for whom such a journey seemed too arduous, remained watching the motions of the fairy vessel from the spot where it had been launched. The sight of their sports pressed on the mind of the childless Lady of Avenel.

'Why are none of these prattlers mine?' she continued, pursuing the tenor of her melancholy reflections. 'Their parents can scarce find them the coarsest food;—and I, who could nurse them in plenty, I am doomed never to hear a child call me mother!'

The thought sunk on her heart with a bitterness which resembled envy, so deeply is the desire of offspring implanted in the female breast. She pressed her hands together as if she were wringing them in the extremity of her desolate feeling, as one whom Heaven had written childless. A large staghound of the greyhound species approached at this moment, and, attracted perhaps by the gesture, licked her hands and pressed his large head against them. He obtained the desired caress in return, but still the sad impression remained.

'Wolf,' she said, as if the animal could have understood her complaints, 'thou art a noble and beautiful animal; but, alas! the love and affection that I long to bestow is of a quality higher than can fall to thy share, though I love thee much.'

And, as if she were apologizing to Wolf for withholding from him any part of her regard, she caressed his proud head and crest, while, looking in her eyes, he seemed to ask her what she wanted, or what he could do to show his attachment. At this moment a shriek of distress was heard on the shore, from the playful group which had been lately so jovial. The lady looked, and saw the cause with great agony.

The little ship, the object of the children's delighted attention, had stuck among some tufts of the plant which bears the water-lily, that marked a shoal in the lake about an arrow-flight from the shore. A hardy little boy, who had taken the lead in the race round the margin of the lake, did not hesitate a moment to strip off his *wylie-coat*, plunge into the water, and swim towards the object of their common solicitude. The first movement of the lady was to call for help; but she observed that the boy swam strongly and fearlessly, and as she saw that one or two villagers, who were distant spectators of the incident, seemed to give themselves no uneasiness on his account, she supposed that he was accustomed to the exercise, and that there was no danger. But whether, in swimming, the boy had struck his breast against a sunken rock, or whether he was suddenly taken with cramp, or whether he had over-calculated his own strength, it so happened, that when he had disembarrassed the little plaything from the flags in which it was entangled, and sent it forward on its course, he had scarce swum a few yards in his way to the shore, than he raised himself suddenly from the water, and screamed aloud, clapping his hands at the same time with an expression of fear and pain.

The Lady of Avenel, instantly taking the alarm, called hastily to the attendants to get the boat ready. But this was an affair of some time. The only boat permitted to be used on the lake was moored within the second cut which intersected the canal, and it was several minutes ere it could be unmoored and got under way. Meantime, the Lady of Avenel, with agonizing anxiety, saw that the efforts that the poor boy made to keep himself afloat were now exchanged for a faint struggling, which would soon have been over, but for aid equally prompt and unhoped for. Wolf, who, like some of that large species of greyhound, was a practised water-dog, had marked the object of her anxiety, and, quitting his mistress's side, had sought the nearest point from which he could with safety plunge into the lake. With the wonderful instinct which these noble animals have so often displayed in the like circumstances, he swam straight to the spot where his assistance was so much wanted, and, seizing the child's under-dress in his mouth, he not only kept him afloat, but towed him towards the causeway. The boat having put off with a couple of men, met the dog half-way, and relieved him of his burden. They landed on the causeway, close by the gates of the castle, with their yet lifeless charge, and were there met by the Lady of Avenel, attended by one or two of her maidens, eagerly waiting to administer assistance to the sufferer.

He was borne into the castle, deposited upon a bed, and every mode of recovery resorted to, which the knowledge of the times, and the skill of Henry Warden, who professed some medical science, could dictate. For some time it was all in vain, and the lady watched, with unspeakable earnestness, the pallid countenance of the beautiful child. He seemed about ten years old. His dress was of the meanest sort, but his long curled hair, and the noble cast of his features, partook not of that poverty of appearance. The proudest noble in Scotland might have been yet prouder could he have called that child his heir. While, with breathless anxiety, the Lady of Avenel gazed on his well-formed and expressive features, a slight shade of colour returned gradually to the cheek; suspended animation became restored by degrees, the child sighed deeply, opened his eyes, which to the human countenance produces the effect of light upon the natural landscape, stretched his arms towards the lady, and muttered the word 'Mother,' that epithet, of all others, which is dearest to the female ear.

'God, madam,' said the preacher, 'has restored the child to your wishes; it must be yours so to bring him up, that he may not one day wish that he had perished in his innocence.'

'It shall be my charge,' said the lady; and, again throwing her arms around the boy, she overwhelmed him with kisses and caresses, so much was she agitated by the terror arising from the danger in which he had been just placed, and by joy at his unexpected deliverance.

'But you are not my mother,' said the boy, recovering his recollection, and endeavouring, though faintly, to escape from the caresses of the Lady of Avenel; 'you are not my mother,—alas! I have no mother--only I have dreamt that I had one.'

'I will read the dream for you, my love answered the Lady of Avenel; 'and I will myself your mother. Surely God has heard my wishes, and, in his own marvellous manner, hath sent me an object on which my affections may expand themselves.' She looked towards Warden as she spoke. The preacher hesitated what he should reply to a burst of passionate feeling, which, perhaps, seemed to him more enthusiastic than the occasion demanded. In the meanwhile, the large staghound Wolf, which, dripping wet as he was, had followed his mistress into the apartment, and had sat by the bedside, a patient and quiet spectator of all the means used for resuscitation of the being whom he had preserved, now became impatient of remaining any longer unnoticed, and began to whine and fawn upon the lady with his great rough paws.

'Yes,' she said, 'good Wolf, and you shall be remembered also for your day's work; and I will think the more of you for having preserved the life of a creature so beautiful.'

But Wolf was not quite satisfied with the share of attention which he thus attracted; he persisted in whining and pawing upon his mistress, his caresses rendered still more troublesome by his long shaggy hair being so much and thoroughly wetted, till she desired one of the domestics, with whom he was familiar, to call the animal out of the apartment. Wolf resisted every invitation to this purpose, until his mistress positively commanded him to be gone, in an angry tone; when, turning towards the bed on which the boy still lay, half awake to sensation, half drowned in the meanders of fluctuating delirium, he uttered a deep and savage growl, curled up his nose and lips, showing his full range of white and sharpened teeth, which might have matched those of an actual wolf, and then, turning round, sullenly followed the domestic out of the apartment.

'It is singular,' said the lady, addressing Warden; 'the animal is not only so good-natured to all, but so particularly fond of children. What can ail him at the little fellow whose life he has saved?'

'Dogs,' replied the preacher, 'are but too like the human race in their foibles, though their instinct be less erring than the reason of poor mortal man when relying upon his own unassisted powers. Jealousy, my good lady, is a passion not unknown to them, and they often evince it, not only with respect to the preferences which they see given by their masters to individuals of their own species, but even when their rivals are children. You have caressed that child much and eagerly, and the dog considers himself as a discarded favourite.'

'It is a strange instinct,' said the lady; 'and from the gravity with which you mention it, my reverend friend, I would almost say that you supposed this singular jealousy of my favourite Wolf was not only well founded, but justifiable. But perhaps you speak in jest?'

'I seldom jest,' answered the preacher; 'life was not lent to us to be expended in that idle mirth which resembles the crackling of thorns under the pot. I would only have you derive, if it so please you, this lesson from what I have said, that the best of our feelings, when indulged to excess, may give pain to others. There is but one in which we may indulge to the utmost limit of vehemence of which our bosom is capable, secure that excess cannot exist in the greatest intensity to which it can be excited—I mean, the love of our Maker.'

'Surely,' said the Lady of Avenel, 'we are commanded by the same authority to love our neighbour?'

'Ay, madam,' said Warden; 'but our love to God is to be unbounded—we are to love him with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole strength. The love which the precept commands us to bear to our neighbour has affixed to it a direct limit and qualification—we are to love our neighbour as ourself; as it is elsewhere explained by the great commandment, that we must do unto him as we would that he should do unto us. Here there is a limit and a bound, even to the most praiseworthy of our affections, so far as they are turned upon sublunary and terrestrial objects. We are to render to our neighbour, whatever be his rank or degree, that corresponding portion of affection with which we should rationally expect we should ourselves be regarded by those standing in the same relation to us. Hence, neither husband nor wife, neither son nor daughter, neither friend nor relation, are lawfully to be made the objects of our idolatry. The Lord our God is a jealous God, and will not endure that we bestow on the creature that extremity of devotion which He who made us demands as his own share. I say to you, lady, that even in the fairest, and purest, and most honourable feelings of our nature, there is that original taint of sin which ought to make us pause and hesitate, ere we indulge them to excess.'

'I understand not this, reverend sir,' said the lady; 'nor do I guess what I can have now said or done, to draw down on me an admonition which has something a taste of reproof.'

'Lady,' said Warden, 'I crave your pardon, if I have urged aught beyond the limits of my duty. But consider whether, in the sacred promise to be not only a protectress, but a mother, to this poor child, your purpose may meet the wishes of the noble knight your husband. The fondness which you have lavished on the unfortunate, and, I own, most lovely child, has met something like a reproof in the bearing of your household dog. Displease not your noble husband. Men, as well as animals, are jealous of the affections of those they love.'

'This is too much, reverend sir,' said the Lady of Avenel, greatly offended. 'You have been long our guest, and have received from the Knight of Avenel and myself that honour and regard which your character and profession so justly demand. But I am yet to learn that we have at any time authorized your interference in our family arrangements, or placed you as a judge of our conduct towards each other. I pray this may be forborne in future.'

'Lady,' replied the preacher, with the boldness peculiar to the clergy of his persuasion at that time, 'when you weary of my admonitions—when I see that my services are no longer acceptable to you, and the noble knight your husband—I shall know that my Master wills me no longer to abide here; and, praying for a continuance of his best blessings on your family, I will then, were the season the depth of winter, and the hour midnight, walk out on yonder waste, and travel forth through these wild mountains as lonely and unaided though far more helpless than when I first met your husband in the valley of Glendearg. But while I remain here, I will not see you err from the true path, no, not a hair's breadth, without making the old man's voice and remonstrance heard.'

'Nay but,' said the lady, who both loved and respected the good man, though sometimes a little offended at what she conceived to be an exuberant degree of zeal, 'we will not part this way, my good friend. Women are quick and hasty in their feelings; but believe me, my wishes and my purposes towards this child are such as both my husband and you will approve of.' The clergyman bowed, and retreated to his own apartment.

CHAPTER II

How steadfastly he fix'd his eyes on me—
His dark eyes shining through forgotten tears—
Then stretch'd his little arms and call'd me mother.
What could I do? I took the bantling home—
I could not tell the imp he had no mother.
COUNT BASIL.

When Warden had left the apartment, the Lady of Avenel gave way to the feelings of tenderness which the sight of the boy, his sudden danger, and his recent escape had inspired; and, no longer awed by the sternness, as she deemed it, of the preacher, heaped with caresses the lovely and interesting child. He was now, in some measure, recovered from the consequences of his accident, and received passively, though not without wonder, the tokens of kindness with which he was thus loaded. The face of the lady was strange to him, and her dress different and far more sumptuous than any he remembered. But the boy was naturally of an undaunted temper; and indeed children are generally acute physiognomists, and not only pleased by that which is beautiful in itself, but peculiarly quick in distinguishing and replying to the attentions of those who really love them. If they see a person in company, though a perfect stranger, who is by nature fond of children, the little imps seem to discover it by a sort of freemasonry, while the awkward attempts of those who make advances to them for the purpose of recommending themselves to the parents, usually fail in attracting their reciprocal attention. The little boy, therefore, appeared in some degree sensible of the lady's caresses, and it was with difficulty she withdrew herself from his pillow, to afford him leisure for necessary repose.

'To whom belongs our little rescued varlet?' was the first question which the Lady of Avenel put to her handmaiden Lilias, when they had returned to the hall.

'To an old woman in the hamlet,' said Lilias, 'who is even now come so far as the porter's lodge to inquire concerning his safety. Is it your pleasure that she be admitted?'

'Is it my pleasure?' said the Lady of Avenel, echoing the question with a strong accent of displeasure and surprise; 'can you make any doubt of it? What woman but must pity the agony of the mother, whose heart is throbbing for the safety of a child so lovely?'

'Nay, but, madam,' said Lilias, 'this woman is too old to be the mother of the child; I rather think she must be his grandmother, or some more distant relation.'

'Be she who she will, Lilias,' replied the lady, 'she must have an aching heart while the safety of a creature so lovely is uncertain. Go instantly and bring her hither. Besides, I would willingly learn something concerning his birth.'

Lilias left the hall, and presently afterwards returned, ushering in a tall female very poorly dressed, yet with more pretension to decency and cleanliness than was usually combined with such coarse garments. The Lady of Avenel knew her figure the instant she presented herself. It was the fashion of the family, that upon every Sabbath, and on two evenings in the week besides, Henry Warden preached or lectured in the chapel at the castle. The extension of the Protestant faith was upon principle, as well as in good policy, a primary object with the Knight of Avenel. The inhabitants of the village were therefore invited to attend upon the instructions of Henry Warden, and many of them were speedily won to the doctrine which their master and protector approved. These sermons, homilies, and lectures, had made a great impression on the mind of the Abbot Eustace, or Eustatius; and were a sufficient spur to the severity and sharpness of his controversy with his old fellow collegiate; and, ere Queen Mary was dethroned, and while the Catholics still had considerable authority in the Border provinces, he more than once threatened to levy his vassals, and assail and level with the earth that stronghold of heresy, the Castle of Avenel. But notwithstanding the Abbot's impotent resentment, and notwithstanding also the disinclination of the country to favour the new religion, Henry Warden proceeded without remission in his labours, and made weekly converts from the faith of Rome to that of the Reformed Church. Amongst those who gave most earnest and constant attendance on his ministry, was the aged woman, whose form, tall and otherwise too remarkable to be forgotten, the lady had of late observed frequently as being conspicuous amongst the little audience. She had

indeed, more than once desired to know who that stately-looking woman was, whose appearance was so much above the poverty of her vestments. But the reply had always been, that she was an Englishwoman, who was tarrying for a season at the hamlet, and that no one knew more concerning her. She now asked her after her name and birth.

'Magdalen Græme is my name,' said the woman; 'I come of the Græmes of Heathergill, in Nicol Forest,* a people of ancient blood.'

'And what make you,' continued the lady, 'so far distant from your home?'

'I have no home,' said Magdalen Græme; 'it was burnt by your Border-riders—my husband and my son were slain—there is not a drop's blood left in the veins of any one which is of kin to mine.'

'That is no uncommon fate in these wild times, and in this unsettled land,' said the lady; 'the English hands have been as deeply dyed in our blood as ever those of Scotsmen have been in yours.'

'You have right to say it, lady,' answered Magdalen Græme; 'for men tell of a time when this castle was not strong enough to save your father's life, or to afford your mother and her infant a place of refuge. And why ask ye me, then, wherefore I dwell not in mine own home, and with mine own people?'

'It was indeed an idle question,' answered the lady, 'where misery so often makes wanderers; but wherefore take refuge in a hostile country?'

'My neighbours were Popish and mass-mongers,' said the old woman; 'it has pleased Heaven to give me a clearer sight of the gospel, and I have tarried here to enjoy the ministry of that worthy man, Henry Warden, who, to the praise and comfort of many, teacheth the evangel in truth and in sincerity.'

'Are you poor?' again demanded the Lady of Avenel.

'You hear me ask alms of no one,' answered the Englishwoman.

Here there was a pause. The manner of the woman was, if not disrespectful, at least much less than gracious; and she appeared to give no encouragement to further communication. The Lady of Avenel renewed the conversation on a different topic.

'You have heard of the danger in which your boy has been placed?'

'I have, lady, and how by an especial providence he was rescued from death. May Heaven make him thankful, and me!'

'What relation do you bear to him?'

'I am his grandmother, lady, if it so please you; the only relation he hath left upon earth to take charge of him.'

'The burden of his maintenance must necessarily be grievous to you in your deserted situation?' pursued the lady.

'I have complained of it to no one,' said Magdalen Græme, with the same unmoved, dry, and unconcerned tone of voice in which she had answered all the former questions.

'If,' said the Lady of Avenel, 'your grandchild could be received into a noble family, would it not advantage both him and you?'

'Received into a noble family!' said the old woman, drawing herself up, and bending her brows until her forehead was wrinkled into a frown of unusual severity; 'and for what purpose, I pray you?—to be my lady's page, or my lord's jack-man, to eat broken victuals, and contend with other menials for the remnants of the master's meal? Would you have him to fan the flies from my lady's face while she sleeps, to carry her train while she walks, to hand her trencher when she feeds, to ride before her on horseback, to walk after her on foot, to sing when she lists, and to be silent when she bids?—a very weathercock, which, though furnished in appearance with wings and plumage, cannot soar into the air—cannot fly from the spot where it is perched, but receives all its impulse, and performs all its revolutions, obedient to the changeful breath of a vain woman? When the eagle of Helvellyn perches on the tower of Lanercost, and turns and changes his place to show how the wind sits, Roland Græme shall be what you would make him.'

The woman spoke with a rapidity and vehemence which seemed to have in it a touch of insanity; and a sudden sense of the danger to which the child must necessarily be exposed in the charge of such a keeper, increased the lady's desire to keep him in the castle if possible.

'You mistake me, dame,' she said, addressing the old woman in a soothing manner; 'I do not wish your boy to be in attendance on myself, but upon the good knight my husband. Were he himself the son of a belted earl, he could not better be trained to arms, and all that befits a gentleman, than by the instructions and discipline of Sir Halbert Glendinning.'

'Ay,' answered the old woman, in the same style of bitter irony, 'I know the wages of that service;—a curse when the corselet is not sufficiently brightened—a blow when the girth is not tightly drawn—to be beaten because the hounds are at fault—to be reviled because the foray is unsuccessful—to stain his hands for the master's bidding in the blood alike of beast and of man—to be a butcher of harmless deer, a murderer and defacer of God's own image, not at his own pleasure, but at that of his lord—to live a brawling ruffian and a common stabber—exposed to heat, to cold, to want of food, to all the privations of an anchoret, not for the love of God, but for the service of Satan—to die by the gibbet, or in some obscure skirmish—to sleep out his brief life in carnal security, and to awake in the eternal fire, which is never quenched.'

'Nay,' said the Lady of Avenel, 'but to such unhallowed course of life your grandson will not be here exposed. My husband is just and kind to those who live under his banner; and you yourself well know that youth have here a strict as well as a good preceptor in the person of our chaplain.'

The old woman appeared to pause.

'You have named,' she said, 'the only circumstance which can move me. I must soon onward, the Vision has said it—I must not tarry in the same spot—I must on—I must on, it is my weird.—Swear, then, that you will protect

* A district of Cumberland, lying close to the Scottish Border.

the boy as if he were your own, until I return hither and claim him, and I will consent for a space to part with him. But especially swear, he shall not lack the instruction of the godly man who hath placed the gospel-truth high above those idolatrous shavelings, the monks and friars.'

'Be satisfied, dame,' said the Lady of Avenel; 'the boy shall have as much care as if he were born of my own blood. Will you see him now?'

'No,' answered the old woman sternly; 'to part is enough. I go forth on my own mission. I will not soften my heart by useless tears and wailings, as one that is not called to a duty.'

'Will you not accept of something to aid you in your pilgrimage?' said the Lady of Avenel, putting into her hands two crowns of the sun. The old woman flung them down on the table.

'Am I of the race of Cain,' she said, 'proud lady, that you offer me gold in exchange for my own flesh and blood?'

'I had no such meaning,' said the lady gently; 'nor am I the proud woman you term me. Alas! my own fortunes might have taught me humility, even had it not been born with me.'

The old woman seemed somewhat to relax her tone of severity.

'You are of gentle blood,' she said, 'else we had not parleyed thus long together.—You are of gentle blood, and to such,' she added, drawing up her tall form as she spoke, 'pride is as graceful as is the plume upon the bonnet. But for these pieces of gold, lady, you must needs resume them. I need not money. I am well provided; and I may not care for myself, nor think how, or by whom, I shall be sustained. Farewell, and keep your word. Cause your gates to be opened, and your bridges to be lowered. I will set forward this very night. When I come again, I will demand from you a strict account, for I have left with you the jewel of my life! Sleep will visit me but in snatches, food will not refresh me, rest will not restore my strength, until I see Roland Græme. Once more, farewell.'

'Make your obeisance, dame,' said Lilias to Magdalen Græme, as she retired, 'make your obeisance to her ladyship, and thank her for her goodness, as is but fitting and right.'

The old woman turned short around on the officious waiting-maid. 'Let her make her obeisance to me, then, and I will return it. Why should I bend to her?—is it because her kirtle is of silk, and mine of blue lockeram?—Go to, my lady's waiting-woman. Know that the rank of the man rates that of the wife, and that she who marries a churl's son, were she a king's daughter, is but a peasant's bride.'

Lilias was about to reply in great indignation, but her mistress imposed silence on her, and commanded that the old woman should be safely conducted to the mainland.

'Conduct her safe!' exclaimed the incensed waiting-woman, while Magdalen Græme left the apartment; 'I say, duck her in the loch, and then we will see whether she is witch or not, as everybody in the village of Lochside will say and swear. I marvel your ladyship could bear so long with her insolence.' But the commands of the lady were obeyed, and the old dame, dismissed from the castle, was committed to her fortune. She kept her word, and did not long abide in that place, leaving the hamlet on the very night succeeding the interview, and wandering no one asked whither. The Lady of Avenel inquired under what circumstances she had appeared among them, but could only learn that she was believed to be the widow of some man of consequence among the Græmes who then inhabited the Debateable Land, a name given to a certain portion of territory which was the frequent subject of dispute betwixt Scotland and England—that she had suffered great wrong in some of the frequent forays by which that unfortunate district was wasted, and had been driven from her dwelling-place. She had arrived in the hamlet no one knew for what purpose, and was held by some to be a witch, by others a zealous Protestant, and by others again a Catholic devotee. Her language was mysterious, and her manners repulsive; and all that could be collected from her conversation seemed to imply that she was under the influence either of a spell or of a vow—there was no saying which, since she talked as one who acted under a powerful and external agency.

Such were the particulars which the lady's inquiries were able to collect concerning Magdalen Græme, being far too meagre and contradictory to authorize any satisfactory deduction. In truth, the miseries of the time, and the various turns of fate incidental to a frontier country, were perpetually chasing from their habitations those who had not the means of defence or protection. These wanderers in the land were too often seen to excite much attention or sympathy. They received the cold relief which was extorted by general feelings of humanity; a little excited in some breasts, and perhaps rather chilled in others, by the recollection that they who gave the charity to-day might themselves want it to-morrow. Magdalen Græme, therefore, came and departed like a shadow from the neighbourhood of Avenel Castle.

The boy whom Providence, as she thought, had thus strangely placed under her care, was at once established a favourite with the lady of the castle. How could it be otherwise? He became the object of those affectionate feelings, which, finding formerly no object on which to expand themselves, had increased the gloom of the castle, and embittered the solitude of its mistress. To teach him reading and writing as far as her skill went, to attend to his childish comforts, to watch his boyish sports, became the lady's favourite amusement. In her circumstances, where the ear only heard the lowing of the cattle from the distant hills, or the heavy step of the warder as he walked upon his post, or the half-envied laugh of her maiden as she turned her wheel, the appearance of the blooming and beautiful boy gave an interest which can hardly be conceived by those who live amid gayer or busier scenes. Young Roland was to the Lady of Avenel what the flower, which occupies the window of some solitary captive, is to the poor wight by whom it is nursed and cultivated—something which at once excited and repaid her care; and in giving the boy her affection, she felt, as it were, grateful to him for releasing her from the state o

dull apathy in which she had usually found herself during the absence of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

But even the charms of this blooming favourite were unable to chase the recurring apprehensions which arose from her husband's procrastinated return. Soon after Roland Græme became a resident at the castle, a groom, despatched by Sir Halbert, brought tidings that business still delayed the knight at the court of Holyrood. The more distant period which the messenger had assigned for his master's arrival at length glided away, summer melted into autumn, and autumn was about to give place to winter, and yet he came not.

CHAPTER III.

The waning harvest-moon shone broad and bright,
The warder's horn was heard at dead of night,
And while the folding portals wide were flung,
With trampling hoofs the rocky pavement rung.
LEYDEN.

'AND you too would be a soldier, Roland?' said the Lady of Avenel to her young charge, while, seated on a stone chair at one end of the battlements, she saw the boy attempt, with a long stick, to mimic the motions of the warder, as he alternately shouldered, or ported, or sloped pike.

'Yes, lady,' said the boy—for he was now familiar, and replied to her questions with readiness and alacrity,—'a soldier will I be; for there ne'er was gentleman but who belted him with the brand.'

'Thou a gentleman!' said Lilias, who, as usual, was in attendance; 'such a gentleman as I would make of a bean-cod with a rusty knife.'

'Nay, chide him not, Lilias,' said the Lady of Avenel, 'for, beshrew me, but I think he comes of gentle blood—see how it musters in his face at your injurious reproof.'

'Had I my will, madam,' answered Lilias, 'a good birchen wand should make his colour muster to better purpose still.'

'On my word, Lilias,' said the lady, 'one would think you had received harm from the poor boy—or is he so far on the frosty side of your favour because he enjoys the sunny side of mine?'

'Over heavens forbode, my lady!' answered Lilias; 'I have lived too long with gentles, I praise my stars for it, to fight with either follies or fantasies, whether they relate to beast, bird, or boy.'

Lilias was a favourite in her own class, a spoiled domestic, and often accustomed to take more licence than her mistress was at all times willing to encourage. But what did not please the Lady of Avenel, she did not choose to hear, and thus it was on the present occasion. She [re]solved to look more close and sharply after [th]e boy, who had hitherto been committed [c]hiefly to the management of Lilias. He must, [s]he thought, be born of gentle blood; it were [s]hame to think otherwise of a form so noble, [an]d features so fair;—the very wildness in which he occasionally indulged, his contempt of danger, and impatience of restraint, had in them something noble;—assuredly the child was born of high rank. Such was her conclusion, and she acted upon it accordingly. The domestics around her, less jealous, or less scrupulous than Lilias, acted as servants usually do, following the bias, and flattering, for their own purposes, the humour of the lady; and the boy soon took on him those airs of superiority which the sight of habitual deference seldom fails to inspire. It seemed, in truth, as if to command were his natural sphere, so easily did he use himself to exact and receive compliance with his humours. The chaplain, indeed, might have interposed to check the air of assumption which Roland Græme so readily indulged, and most probably would have willingly rendered him that favour; but the necessity of adjusting with his brethren some disputed points of Church discipline had withdrawn him for some time from the castle, and detained him in a distant part of the kingdom.

Matters stood thus in the Castle of Avenel, when a winded bugle sent its shrill and prolonged notes from the shore of the lake, and was replied to cheerily by the signal of the warder. The Lady of Avenel knew the sounds of her husband, and rushed to the window of the apartment in which she was sitting. A band of about thirty spearmen, with a pennon displayed before them, winded along the indented shores of the lake, and approached the causeway. A single horseman rode at the head of the party, his bright arms catching a glance of the October sun as he moved steadily along. Even at that distance, the lady recognised the lofty plume, bearing the mingled colours of her own liveries and those of Glendonwyne, blended with the holly-branch; and the firm seat and dignified demeanour of the rider, joined to the stately motion of the dark-brown steed, sufficiently announced Halbert Glendinning.

The lady's first thought was that of rapturous joy at her husband's return—her second was connected with a fear which had sometimes intruded itself, that he might not altogether approve the peculiar distinction with which she had treated her orphan ward. In this fear there was implied a consciousness that the favour she had shown him was excessive; for Halbert Glendinning was at least as gentle and indulgent as he was firm and rational in the intercourse of his household; and to her, in particular, his conduct had ever been most affectionately tender.

Yet she did fear that, on the present occasion, her conduct might incur Sir Halbert's censure; and, hastily resolving that she would not mention the anecdote of the boy until the next day, she ordered him to be withdrawn from the apartment by Lilias.

'I will not go with Lilias, madam,' answered the spoiled child, who had more than once carried his point by perseverance, and who, like his betters, delighted in the exercise of such authority,—'I will not go to Lilias's gousty room—I will stay and see that brave warrior, who comes riding so gallantly along the drawbridge.'

'You must not stay, Roland,' said the lady,

more positively than she usually spoke to her little favourite.

'I will,' reiterated the boy, who had already felt his consequence, and the probable chance of success.

'You *will*, Roland!' answered the lady; 'what manner of word is that? I tell you, you must go.'

'*Will*,' answered the forward boy, 'is a word for a man, and *must* is no word for a lady.'

'You are saucy, sirrah,' said the lady.—'Lilias, take him with you instantly.'

'I always thought,' said Lilias, smiling, as she seized the reluctant boy by the arm, 'that my young master must give place to my old one.'

'And you too are malapert, mistress!' said the lady; 'hath the moon changed, that ye all of you thus forget yourselves?'

Lilias made no reply, but led off the boy, who, too proud to offer unavailing resistance, darted at his benefactress a glance, which intimated plainly how willingly he would have defied her authority, had he possessed the power to make good his point.

The Lady of Avenel was vexed to find how much this trifling circumstance had discomposed her, at the moment when she ought naturally to have been entirely engrossed by her husband's return. But we do not recover composure by the mere feeling that agitation is mistimed. The glow of displeasure had not left the lady's cheek, her ruffled deportment was not yet entirely composed, when her husband, unhelmeted, but still wearing the rest of his arms, entered the apartment. His appearance banished the thoughts of everything else; she rushed to him, clasped his iron-sheathed frame in her arms, and kissed his martial and manly face with an affection which was at once evident and sincere. The warrior returned her embrace and caress with the same fondness; for the time which had passed since their union had diminished its romantic ardour, perhaps, but it had rather increased its rational tenderness, and Sir Halbert Glendinning's long and frequent absences from his castle had prevented affection from degenerating by habit into indifference.

When the first eager greetings were paid and received, the lady gazed fondly on her husband's face as she remarked, 'You are altered, Halbert—you have ridden hard and far to-day, or you have been ill?'

'I have been well, Mary,' answered the knight, 'passing well have I been; and a long ride is to me, thou well knowest, but a thing of constant custom. Those who are born noble may slumber out their lives within the walls of their castles and manor-houses; but he who hath achieved nobility by his own deeds must ever be in the saddle, to show that he merits his advancement.'

While he spoke thus, the lady gazed fondly on him, as if endeavouring to read his inmost soul; for the tone in which he spoke was that of melancholy depression.

Sir Halbert Glendinning was the same, yet a different person from what he had appeared in his early years. The fiery freedom of the aspiring youth had given place to the steady and stern composure of the approved soldier and skilful politician. There were deep traces of care on those noble features, over which each emotion used formerly to pass, like light clouds across a summer sky. That sky was now, not perhaps clouded, but still and grave, like that of the sober autumn evening. The forehead was higher and more bare than in early youth, and the locks which still clustered thick and dark on the warrior's head were worn away at the temples, not by age, but by the constant pressure of the steel cap, or helmet. His beard, according to the fashion of the time, grew short and thick, and was turned into moustaches on the upper lip, and peaked at the extremity. The cheek, weather-beaten and embrowned, had lost the glow of youth, but showed the vigorous complexion of active and confirmed manhood. Halbert Glendinning was, in a word, a knight to ride at a king's right hand, to bear his banner in war, and to be his counsellor in time of peace; for his looks expressed the considerate firmness which can resolve wisely and dare boldly. Still, over these noble features there now spread an air of dejection, of which, perhaps, the owner was not conscious, but which did not escape the observation of his anxious and affectionate partner.

'Something has happened, or is about to happen,' said the Lady of Avenel; 'this sadness sits not on your brow without cause—misfortune, national or particular, must needs be at hand.'

'There is nothing new that I wot of,' said Halbert Glendinning; 'but there is little of evil which can befall a kingdom, that may not be apprehended in this unhappy and divided realm.'

'Nay, then,' said the lady, 'I see there hath really been some fatal work on foot. My Lord of Murray hath not so long detained you at Holyrood, save that he wanted your help in some weighty purpose.'

'I have not been at Holyrood, Mary,' answered the knight; 'I have been several weeks abroad.'

'Abroad! and sent me no word?' replied the lady.

'What would the knowledge have availed, but to have rendered you unhappy, my love?' replied the knight; 'your thoughts would have converted the slightest breeze that curled your own lake into a tempest raging in the German Ocean.'

'And have you then really crossed the sea?' said the lady, to whom the very idea of an element which she had never seen conveyed notions of terror and of wonder,—'really left your own native land, and trod distant shores, where the Scottish tongue is unheard and unknown?'

'Really, and really,' said the knight, taking her hand in affectionate playfulness, 'I have done this marvellous deed—have rolled on the ocean for three days and three nights, with the deep green waves dashing by the side of my pillow, and but a thin plank to divide me from it.'

'Indeed, my Halbert,' said the lady, 'that was a tempting of Divine Providence. I never bade you unbuckle the sword from your side, or lay the lance from your hand—I never bade you sit still when your honour called you to rise and ride; but are not blade and spear dangers enough for one man's life, and why would you trust rough waves and raging seas?'

'We have in Germany, and in the Low Countries, as they are called,' answered Glendinning, 'men who are united with us in faith, and with whom it is fitting we should unite in alliance. To some of these I was despatched on business as important as it was secret. I went in safety, and I returned in security; there is more danger to a man's life betwixt this and Holyrood, than in all the seas that wash the lowlands of Holland.'

'And the country, my Halbert, and the people,' said the lady, 'are they like our kindly Scots? or what bearing have they to strangers?'

'They are a people, Mary, strong in their wealth, which renders all other nations weak, and weak in those arts of war by which other nations are strong.'

'I do not understand you,' said the lady.

'The Hollander and the Fleming, Mary, pour forth their spirit in trade, and not in war; their wealth purchases them the arms of foreign soldiers, by whose aid they defend it. They erect dykes on the sea-shore to protect the land which they have won, and they levy regiments of the stubborn Switzers and hardy Germans to protect the treasures which they have amassed. And thus they are strong in their weakness; for the very wealth which tempts their masters to despoil them, arms strangers in their behalf.'

'The slothful hinds!' exclaimed Mary, thinking and feeling like a Scotswoman of the period; 'have they hands and fight not for the land which bore them? They should be notched off at the elbow!'

'Nay, that were but hard justice,' answered her husband; 'for their hands serve their country, though not in battle, like ours. Look at these barren hills, Mary, and at that deep winding vale by which the cattle are even now returning from their scanty browse. The hand of the industrious Fleming would cover these mountains with wood, and raise corn where we now see a starved and scanty sward of heath and ling. It grieves me, Mary, when I look on that land, and think what benefit it might receive from such men as I have lately seen—men who seek not the idle fame derived from dead ancestors, or the bloody renown won in modern broils, but tread along the land, as preservers and improvers, not as tyrants and destroyers.'

'These amendments would here be but a vain fancy, my Halbert,' answered the Lady of Avenel; 'the trees would be burned by the English foemen ere they ceased to be shrubs, and the grain that you raised would be gathered in by the first neighbour that possessed more riders than follow your train. Why should you repine at this? The fate that made you Scotsman by birth, gave you head, and heart, and hand to uphold the name as it must needs be upheld.'

'It gave *me* no name to uphold,' said Halbert, pacing the floor slowly; 'my arm has been foremost in every strife—my voice has been heard in every council, nor have the wisest rebuked me. The crafty Lethington, the deep and dark Morton, have held secret council with me, and Grange and Lindsay have owned that in the field I did the devoir of a gallant knight—but let the emergence be passed when they need my head and hand, and they only know me as son of the obscure portioner of Glendearg.'

This was a theme which the lady always dreaded; for the rank conferred on her husband, the favour in which he was held by the powerful Earl of Murray, and the high talents by which he vindicated his right to that rank and that favour, were qualities which rather increased than diminished the envy which was harboured against Sir Halbert Glendinning among a proud aristocracy, as a person originally of inferior and obscure birth, who had risen to his present eminence solely by his personal merit. The natural firmness of his mind did not enable him to despise the ideal advantages of a higher pedigree, which were held in such universal esteem by all with whom he conversed; and so open are the noblest minds to jealous inconsistencies, that there were moments in which he felt mortified that his lady should possess those advantages of birth and high descent which he himself did not enjoy, and regretted that his importance as the proprietor of Avenel was qualified by his possessing it only as the husband of the heiress. He was not so unjust as to permit any unworthy feelings to retain permanent possession of his mind, but yet they recurred from time to time, and did not escape his lady's anxious observation.

'Had we been blessed with children,' she was wont on such occasions to say to herself, 'had our blood been united in a son who might have joined my advantages of descent with my husband's personal worth, these painful and irksome reflections had not disturbed our union even for a moment. But the existence of such an heir, in whom our affections, as well as our pretensions might have centred, has been denied to us.'

With such mutual feelings, it cannot be wondered that it gave the lady pain to hear her husband verging towards this topic of mutual discontent. On the present as on other similar occasions, she endeavoured to divert the knight's thoughts from this painful channel.

'How can you,' she said, 'suffer yourself to dwell upon things which profit nothing? Have you indeed no name to uphold? You, the good and the brave, the wise in council, and the strong in battle, have you not to support the reputation your own deeds have won, a reputation more honourable than mere ancestry can supply? Good men love and honour you, the wicked fear, and the turbulent obey you; and is it not necessary you should exert yourself to insure the endurance of that love, that honour, that wholesome fear, and that necessary obedience?'

As she thus spoke, the eye of her husband caught from hers courage and comfort, and it lightened as he took her hand and replied, 'It is most true, my Mary, and I deserve thy rebuke, who forget what I am, in repining because I am not what I cannot be. I am now what the most famed ancestors of those I envy were, the mean man raised into eminence by his own exertions; and sure it is a boast as honourable to have those capacities which are necessary to the foundation of a family, as to be descended from one who possessed them some centuries

before. The Hay of Luncarty, who bequeathed his bloody yoke to his lineage,—the "dark grey man," who first founded the house of Douglas, had yet less of ancestry to boast than I have. For thou knowest, Mary, that my name derives itself from a line of ancient warriors, although my immediate forefathers preferred the humble station in which thou didst first find them; and war and council are not less proper to the house of Glendonwyne, even in its most remote descendants, than to the proudest of their baronage.' *

He strode across the hall as he spoke; and the lady smiled internally to observe how much his mind dwelt upon the prerogatives of birth, and endeavoured to establish his claims, however remote, to a share in them, at the very moment when he affected to hold them in contempt. It will be easily guessed, however, that she permitted no symptom to escape her that could show she was sensible of the weakness of her husband, a perspicacity which perhaps his proud spirit could not very easily have brooked.

As he returned from the extremity of the hall, to which he had stalked while in the act of vindicating the title of the House of Glendonwyne in its most remote branches to the full privileges of aristocracy, 'Where,' he said, 'is Wolf? I have not seen him since my return, and he was usually the first to welcome my home-coming.'

'Wolf,' said the lady, with a slight degree of embarrassment, for which, perhaps, she would have found it difficult to assign any reason even to herself, 'Wolf is chained up for the present. He has been surly to my page.'

'Wolf chained up—and Wolf surly to your page!' answered Sir Halbert Glendinning; 'Wolf never was surly to any one; and the chain will either break his spirit or render him savage—So ho, there—set Wolf free directly.'

He was obeyed: and the huge dog rushed into the hall, disturbing, by his unwieldy and boisterous gambols, the whole economy of reels, rocks, and distaffs, with which the maidens of the household were employed when the arrival of their lord was a signal to them to withdraw, and extracting from Lilias, who was summoned to put them again in order, the natural observation, 'That the laird's pet was as troublesome as the lady's page.'

'And who is this page, Mary?' said the knight, his attention again called to the subject by the observation of the waiting-woman,—'Who is this page, whom every one seems to weigh in the balance with my old friend and favourite Wolf?—When did you aspire to the dignity of keeping a page, or who is the boy?'

'I trust, my Halbert,' said the lady, not without a blush, 'you will not think your wife entitled to less attendance than other ladies of her quality?'

'Nay, Dame Mary,' answered the knight, 'it is enough you desire such an attendant.—Yet I have never loved to nurse such useless menials—a lady's page—it may well suit the proud English dames to have a slender youth to bear their trains from bower to hall, fan them when they slumber, and touch the lute for them when they please to listen; but our Scottish matrons were wont to be above such vanities, and our Scottish youth ought to be bred to the spear and the stirrup.'

'Nay, but, my husband,' said the lady, 'I did but jest when I called this boy my page; he is in sooth a little orphan whom we saved from perishing in the lake, and whom I have since kept in the castle out of charity.—Lilias, bring little Roland hither.'

Roland entered accordingly, and, flying to the lady's side, took hold of the plaits of her gown, and then turned round and gazed, with an attention not unmingled with fear, upon the stately form of the knight.—'Roland,' said the lady, 'go kiss the hand of the noble knight, and ask him to be thy protector.'—But Roland obeyed not, and, keeping his station, continued to gaze fixedly and timidly on Sir Halbert Glendinning.—'Go to the knight, boy,' said the lady; 'what dost thou fear, child? Go, kiss Sir Halbert's hand.'

'I will kiss no hand save yours, lady,' answered the boy.

'Nay, but do as you are commanded, child,' replied the lady.—'He is dashed by your presence,' she said, apologizing to her husband; 'but is he not a handsome boy?'

'And so is Wolf,' said Sir Halbert, as he patted his huge four-footed favourite, 'a handsome dog; but he has this double advantage over your new favourite, that he does what he is commanded, and hears not when he is praised.'

'Nay, now you are displeased with me,' replied the lady; 'and yet why should you be so? There is nothing wrong in relieving the distressed orphan, or in loving that which is in itself lovely and deserving of affection. But you have seen Master Warden at Edinburgh, and he has set you against the poor boy.'

'My dear Mary,' answered her husband, 'Master Warden better knows his place than to presume to interfere either in your affairs or in mine. I neither blame your relieving this boy, nor your kindness for him. But I think, considering his birth and prospects, you ought not to treat him with injudicious fondness, which can only end in rendering him unfit for the humble situation to which Heaven has designed him.'

'Nay, but, my Halbert, do but look at the boy,' said the lady, 'and see whether he has not the air of being intended by Heaven for something nobler than a mere peasant. May he not be designed, as others have been, to rise out of a humble situation into honour and eminence?'

Thus far had she proceeded, when the consciousness that she was treading upon delicate ground at once occurred to her, and induced her to take the most natural, but the worst of all courses, on such occasions, whether in conversation or in an actual bog, namely, that of stopping suddenly short in the illustration which she had commenced. Her brow crimsoned, and that of Sir Halbert Glendinning was slightly overcast. But it was only for an instant; for he was incapable of mistaking his lady's meaning, or supposing that she meant intentional disrespect to him.

'Be it as you please, my love,' he replied; 'I owe you too much to contradict you in aught

*Note A. Glendonwyne of Glendonwyne.

which may render your solitary mode of life more endurable. Make of this youth what you will, and you have my full authority for doing so. But remember he is your charge, not mine—remember he hath limbs to do man's service, a soul and a tongue to worship God; breed him, therefore, to be true to his country and to Heaven; and for the rest, dispose of him as you list—it is, and shall rest, your own matter."

This conversation decided the fate of Roland Græme, who from thenceforward was little noticed by the master of the mansion of Avenel, but indulged and favoured by its mistress.

This situation led to many important consequences, and, in truth, tended to bring forth the character of the youth in all its broad lights and deep shadows. As the knight himself seemed tacitly to disclaim alike interest and control over the immediate favourite of his lady, young Roland was, by circumstances, exempted from the strict discipline to which, as the retainer of a Scottish man of rank, he would otherwise have been subjected, according to all the rigour of the age. But the steward, or master of the household—such was the proud title assumed by the head domestic of each petty baron—deemed it not advisable to interfere with the favourite of the lady, and especially since she had brought the state into the present family. Master Jasper Wingate was a man experienced, as he often boasted, in the ways of great families, and knew how to keep the steerage even when wind and tide chanced to be in contradiction.

This prudent personage winked at much, and avoided giving opportunity for further offence, by requesting little of Roland Græme beyond the degree of attention which he was himself disposed to pay; rightly conjecturing that, however lowly the place which the youth might hold in the favour of the Knight of Avenel, still to make an evil report of him would make an enemy of the lady, without securing the favour of her husband.

With these prudential considerations, and doubtless not without an eye to his own ease and convenience, he taught the boy as much, and only as much, as he chose to learn, readily admitting whatever apology it pleased his pupil to allege in excuse for idleness or negligence. As the other persons in the castle, to whom such tasks were delegated, readily imitated the prudential conduct of the major-domo, there was little control used towards Roland Græme, who, of course, learned no more than what a very active mind, and a total impatience of absolute idleness, led him to acquire upon his own account, and by dint of his own exertions. The latter were especially earnest, when the lady herself condescended to be his tutoress, or to examine his progress.

It followed also from his quality as my lady's favourite, that Roland was viewed with no peculiar good-will by the followers of the knight, many of whom, of the same age, and apparently similar origin, with the fortunate page, were subjected to severe observance of the ancient and rigorous discipline of a feudal retainer. To these Roland Græme was of course an object of envy, and, in consequence, of dislike and detraction; but the youth possessed qualities which it was impossible to depreciate. Pride, and a sense of early ambition, did for him what severity and constant instruction did for others. In truth, the youthful Roland displayed that early flexibility both of body and mind, which renders exercise, either mental or bodily, rather matter of sport than of study; and it seemed as if he acquired accidentally, and by starts, those accomplishments, which earnest and constant instruction, enforced by frequent reproof and occasional chastisement, had taught to others. Such military exercises, such lessons of the period, as he found it agreeable or convenient to apply to, he learned so perfectly, as to confound those who were ignorant how often the want of constant application is compensated by vivacity of talent and ardent enthusiasm. The lads, therefore, who were more regularly trained to arms, to horsemanship, and to other necessary exercises of the period, while they envied Roland Græme the indulgence or negligence with which he seemed to be treated, had little to boast of their own superior acquirements; a few hours, with the powerful exertion of a most energetic will, seemed to do for him more than the regular instruction of weeks could accomplish for others.

Under these advantages, if indeed they were to be termed such, the character of young Roland began to develop itself. It was bold, peremptory, decisive, and overbearing; generous, if neither withstood nor contradicted; vehement and passionate, if censured or opposed. He seemed to consider himself as attached to no one, and responsible to no one, except his mistress, and even over her mind he had gradually acquired that species of ascendency which indulgence is so apt to occasion. And although the immediate followers and dependents of Sir Halbert Glendinning saw his ascendancy with jealousy, and often took occasion to mortify his vanity, there wanted not those who were willing to acquire the favour of the Lady of Avenel by humouring and taking part with the youth whom she protected; for although a favourite, as the poet assures us, has no friend, he seldom fails to have both followers and flatterers.

The partisans of Roland Græme were chiefly to be found among the inhabitants of the little hamlet on the shore of the lake. These villagers, who were sometimes tempted to compare their own situation with that of the immediate and constant followers of the knight, who attended him on his frequent journeys to Edinburgh and elsewhere, delighted in considering and representing themselves as more properly the subjects of the Lady of Avenel than of her husband. It is true, her wisdom and affection on all occasions discountenanced the distinction which was here implied; but the villagers persisted in thinking it must be agreeable to her to enjoy their peculiar and undivided homage, or at least in acting as if they thought so; and one chief mode by which they evinced their sentiments, was by the respect they paid to young Roland Græme, the favourite attendant of the descendant of their ancient lords. This was a mode of flattery too pleasing to encounter rebuke or censure; and the opportunity which it afforded the youth to form, as it were, a party of his own within the limits of the ancient barony of Avenel, added not a little to

the audacity and decisive tone of a character, which was by nature bold, impetuous, and incontrollable.

Of the two members of the household who had manifested an early jealousy of Roland Græme, the prejudices of Wolf were easily overcome; and in process of time the noble dog slept with Bran, Luath, and the celebrated hounds of ancient days. But Master Warden, the chaplain, lived, and retained his dislike to the youth. That good man, single-minded and benevolent as he really was, entertained rather more than a reasonable idea of the respect due to him as a minister, and exacted from the inhabitants of the castle more deference than the haughty young page, proud of his mistress's favour, and petulant from youth and situation, was at all times willing to pay. His bold and free demeanour, his attachment to rich dress and decoration, his inaptitude to receive instruction, and his hardening himself against rebuke, were circumstances which induced the good old man, with more haste than charity, to set the forward page down as a vessel of wrath, and to presage that the youth nursed that pride and haughtiness of spirit which goes before ruin and destruction. On the other hand, Roland evinced at times a marked dislike, and even something like contempt, of the chaplain. Most of the attendants and followers of Sir Halbert Glendinning entertained the same charitable thoughts as the Reverend Master Warden; but while Roland was favoured by their lady, and endured by their lord, they saw no policy in making their opinions public.

Roland Græme was sufficiently sensible of the unpleasant situation in which he stood; but in the haughtiness of his heart he retorted upon the other domestics the distant, cold, and sarcastic manner in which they treated him, assumed an air of superiority which compelled the most obstinate to obedience, and had the satisfaction at least to be dreaded, if he was heartily hated.

The chaplain's marked dislike had the effect of recommending him to the attention of Sir Halbert's brother Edward, who now, under the conventual appellation of Father Ambrose, continued to be one of the few monks who, with the Abbot Eustatius, had, notwithstanding the nearly total downfall of their faith under the regency of Murray, been still permitted to linger in the cloisters at Kennaquhair. Respect to Sir Halbert had prevented their being altogether driven out of the Abbey, though their Order was now in a great measure suppressed, and they were interdicted the public exercise of their ritual, and only allowed for their support a small pension out of their once splendid revenues. Father Ambrose, thus situated, was an occasional, though very rare visitant, at the Castle of Avenel, and was at such times observed to pay particular attention to Roland Græme, who seemed to return it with more depth of feeling than consisted with his usual habits.

Thus situated, years glided on, during which the Knight of Avenel continued to act a frequent and important part in the convulsions of his distracted country; while young Græme anticipated, both in wishes and personal accomplishments, the age which should enable him to emerge from the obscurity of his present situation.

CHAPTER IV.

Amid their cups that freely flow'd,
Their revelry and mirth,
A youthful lord tax'd Valentine
With base and doubtful birth.
VALENTINE AND ORSON.

When Roland Græme was a youth about seventeen years of age, he chanced one summer morning to descend to the mew in which Sir Halbert Glendinning kept his hawks, in order to superintend the training of an eyas, or young hawk, which he himself, at the imminent risk of neck and limbs, had taken from a celebrated eyrie in the neighbourhood, called Gledscraig. As he was by no means satisfied with the attention which had been bestowed on his favourite bird, he was not slack in testifying his displeasure to the falconer's lad, whose duty it was to have attended upon it.

'What ho! sir knave,' exclaimed Roland, 'is it thus you feed the eyas with unwashed meat, as if you were gorging the foul brancher of a worthless hoodie-crow? by the mass, and thou hast neglected its castings also for these two days? Think'st thou I ventured my neck to bring the bird down from the crag, that thou shouldst spoil him by thy neglect!' And to add force to his remonstrances, he conferred a cuff or two on the negligent attendant of the hawks, who, shouting rather louder than was necessary under all the circumstances, brought the master falconer to his assistance.

Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel, was an Englishman by birth, but so long in the service of Glendinning, that he had lost much of his national attachment in that which he had formed to his master. He was a favourite in his department, jealous and conceited of his skill, as masters of the game usually are; for the rest of his character, he was a jester and a parcel poet (qualities which by no means abated his natural conceit), a jolly fellow, who, though a sound Protestant, loved a flagon of ale better than a long sermon, a stout man of his hands when need required, true to his master, and a little presuming on his interest with him.

Adam Woodcock, such as we have described him, by no means relished the freedom used by young Græme in chastising his assistant. 'Hey, hey, my lady's page,' said he, stepping between his own boy and Roland, 'fair and softly, an it like your gilt jacket—hands off is fair play; if my boy has done amiss, I can beat him myself, and then you may keep your hands soft.'

'I will beat him and thee too,' answered Roland, without hesitation, 'an you look not better after your business. See how the bird is cast away between you. I found the careless lurdane feeding her with unwashed flesh, and she an eyas.' *

'Go to,' said the falconer, 'thou art but an eyas thyself, child Roland.—What knowest thou of feeding? I say that the eyas should have her meat unwashed, until she becomes a brancher—'twere the ready way to give her the frounce, to

* There is a difference amongst authorities how long the nestling hawk should be fed with flesh which has previously been washed.

wash her meat sooner, and so knows every one who knows a gled from a falcon.'

'It is thine own laziness, thou false English blood, that dost nothing but drink and sleep,' retorted the page, 'and leaves that lither lad to do the work, which he minds as little as thou.'

'And am I so idle, then,' said the falconer, 'that have three casts of hawks to look after, at perch and mew, and to fly them in the field to boot?—and is my lady's page so busy a man that he must take me up short?—and am I of false English blood?—I marvel what blood thou art—neither Englander or Scot—fish nor flesh—a bastard from the Debateable Land, without either kith, or kin, or ally!—Marry, out upon thee, foul kite, that would fain be a tercel gentle!'

The reply to this sarcasm was a box on the ear, so well applied, that it overthrew the falconer into the cistern in which water was kept for the benefit of the hawks. Up started Adam Woodcock, his wrath no way appeased by the cold immersion, and, seizing on a truncheon which stood by, would have soon requited the injury he had received, had not Roland laid his hand on his poniard, and sworn by all that was sacred that, if he offered a stroke towards him, he would sheathe the blade in his bowels. The noise was now so great, that more than one of the household came in, and amongst others the major-domo, a grave personage, already mentioned, whose gold chain and white wand intimated his authority. At the appearance of this dignitary, the strife was for the present appeased. He embraced, however, so favourable an opportunity to read Roland Græme a shrewd lecture on the impropriety of his deportment to his fellow-menials, and to assure him that, should he communicate this fray to his master (who, though now on one of his frequent expeditions, was speedily expected to return), which but for respect to his lady he would most certainly do, the residence of the culprit in the Castle of Avenel would be but of brief duration. 'But however,' added the prudent master of the household, 'I will report the matter first to my lady.'

'Very just, very right, Master Wingate,' exclaimed several voices together; 'my lady will consider if daggers are to be drawn on us for every idle word, and whether we are to live in a well-ordered household, where there is the fear of God, or amongst drawn dirks and sharp knives.'

The object of this general resentment darted an angry glance around him, and, suppressing with difficulty the desire which urged him to reply in furious or in contemptuous language, returned his dagger into the scabbard, looked disdainfully around upon the assembled menials, turned short upon his heel, and, pushing aside those who stood betwixt him and the door, left the apartment.

'This will be no tree for my nest,' said the falconer, 'if this cock-sparrow is to crow over us as he seems to do.'

'He struck me with his switch yesterday,' said one of the grooms, 'because the tail of his worship's gelding was not trimmed altogether so as suited his humour.'

'And I promise you,' said the laundress, 'my young master will stick nothing to call an honest woman slut and quean, if there be but a speck of soot upon his band-collar.'

'If Master Wingate do not his errand to my lady,' was the general result, 'there will be no tarrying in the same house with Roland Græme.'

The master of the household heard them all for some time, and then, motioning for universal silence, he addressed them with all the dignity of Malvolio himself.—'My masters,—not forgetting you, my mistresses,—do not think the worse of me that I proceed with as much care as haste in this matter. Our master is a gallant knight, and will have his sway at home and abroad, in wood and field, in hall and bower, as the saying is. Our lady, my benison upon her, is also a noble person of long descent, and rightful heir of this place and barony, and she also loves her will; as for that matter, show me the woman who doth not. Now, she hath favoured, doth favour, and will favour, this jackanape,—for what good part about him I know not, save that, as one noble lady will love a messan dog, and another a screaming popinjay, and a third a Barbary ape, so doth it please our noble dame to set her affections upon this stray elf of a page, for nought that I can think of, save that she was the cause of his being saved (the more's the pity) from drowning.' And here Master Wingate made a pause.

'I would have been his caution for a grey groat against salt water or fresh,' said Roland's adversary, the falconer; 'marry, if he crack not a rope for stabbing or for snatching, I will be content never to hood hawk again.'

'Peace, Adam Woodcock,' said Wingate, waving his hand; 'I prithee, peace, man.—Now, my lady, liking this springald, as aforesaid, differs therein from my lord, who loves never a bone in his skin. Now, is it for me to stir up strife betwixt them, and put as 'twere my finger betwixt the bark and the tree, on account of a pragmatical youngster, whom, nevertheless, I would willingly see whipped forth of the barony? Have patience, and this boil will break without our meddling. I have been in service since I wore a beard on my chin, till now that that beard is turned grey, and I have seldom known any one better themselves, even by taking the lady's part against the lord's; but never one who did not dirk himself, if he took the lord's against the lady's.'

'And so,' said Lilias, 'we are to be crowed over, every one of us, men and women, cock and hen, by this little upstart? I will try titles with him first, I promise you.—I fancy, Master Wingate, for as wise as you look, you will be pleased to tell what you have seen today, if my lady commands you?'

'To speak the truth when my lady commands me,' answered the prudential major-domo, 'is in some measure my duty, Mistress Lilias; always providing for and excepting those cases in which it cannot be spoken without breeding mischief and inconvenience to myself or my fellow-servants; for the tongue of a tale-bearer breaketh bones as well as a Jeddart-staff.'*

* A species of battle-axe, so called as being in especial use in that ancient burgh, whose armorial bearings still represent an armed horseman brandishing such a weapon.

'But this imp of Satan is none of your friends or fellow-servants,' said Lilias; 'and I trust you mean not to stand up for him against the whole family besides?'

'Credit me, Mistress Lilias,' replied the senior, 'should I see the time fitting, I would with right good-will give him a lick with the rough side of my tongue.'

'Enough said, Master Wingate,' answered Lilias; 'then trust me his song shall soon be laid. If my mistress does not ask me what is the matter below stairs before she be ten minutes of time older, she is no born woman, and my name is not Lilias Bradbourne.'

In pursuance of her plan, Mistress Lilias failed not to present herself before her mistress with all the exterior of one who is possessed of an important secret,—that is, she had the corners of her mouth turned down, her eyes raised up, her lips pressed as fast together as if they had been sewed up, to prevent her blabbing, and an air of prim, mystical importance diffused over her whole person and demeanour, which seemed to intimate, 'I know something which I am resolved not to tell you!'

Lilias had rightly read her mistress's temper, who, wise and good as she was, was yet a daughter of grandame Eve, and could not witness this mysterious bearing on the part of her waiting-woman without longing to ascertain the secret cause. For a space, Mistress Lilias was obdurate to all inquiries, sighed, turned her eyes up higher yet to heaven, hoped for the best, but had nothing particular to communicate. All this, as was most natural and proper, only stimulated the lady's curiosity; neither was her importunity to be parried with,—'Thank God, I am no makebate—no tale-bearer,—thank God, I never envied any one's favour, or was anxious to propale their misdemeanour—only, thank God, there has been no bloodshed and murder in the house—that is all.'

'Bloodshed and murder!' exclaimed the lady; 'what does the quean mean?—if you speak not plain out, you shall have something you will scarce be thankful for.'

'Nay, my lady,' answered Lilias, eager to disburden her mind, or, in Chaucer's phrase, to 'unbuckle her mail,' 'if you bid me speak out the truth, you must not be moved with what might displease you—Roland Græme has dirked Adam Woodcock—that is all.'

'Good Heaven!' said the lady, turning pale as ashes; 'is the man slain?'

'No, madam,' replied Lilias, 'but slain he would have been, if there had not been ready help; but maybe it is your ladyship's pleasure that this young esquire shall poniard the servants as well as switch and baton them?'

'Go to, minion,' said the lady, 'you are saucy—tell the master of the household to attend me instantly.'

Lilias hastened to seek out Master Wingate, and hurry him to his lady's presence, speaking as a word in season to him on the way, 'I have set the stone a-trowling, look that you do not let it stand still.'

The steward, too prudential a person to commit himself otherwise, answered by a sly look and a nod of intelligence, and presently after stood in the presence of the Lady of Avenel, with a look of great respect for his lady, partly real, partly affected, and an air of great sagacity, which inferred no ordinary conceit of himself.

'How is this, Wingate,' said the lady, 'and what rule do you keep in the castle, that the domestics of Sir Halbert Glendinning draw the dagger on each other, as in a cavern of thieves and murderers?—is the wounded man much hurt? and what—what hath become of the unhappy boy?'

'There is no one wounded as yet, madam,' replied he of the golden chain; 'it passes my poor skill to say how many may be wounded before Pasche* if some rule be not taken with this youth—not but the youth is a fair youth,' he added, correcting himself, 'and able at his exercise; but somewhat too ready with the ends of his fingers, the butt of his riding-switch, and the point of his dagger.'

'And whose fault is that,' said the lady, 'but yours, who should have taught him better discipline than to brawl or to draw his dagger?'

'If it please your ladyship so to impose the blame on me,' answered the steward, 'it is my part, doubtless, to bear it—only I submit to your consideration, that, unless I nailed his weapon to the scabbard, I could no more keep it still than I could fix quicksilver, which defied even the skill of Raymond Lullius.'†

'Tell me not of Raymond Lullius,' said the lady, losing patience, 'but send me the chaplain hither. You grow all of you too wise for me, during your lord's long and repeated absences. I would to God his affairs would permit him to remain at home and rule his own household, for it passes my wit and skill!'

'God forbid, my lady,' said the old domestic, 'that you should sincerely think what you are now pleased to say: your old servants might well hope that, after so many years' duty, you would do their service more justice than to distrust their grey hairs, because they cannot rule the peevish humour of a green head, which the owner carries, it may be, a brace of inches higher than becomes him.'

'Leave me,' said the lady. 'Sir Halbert's return must now be expected daily, and he will look into these matters himself—Leave me, I say, Wingate, without saying more of it. I know you are honest, and I believe the boy is petulant; and yet I think it is my favour which hath set all of you against him.'

The steward bowed and retired, after having been silenced in a second attempt to explain the motives on which he acted.

The chaplain arrived; but neither from him did the lady receive much comfort. On the contrary, she found him disposed, in plain terms, to lay to the door of her indulgence all the disturbances which the fiery temper of Roland Græme had already occasioned, or might hereafter occasion, in the family. 'I would,'

* Easter.

† [Raymond Lully, surnamed *Doctor Illuminatus*, a native of Majorca, was born in 1236, and died 1315, in the eightieth year of his age. His latest work, *Arbor Scientiæ*, is divided into sixteen parts, each of which contained a special science, forming a kind of encyclopædia of the knowledge of the thirteenth century.]

he said, 'honoured lady, that you had deigned to be ruled by me in the outset of this matter, sith it is easy to stem evil in the fountain, but hard to struggle against it in the stream. You, honoured madam (a word which I do not use according to the vain forms of this world, but because I have ever loved and honoured you as an honourable and an elect lady),--you, I say, madam, have been pleased, contrary to my poor but earnest counsel, to raise this boy from his station into one approaching to your own.'

'What mean you, reverend sir?' said the lady; 'I have made this youth a page—is there aught in my doing so that does not become my character and quality?'

'I dispute not, madam,' said the pertinacious preacher, 'your benevolent purpose in taking charge of this youth, or your title to give him this idle character of page, if such was your pleasure; though what the education of a boy in the train of a female can tend to, save to engraft foppery and effeminacy on conceit and arrogance, it passes my knowledge to discover. But I blame you more directly for having taken little care to guard him against the perils of his condition, or to tame and humble a spirit naturally haughty, overbearing, and impatient. You have brought into your bower a lion's cub; delighted with the beauty of his fur, and the grace of his gambols, you have bound him with no fetters befitting the fierceness of his disposition. You have let him grow up as unawed as if he had been still a tenant of the forest, and now you are surprised, and call out for assistance, when he begins to ramp, rend, and tear, according to his proper nature.'

'Master Warden,' said the lady, considerably offended, 'you are my husband's ancient friend, and I believe your love sincere to him and to his household. Yet let me say, that when I asked you for counsel, I expected not this asperity of rebuke. If I have done wrong in loving this poor orphan lad more than others of his class, I scarce think the error merited such severe censure; and if stricter discipline were required to keep his fiery temper in order, it ought, I think, to be considered that I am a woman, and that, if I have erred in this matter, it becomes a friend's part rather to aid than to rebuke me. I would these evils were taken order with before my lord's return. He loves not domestic discord or domestic brawls; and I would not willingly that he thought such could arise from one whom I favoured—What do you counsel me to do?'

'Dismiss this youth from your service, madam,' replied the preacher.

'You cannot bid me do so,' said the lady; 'you cannot, as a Christian and a man of humanity, bid me turn away an unprotected creature against whom my favour, my injudicious favour if you will, has reared up so many enemies.'

'It is not necessary you should altogether abandon him, though you dismiss him to another service, or to a calling better suiting his station and character,' said the preacher; 'elsewhere he may be an useful and profitable member of the commonweal—here he is but a makebate, and a stumbling-block of offence. The youth has snatches of sense and of intelligence, though he lacks industry. I will myself give him letters commendatory to Olearius Schinderhausen, a learned professor at the famous university of Leyden, where they lack an under-janitor—where, besides gratis instruction, if God give him the grace to seek it, he will enjoy five merks by the year, and the professor's cast-off suit, which he disparts with biennially.'

'This will never do, good Master Warden,' said the lady, scarce able to suppress a smile; 'we will think more at large upon this matter. In the meanwhile, I trust to your remonstrances with this wild boy and with the family, for restraining these violent and unseemly jealousies and bursts of passion; and I entreat you to press on him and them their duty in this respect towards God, and towards their master.'

'You shall be obeyed, madam,' said Warden. 'On the next Thursday I exhort the family, and will, with God's blessing, so wrestle with the demon of wrath and violence, which hath entered into my little flock, that I trust to hound the wolf out of the fold, as if he were chased away with ban-dogs.'

This was the part of the conference from which Master Warden derived the greatest pleasure. The pulpit was at that time the same powerful engine for affecting popular feeling which the press has since become, and he had been no unsuccessful preacher, as we have already seen. It followed, as a natural consequence, that he rather over-estimated the powers of his own oratory, and, like some of his brethren about the period, was glad of an opportunity to handle any matters of importance, whether public or private, the discussion of which could be dragged into his discourse. In that rude age the delicacy was unknown which prescribed time and place to personal exhortations; and as the court-preacher often addressed the king individually, and dictated to him the conduct he ought to observe in matters of state, so the nobleman himself, or any of his retainers, were, in the chapel of the feudal castle, often incensed or appalled, as the case might be, by the discussion of their private faults in the evening exercise, and by spiritual censures directed against them, specifically, personally, and by name.

The sermon, by means of which Henry Warden purposed to restore concord and good order to the Castle of Avenel, bore for text the well-known words, '*He who striketh with the sword shall perish by the sword*,' and was a singular mixture of good sense and powerful oratory with pedantry and bad taste. He enlarged a good deal on the word *striketh*, which he assured his hearers comprehended blows given with the point as well as with the edge, and, more generally, shooting with hand-gun, cross-bow, or long-bow, thrusting with a lance, or doing anything whatever by which death might be occasioned to the adversary. In the same manner he proved satisfactorily that the word *sword* comprehended all descriptions, whether back-sword or basket-hilt, cut-and-thrust or rapier, falchion or scimitar. 'But if,' he continued, with still greater animation, 'the text includeth in its anathema those who strike with any of those weapons which man hath devised for the exercise of his open hostility, still more doth it comprehend such as from their

form and size are devised rather for the gratification of privy malice by treachery, than for the [illegible]

sternly at the place where the page

on a cushion at the feet of his mistress, and wearing in his crimson belt a gay dagger with a gilded hilt,—'such, more especially, I hold to be those implements of death, which, in our modern and fantastic times, are worn not only by thieves and cut-throats, to whom they most properly belong, but even by those who attend upon women, and wait in the chambers of honourable ladies. Yes, my friends,—every species of this unhappy weapon, framed for all evil and for no good, is comprehended under this deadly denunciation, whether it be a stilet, which we have borrowed from the treacherous Italian, or a dirk, which is borne by the savage Highlandman, or a whinger, which is carried by our own Border-thieves and cut-throats, or a dudgeon-dagger, all are alike engines invented by the devil himself for ready implements of deadly wrath, sudden to execute and difficult to be parried. Even the common sword-and-buckler brawler despises the use of such a treacherous and malignant instrument, which is therefore fit to be used, not by men or soldiers, but by those who, trained under female discipline, become themselves effeminate hermaphrodites, having female spite and female cowardice added to the infirmities and evil passions of their masculine nature.'

The effect which this oration produced upon the assembled congregation of Avenel cannot very easily be described. The lady seemed at once embarrassed and offended; the menials could hardly contain, under an affectation of deep attention, the joy with which they heard the chaplain launch his thunders at the head of the unpopular favourite, and the weapon which they considered as a badge of affectation and finery. Mistress Lilias crested and drew up her head with all the deep-felt pride of gratified resentment; while the steward, observing a strict neutrality of aspect, fixed his eyes upon an old scutcheon on the opposite side of the wall, which he seemed to examine with the utmost accuracy, more willing, perhaps, to incur the censure of being inattentive to the sermon, than that of seeming to listen with marked approbation to what appeared so distasteful to his mistress.

The unfortunate subject of the harangue, whom nature had endowed with passions which had hitherto found no effectual restraint, could not disguise the resentment which he felt at being thus directly held up to the scorn, as well as the censure, of the assembled inhabitants of the little world in which he lived. His brow grew red, his lip grew pale, he set his teeth, he clenched his hand, and then with mechanical readiness grasped the weapon of which the clergyman had given so hideous a character; and at length, as the preacher heightened the colouring of his invective, he felt his rage become so ungovernable, that, fearful of being hurried into some deed of desperate violence, he rose up, traversed the chapel with hasty steps, and left the congregation.

The preacher was surprised into a sudden pause, while the fiery youth shot across him like a flash of lightning, regarding him as he passed, as if he had wished to dart from his eyes the same power of blighting and of consuming. But no sooner had he crossed the chapel, and shut with violence behind him the door of the vaulted entrance by which it communicated with the castle, than the impropriety of his conduct supplied Warden with one of those happier subjects for eloquence, of which he knew how to take advantage for making a suitable impression on his hearers. He paused for an instant, and then pronounced, in a slow and solemn voice, the deep anathema: 'He hath gone out from us because he was not of us—the sick man hath been offended at the wholesome bitter of the medicine—the wounded patient hath flinched from the friendly knife of the surgeon—the sheep hath fled from the sheepfold and delivered himself to the wolf, because he could not assume the quiet and humble conduct demanded of us by the great Shepherd. Ah! my brethren, beware of wrath—beware of pride—beware of the deadly and destroying sin which so often shows itself to our frail eyes in the garments of light! What is our earthly honour? Pride, and pride only—What our earthly gifts and graces? Pride and vanity. Voyagers speak of Indian men who deck themselves with shells, and anoint themselves with pigments, and boast of their attire as we do of our miserable carnal advantages—Pride could draw down the morning-star from heaven even to the verge of the pit—Pride and self-opinion kindled the flaming sword which waves us off from Paradise—Pride made Adam mortal, and a weary wanderer on the face of the earth, which he had else been at this day the immortal lord of—Pride brought amongst us sin, and doubles every sin it has brought. It is the outpost which the devil and the flesh most stubbornly maintain against the assaults of grace; and until it be subdued, and its barriers levelled with the very earth, there is more hope of a fool than of the sinner. Rend, then, from your bosoms this accursed shoot of the fatal apple; tear it up by the roots, though it be twisted with the chords of your life. Profit by the example of the miserable sinner that has passed from us, and embrace the means of grace while it is called to-day—ere your conscience is seared as with a firebrand, and your ears deafened like those of the adder, and your heart hardened like the nether millstone. Up, then, and be doing—wrestle and overcome; resist, and the enemy shall flee from you—Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation, and let the stumbling of others be your warning and your example. Above all, rely not on yourselves, for such self-confidence is even the worst symptom of the disorder itself. The Pharisee, perhaps, deemed himself humble while he stooped in the Temple, and thanked God that he was not as other men, and even as the publican. But while his knees touched the marble pavement, his head was as high as the topmost pinnacle of the Temple. Do not, therefore, deceive yourselves, and offer false coin, where the purest you can present is but as dross—think not that such will pass the assay of Omnipotent Wisdom. Yet shrink not from the task, because, as is my bounden

duty, I do not disguise from you its difficulties. Self-searching can do much—Meditation can do much—Grace can do all.'

And he concluded with a touching and animating exhortation to his hearers to seek divine grace, which is perfected in human weakness.

The audience did not listen to this address without being considerably affected; though it might be doubted whether the feelings of triumph, excited by the disgraceful retreat of the favourite page, did not greatly qualify, in the minds of many, the exhortations of the preacher to charity and to humility. And, in fact, the expression of their countenances much resembled the satisfied, triumphant air of a set of children, who, having just seen a companion punished for a fault in which they had no share, con their task with double glee, both because they themselves are out of the scrape, and because the culprit is in it.

With very different feelings did the Lady of Avenel seek her own apartment. She felt angry at Warden having made a domestic matter, in which she took a personal interest, the subject of such public discussion. But this she knew the good man claimed as a branch of his Christian liberty as a preacher, and also that it was vindicated by the universal custom of his brethren. But the self-willed conduct of her *protégé* afforded her yet deeper concern. That he had broken through in so remarkable a degree, not only the respect due to her presence, but that which was paid to religious admonition in those days with such peculiar reverence, argued a spirit as untameable as his enemies had represented him to possess. And yet, so far as he had been under her own eye, she had seen no more of that fiery spirit than appeared to her to become his years and his vivacity. This opinion might be founded in some degree on partiality; in some degree, too, it might be owing to the kindness and indulgence which she had always extended to him; but still she thought it impossible that she could be totally mistaken in the estimate she had formed of his character. The extreme of violence is scarce consistent with a course of continued hypocrisy (although Lilias charitably hinted that in some instances they were happily united), and therefore she could not exactly trust the report of others against her own experience and observation. The thoughts of this orphan boy clung to her heart-strings with a fondness for which she herself was unable to account. He seemed to have been sent to her by Heaven, to fill up those intervals of languor and vacuity which deprived her of much enjoyment. Perhaps he was not less dear to her because she well saw that he was a favourite with no one else, and because she felt that to give him up was to afford the judgment of her husband and others a triumph over her own; a circumstance not quite indifferent to the best of spouses of either sex.

In short, the Lady of Avenel formed the internal resolution that she would not desert her page while her page could be rationally protected; and, with the view of ascertaining how far this might be done, she caused him to be summoned to her presence.

CHAPTER V.

——In the wild storm,
The seaman hews his mast down, and the merchant
Heaves to the billows wares he once deemed precious;
So prince and peer, 'mid popular contentions,
Cast off their favourites.

OLD PLAY.

It was some time ere Roland Græme appeared. The messenger (his old friend Lilias) had at first attempted to open the door of his little apartment, with the charitable purpose, doubtless, of enjoying the confusion and marking the demeanour of the culprit. But an oblong bit of iron, yclept a bolt, was passed across the door on the inside, and prevented her benign intentions. Lilias knocked and called at intervals. 'Roland—Roland Græme—*Master* Roland Græme' (an emphasis on the word Master), 'will you be pleased to undo the door?—What ails you?—are you at your prayers in private, to complete the devotion which you left unfinished in public?—Surely we must have a screened seat for you in the chapel, that your gentility may be free from the eyes of common folks!' Still no whisper was heard in reply. 'Well, Master Roland,' said the waiting-maid, 'I must tell my mistress that if she would have an answer, she must either come herself, or send those on errand to you who can beat the door down.'

'What says your lady?' answered the page from within.

'Marry, open the door, and you shall hear,' answered the waiting-maid. 'I trow it becomes my lady's message to be listened to face to face; and I will not, for your idle pleasure, whistle it through a key-hole.'

'Your mistress's name,' said the page, opening the door, 'is too fair a cover for your impertinence—What says my lady?'

'That you will be pleased to come to her directly, in the withdrawing-room,' answered Lilias. 'I presume she has some directions for you concerning the forms to be observed in leaving chapel in future.'

'Say to my lady that I will directly wait on her,' answered the page; and, returning into his apartment, he once more locked the door in the face of the waiting-maid.

'Rare courtesy!' muttered Lilias; and, returning to her mistress, acquainted her that Roland Græme would wait on her when it suited his convenience.

'What! is that his addition or your own phrase, Lilias?' said the lady coolly.

'Nay, madam,' replied the attendant, not directly answering the question, 'he looked as if he could have said much more impertinent things than that, if I had been willing to hear them.—But here he comes to answer for himself.'

Roland Græme entered the apartment with a loftier mien, and somewhat a higher colour, than his wont; there was embarrassment in his manner, but it was neither that of fear nor of penitence.

'Young man,' said the lady, 'what trow you I am to think of your conduct this day?'

'If it has offended you, madam, I am deeply grieved,' replied the youth.

'To have offended me alone,' replied the lady, 'were but little—You have been guilty of conduct which will highly offend your master—of violence to your fellow-servants, and of disrespect to God himself, in the person of his ambassador.'

'Permit me again to reply,' said the page, 'that if I have offended my only mistress, friend, and benefactress, it includes the sum of my guilt, and deserves the sum of my penitence—Sir Halbert Glendinning calls me not servant, nor do I call him master—he is not entitled to blame me for chastising an insolent groom—nor do I fear the wrath of Heaven for treating with scorn the unauthorized interference of a meddling preacher.'

The Lady of Avenel had before this seen symptoms in her favourite of boyish petulance, and of impatience of censure or reproof. But his present demeanour was of a graver and more determined character, and she was for a moment at a loss how she should treat the youth, who seemed to have at once assumed the character not only of a man, but of a bold and determined one. She paused an instant, and then, assuming the dignity which was natural to her, she said, 'Is it to me, Roland, that you hold this language? Is it for the purpose of making me repent the favour I have shown you, that you declare yourself independent both of an earthly and a heavenly master? Have you forgotten what you were, and to what the loss of my protection would speedily again reduce you?'

'Lady,' said the page, 'I have forgot nothing, I remember but too much. I know that, but for you, I should have perished in yon blue waves,' pointing, as he spoke, to the lake, which was seen through the window, agitated by the western wind. 'Your goodness has gone further, madam—you have protected me against the malice of others, and against my own folly. You are free, if you are willing, to abandon the orphan you have reared. You have left nothing undone by him, and he complains of nothing. And yet, lady, do not think I have been ungrateful—I have endured something on my part, which I would have borne for the sake of no one but my benefactress.'

'For my sake!' said the lady; 'and what is it, that I can have subjected you to endure, which can be remembered with other feelings than those of thanks and gratitude?'

'You are too just, madam, to require me to be thankful for the cold neglect with which your husband has uniformly treated me—neglect not unmingled with fixed aversion. You are too just, madam, to require me to be grateful for the constant and unceasing marks of scorn and malevolence with which I have been treated by others, or for such a homily as that with which your reverend chaplain has, at my expense, this very day regaled the assembled household.'

'Heard mortal ears the like of this!' said the waiting-maid, with her hands expanded and her eyes turned up to heaven; 'he speaks as if he were son of an earl, or of a belted knight the least penny!'

The page glanced on her a look of supreme contempt, but vouchsafed no other answer. His mistress, who began to feel herself seriously offended, and yet sorry for the youth's folly, took up the same tone.

'Indeed, Roland, you forget yourself so strangely,' said she, 'that you will tempt me to take serious measures to lower you in your own opinion, by reducing you to your proper station in society.'

'And that,' added Lilias, 'would be best done by turning him out the same beggar's brat that your ladyship took him in.'

'Lilias speaks too rudely,' continued the lady, 'but she has spoken the truth, young man; nor do I think I ought to spare that pride which hath so completely turned your head. You have been tricked up with fine garments, and treated like the son of a gentleman, until you have forgot the fountain of your churlish blood.'

'Craving your pardon, most honourable madam, Lilias hath *not* spoken truth, nor does your ladyship know aught of my descent, which should entitle you to treat it with such decided scorn. I am no beggar's brat—my grandmother begged from no one, here nor elsewhere—she would have perished sooner on the bare moor. We were harried out and driven from our home—a chance which has happened elsewhere, and to others. Avenel Castle, with its lake and its towers, was not at all times able to protect its inhabitants from want and desolation.'

'Hear but his assurance!' said Lilias; 'he upbraids my lady with the distresses of her family!'

'It had indeed been a theme more gratefully spared,' said the lady, affected nevertheless with the allusion.

'It was necessary, madam, for my vindication,' said the page, 'or I had not even hinted at a word that might give you pain. But believe, honoured lady, I am of no churl's blood. My proper descent I know not; but my only relation has said, and my heart has echoed it back and attested the truth, that I am sprung of gentle blood, and deserve gentle usage.'

'And upon an assurance so vague as this,' said the lady, 'do you propose to expect all the regard, all the privileges, befitting high rank and distinguished birth, and become a contender for concessions which are only due to the noble? Go to, sir, know yourself, or the master of the household shall make you know you are liable to the scourge as a malapert boy. You have tasted too little the discipline fit for your age and station.'

'The master of the household shall taste of my dagger, ere I taste of his discipline,' said the page, giving way to his restrained passion. 'Lady, I have been too long the vassal of a pantoufle, and the slave of a silver whistle. You must henceforth find some other to answer your call; and let him be of birth and spirit mean enough to brook the scorn of your menials, and to call a Church vassal his master.'

'I have deserved this insult,' said the lady, colouring deeply, 'for so long enduring and fostering your petulance. Begone, sir. Leave this castle to-night—I will send you the means of subsistence till you find some honest mode of support, though I fear your imaginary grandeur will be above all others, save those of rapine and violence. Begone, sir, and see my face no more.'

The page threw himself at her feet in an agony of sorrow. 'My dear and honoured mistress,' he said, but was unable to bring out another syllable.

'Arise, sir,' said the lady, 'and let go my mantle—hypocrisy is a poor cloak for ingratitude.'

'I am incapable of either, madam,' said the page, springing up with the hasty start of passion which belonged to his rapid and impetuous temper. 'Think not I meant to implore permission to reside here; it has been long my determination to leave Avenel, and I will never forgive myself for having permitted you to say the word *begone*, ere I said, "I leave you." I did but kneel to ask your forgiveness for an ill-considered word used in the height of displeasure, but which ill became my mouth, as addressed to you. Other grace I asked not—you have done much for me—but I repeat, that you better know what you yourself have done, than what I have suffered.'

'Roland,' said the lady, somewhat appeased, and relenting towards her favourite, 'you had me to appeal to when you were aggrieved. You were neither called upon to suffer wrong, nor entitled to resent it, when you were under my protection.'

'And what,' said the youth, 'if I sustained wrong from those you loved and favoured, was I to disturb your peace with idle tale-bearings and eternal complaints? No, madam; I have borne my own burden in silence, and without disturbing you with murmurs; and the respect which you accuse me of wanting furnishes the only reason why I have neither appealed to you, nor taken vengeance at my own hand in a manner far more effectual. It is well, however, that we part. I was not born to be a stipendiary, favoured by his mistress, until ruined by the calumnies of others. May Heaven multiply its choicest blessings on your honoured head; and, for your sake, upon all that are dear to you!'

He was about to leave the apartment, when the lady called upon him to return. He stood still, while she thus addressed him: 'It was not my intention, nor would it be just, even in the height of my displeasure, to dismiss you without the means of support; take this purse of gold.'

'Forgive me, lady,' said the boy, 'and let me go hence with the consciousness that I have not been degraded to the point of accepting alms. If my poor services can be placed against the expense of my apparel and my maintenance, I only remain debtor to you for my life, and that alone is a debt which I can never repay; put up then that purse, and only say, instead, that you do not part from me in anger.'

'No, not in anger,' said the lady, 'in sorrow rather for your wilfulness; but take the gold, you cannot but need it.'

'May God evermore bless you for the kind tone and the kind word! but the gold I cannot take. I am able of body, and do not lack friends so wholly as you may think; for the time may come that I may yet show myself more thankful than by mere words.' He threw himself on his knees, kissed the hand which she did not withdraw, and then hastily left the apartment.

Lilias, for a moment or two, kept her eye fixed on her mistress, who looked so unusually pale, that she seemed about to faint; but the lady instantly recovered herself, and, declining the assistance which her attendant offered her, walked to her own apartment.

CHAPTER VI.

Thou hast each secret of the household, Francis,
I dare be sworn thou hast been in the buttery,
Steeping thy curious humour in fat ale,
And in the butler's tattle—ay, or chatting
With the glib waiting-woman o'er her comfits—
These bear the key to each domestic mystery.

OLD PLAY.

UPON the morrow succeeding the scene we have described, the disgraced favourite left the castle; and at breakfast-time the cautious old steward and Mistress Lilias sat in the apartment of the latter personage, holding grave converse on the important event of the day, sweetened by a small treat of comfits, to which the providence of Master Wingate had added a little flask of racy canary.

'He is gone at last,' said the Abigail, sipping her glass; 'and here is to his good journey.'

'Amen,' answered the steward gravely; 'I wish the poor deserted lad no ill.'

'And he is gone like a wild-duck, as he came,' continued Mistress Lilias; 'no lowering of drawbridges, or pacing along causeways, for him. My master has pushed off in the boat which they call the little Herod (more shame to them for giving the name of a Christian to wood and iron), and has rowed himself by himself to the farther side of the loch, and off and away with himself, and left all his finery strewed about his room. I wonder who is to clean his trumpery out after him—though the things are worth lifting, too.'

'Doubtless, Mistress Lilias,' answered the master of the household; 'in the which case, I am free to think, they will not long cumber the floor.'

'And now tell me, Master Wingate,' continued the damsel, 'do not the very cockles of your heart rejoice at the house being rid of this upstart whelp, that flung us all into shadow?'

'Why, Mistress Lilias,' replied Wingate, 'as to rejoicing—those who have lived as long in great families as has been my lot, will be in no hurry to rejoice at anything. And for Roland Græme, though he may be a good riddance in the main, yet what says the very sooth proverb, "Seldom comes a better."'

'Seldom comes a better, indeed!' echoed Mistress Lilias. 'I say, never can come a worse, or one half so bad. He might have been the ruin of our poor dear mistress' (here she used her kerchief), 'body and soul, and estate too; for she spent more coin on his apparel than on any four servants about the house.'

'Mistress Lilias,' said the sage steward, 'I do opine that our mistress requireth not this pity at your hands, being in all respects competent to take care of her own body, soul, and estate into the bargain.'

'You would not mayhap have said so,' answered the waiting-woman, 'had you seen how like Lot's wife she looked when young master

took his leave. My mistress is a good lady, and a virtuous, and a well-doing lady, and a well-spoken of—but I would not Sir Halbert had seen her last evening for two and a plack.'

'O, foy! foy! foy!' reiterated the steward; 'servants should hear and see, and say nothing. Besides that, my lady is utterly devoted to Sir Halbert, as well she may, being, as he is, the most renowned knight in these parts.'

'Well, well,' said the Abigail, 'I mean no more harm; but they that seek least renown abroad, are most apt to find quiet at home, that's all; and my lady's lonesome situation is to be considered, that made her fain to take up with the first beggar's brat that a dog brought her out of the loch.'

'And, therefore,' said the steward, 'I say, rejoice not too much, or too hastily, Mistress Lilias; for if your lady wished a favourite to pass away the time, depend upon it, the time will not pass lighter now that he is gone. So she will have another favourite to choose for herself; and be assured, if she wishes such a toy, she will not lack one.'

'And where should she choose one, but among her own tried and faithful servants,' said Mistress Lilias, 'who have broken her bread, and drunk her drink, for so many years? I have known many a lady as high as she is, that never thought either of a friend or favourite beyond their own waiting-woman—always having a proper respect, at the same time, for their old and faithful master of the household, Master Wingate.'

'Truly, Mistress Lilias,' replied the steward, 'I do partly see the mark at which you shoot, but I doubt your bolt will fall short. Matters being with our lady as it likes you to suppose, it will neither be your crimped pinners, Mistress Lilias (speaking of them with due respect), nor my silver hair or golden chain, that will fill up the void which Roland Græme must needs leave in our lady's leisure. There will be a learned young divine with some new doctrine—a learned leech with some new drug—a bold cavalier, who will not be refused the favour of wearing her colours at a running at the ring—a cunning harper that could harp the heart out of woman's breast, as they say Signor David Rizzio did to our poor Queen;—these are the sort of folk who supply the loss of a well-favoured favourite, and not an old steward, or a middle-aged waiting-woman.'

'Well,' replied Lilias, 'you have experience, Master Wingate, and truly I would my master would leave off his pricking hither and thither, and look better after the affairs of his household. There will be a Papistrie among us next, for what should I see among master's clothes but a string of gold beads! I promise you, *aves* and *credos* both!—I seized on them like a falcon.'

'I doubt it not, I doubt it not,' said the steward, sagaciously nodding his head; 'I have often noticed that the boy had strange observances which savoured of Popery, and that he was very jealous to conceal them. But you will find the Catholic under the Presbyterian cloak as often as the knave under the friar's hood—what then? we are all mortal.—Right proper beads they are,' he added, looking attentively at them, 'and may weigh four ounces of fine gold.'

'And I will have them melted down presently,' she said, 'before they be the misguiding of some poor blinded soul.'

'Very cautious, indeed, Mistress Lilias,' said the steward, nodding his head in assent.

'I will have them made,' said Mistress Lilias, 'into a pair of shoe-buckles; I would not wear the Pope's trinkets, or whatever has once borne the shape of them, one inch above my instep, were they diamonds instead of gold.—But this is what has come of Father Ambrose coming about the castle, as demure as a cat that is about to steal cream.'

'Father Ambrose is our master's brother,' said the steward gravely.

'Very true, Master Wingate,' answered the dame; 'but is that a good reason why he should pervert the king's liege subjects to Papistrie?'

'Heaven forbid, Mistress Lilias,' answered the sententious major-domo; 'but yet there are worse folk than the Papists.'

'I wonder where they are to be found,' said the waiting-woman, with some asperity; 'but I believe, Master Wingate, if one were to speak to you about the devil himself, you would say there were worse people than Satan.'

'Assuredly I might say so,' replied the steward, 'supposing that I saw Satan standing at my elbow.'

The waiting-woman started, and, having exclaimed, 'God bless us!' added, 'I wonder, Master Wingate, you can take pleasure in frightening one thus.'

'Nay, Mistress Lilias, I had no such purpose,' was the reply; 'but look you here—the Papists are but put down for the present, but who knows how long this word *present* will last? There are two great Popish earls in the north of England, that abominate the very word Reformation; I mean the Northumberland and Westmoreland earls, men of power enough to shake any throne in Christendom. Then, though our Scottish king be, God bless him, a true Protestant, yet he is but a boy; and here is his mother, that was our Queen—I trust there is no harm to say, God bless her too—and she is a Catholic; and many begin to think she has had but hard measure, such as the Hamiltons in the west, and some of our Border clans here, and the Gordons in the north, who are all wishing to see a new world; and if such a new world should chance to come up, it is like that the Queen will take back her own crown, and that the mass and the cross will come up, and then down go pulpits, Geneva gowns, and black silk skull-caps.'

'And have you, Master Jasper Wingate, who have heard the word, and listened unto pure and precious Master Henry Warden—have you, I say, the patience to speak, or but to think, of Popery coming down on us like a storm, or of the woman Mary again making the royal seat of Scotland a throne of abomination? No marvel that you are so civil to the cowled monk, Father Ambrose, when he comes hither with his downcast eyes that he never raises to my lady's face, and with his low, sweet-toned voice, and his benedicites, and his benisons; and who so ready to take them kindly as Master Wingate?'

'Mistress Lilias,' replied the butler, with an

air which was intended to close the debate, 'there are reasons for all things. If I received Father Ambrose debonairly, and suffered him to steal a word now and then with this same Roland Græme, it was not that I cared a brass bodle for his benison or malison either, but only because I respected my master's blood. And who can answer, if Mary come in again, whether he may not be as stout a tree to lean to as ever his brother hath proved to us? For down goes the Earl of Murray when the Queen comes by her own again; and good is his luck if he can keep the head on his own shoulders. And down goes our knight, with the earl, his patron; and who so like to mount into his empty saddle as this same Father Ambrose? The Pope of Rome can soon dispense with his vows, and then we should have Sir Edward the soldier, instead of Ambrose the priest.'

Anger and astonishment kept Mistress Lilias silent, while her old friend, in his self-complacent manner, was making known to her his political speculations. At length her resentment found utterance in words of great ire and scorn. 'What, Master Wingate! have you eaten my mistress's bread, to say nothing of my master's, so many years, that you could live to think of her being dispossessed of her own Castle of Avenel by a wretched monk, who is not a drop's blood to her in the way of relation? I, that am but a woman, would try first whether my rock or his cowl was the better metal. Shame on you, Master Wingate! If I had not held you as so old an acquaintance, this should have gone to my lady's ears, though I had been called pick-thank and tale-pyet for my pains, as when I told of Roland Græme shooting the wild swan.'

Master Wingate was somewhat dismayed at perceiving that the details which he had given of his far-sighted political views had produced on his hearer rather suspicion of his fidelity than admiration of his wisdom, and endeavoured, as hastily as possible, to apologize and to explain, although internally extremely offended at the unreasonable view, as he deemed it, which it had pleased Mistress Lilias Bradbourne to take of his expressions; and mentally convinced that her disapprobation of his sentiments arose solely out of the consideration that, though Father Ambrose, supposing him to become the master of the castle, would certainly require the services of a steward, yet those of a waiting-woman would, in the supposed circumstances, be altogether superfluous.

After his explanation had been received as explanations usually are, the two friends separated; Lilias to attend the silver whistle which called her to her mistress's chamber, and the sapient major-domo to the duties of his own department. They parted with less than their usual degree of reverence and regard; for the steward felt that his worldly wisdom was rebuked by the more disinterested attachment of the waiting-woman, and Mistress Lilias Bradbourne was compelled to consider her old friend as something little better than a time-server.

CHAPTER VII.

> When I hae a saxpence under my thumb,
> Then I get credit in ilka town;
> But when I am puir, they bid me gae by—
> Oh, poverty parts good company!
>
> OLD SONG.

WHILE the departure of the page afforded subject for the conversation which we have detailed in our last chapter, the late favourite was far advanced on his solitary journey, without well knowing what was its object, or what was likely to be its end. He had rowed the skiff in which he left the castle to the side of the lake most distant from the village, with the desire of escaping from the notice of the inhabitants. His pride whispered that he would be, in his discarded state, only the subject of their wonder and compassion; and his generosity told him that any mark of sympathy which his situation should excite, might be unfavourably reported at the castle. A trifling incident convinced him he had little to fear for his friends on the latter score. He was met by a young man some years older than himself, who had on former occasions been but too happy to be permitted to share in his sports in the subordinate character of his assistant. Ralph Fisher approached to greet him, with all the alacrity of an humble friend.

'What, Master Roland, abroad on this side, and without either hawk or hound?'

'Hawk or hound,' said Roland, 'I will never perhaps hollo to again. I have been dismissed—that is, I have left the castle.'

Ralph was surprised. 'What! you are to pass into the knight's service, and take the black-jack and the lance?'

'Indeed,' replied Roland Græme, 'I am not—I am now leaving the service of Avenel for ever.'

'And whither are you going, then?' said the young peasant.

'Nay, that is a question which it craves time to answer—I have that matter to determine yet,' replied the disgraced favourite.

'Nay, nay,' said Ralph, 'I warrant you it is the same to you which way you go—my lady would not dismiss you till she had put some lining into the pouches of your doublet.'

'Sordid slave!' said Roland Græme, 'dost thou think I would have accepted a boon from one who was giving me over a prey to detraction and to ruin, at the instigation of a canting priest and a meddling serving-woman? The bread that I had bought with such an alms would have choked me at the first mouthful.'

Ralph looked at his quondam friend with an air of wonder not unmixed with contempt. 'Well,' he said at length, 'no occasion for passion—each man knows his own stomach best—but, were I on a black moor at this time of day, not knowing whither I was going, I should be glad to have a broad piece or two in my pouch, come by them as I could.—But perhaps you will go with me to my father's—that is, for a night, for to-morrow we expect my uncle Menelaus and all his folk; but, as I said, for one night'——

The cold-blooded limitation of the offered shelter to one night only, and that tendered

most unwillingly, offended the pride of the discarded favourite.

'I would rather sleep on the fresh heather, as I have done many a night on less occasion,' said Roland Græme, 'than in the smoky garret of your father, that smells of peat-smoke and usquebaugh like a Highlander's plaid.'

'You may choose, my master, if you are so nice,' replied Ralph Fisher; 'you may be glad to smell a peat-fire, and usquebaugh too, if you journey long in the fashion you propose. You might have said God-a-mercy for your proffer, though—it is not every one will put themselves in the way of ill-will by harbouring a discarded serving-man.'

'Ralph,' said Roland Græme, 'I would pray you to remember that I have switched you before now, and this is the same riding-wand which you have tasted.'

Ralph, who was a thickset, clownish figure, arrived at his full strength, and conscious of the most complete personal superiority, laughed contemptuously at the threats of the slight-made stripling.

'It may be the same wand,' he said, 'but not the same hand; and that is as good rhyme as if it were in a ballad. Look you, my lady's page that was, when your switch was up, it was no fear of you, but of your betters, that kept mine down—and I wot not what hinders me from clearing old scores with this hazel rung, and showing you it was your lady's livery-coat which I spared, and not your flesh and blood, Master Roland.'

In the midst of his rage, Roland Græme was just wise enough to see that, by continuing this altercation, he would subject himself to very rude treatment from the boor, who was so much older and stronger than himself; and while his antagonist, with a sort of jeering laugh of defiance, seemed to provoke the contest, he felt the full bitterness of his own degraded condition, and burst into a passion of tears, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal with both his hands.

Even the rough churl was moved with the distress of his quondam companion.

'Nay, Master Roland,' he said, 'I did but as 'twere jest with thee—I would not harm thee, man, were it but for old acquaintance' sake. But ever look to a man's inches ere you talk of switching—why, thine arm, man, is but like a spindle compared to mine.—But hark, I hear old Adam Woodcock hollowing to his hawk.—Come along, man, we will have a merry afternoon, and go jollily to my father's, in spite of the peat-smoke and usquebaugh to boot. Maybe we may put you into some honest way of winning your bread, though it's hard to come by in these broken times.'

The unfortunate page made no answer, nor did he withdraw his hands from his face, and Fisher continued in what he imagined a suitable tone of comfort:

'Why, man, when you were my lady's minion, men held you proud, and some thought you a Papist, and I wot not what; and so, now that you have no one to bear you out, you must be companionable and hearty, and wait on the minister's examinations, and put these things out of folk's head; and if he says you are in fault, you must jouk your head to the stream; and if a gentleman, or a gentleman's gentleman, give you a rough word or a light blow, you must only say, Thank you for dusting my doublet, or the like, as I have done by you.—But hark to Woodcock's whistle again. Come, and I will teach you all the trick on't as we go on.'

'I thank you,' said Roland Græme, endeavouring to assume an air of indifference and of superiority; 'but I have another path before me, and, were it otherwise, I could not tread in yours.'

'Very true, Master Roland,' replied the clown; 'and every man knows his own matters best, and so I will not keep you from the path, as you say. Give us a grip of your hand, man, for auld lang syne.—What! not clap palms ere we part!—well, so be it—a wilful man will have his way; and so farewell, and the blessing of the morning to you.'

'Good-morrow—good-morrow,' said Roland hastily; and the clown walked lightly off, whistling as he went, and glad, apparently, to be rid of an acquaintance whose claims might be troublesome, and who had no longer the means to be serviceable to him.

Roland Græme compelled himself to walk on while they were within sight of each other, that his former intimate might not augur any vacillation of purpose, or uncertainty of object, from his remaining on the same spot; but the effort was a painful one. He seemed stunned as it were, and giddy; the earth on which he stood felt as if unsound, and quaking under his feet like the surface of a bog; and he had once or twice nearly fallen, though the path he trod was of firm greensward. He kept resolutely moving forward, in spite of the internal agitation to which these symptoms belonged, until the distant form of his acquaintance disappeared behind the slope of a hill, when his heart failed at once; and, sitting down on the turf, remote from human ken, he gave way to the natural expressions of wounded pride, grief, and fear, and wept with unrestrained profusion and unqualified bitterness.

When the first violent paroxysm of his feelings had subsided, the deserted and friendless youth felt that mental relief which usually follows such discharges of sorrow. The tears continued to chase each other down his cheeks, but they were no longer accompanied by the same sense of desolation; an afflicting yet milder sentiment was awakened in his mind, by the recollection of his benefactress, of the unwearied kindness which had attached her to him in spite of many acts of provoking petulance, now recollected as offences of a deep dye, which had protected him against the machinations of others, as well as against the consequences of his own folly, and would have continued to do so, had not the excess of his presumption compelled her to withdraw her protection.

'Whatever indignity I have borne,' he said, 'has been the just reward of my own ingratitude. And have I done well to accept the hospitality, the more than maternal kindness, of my protectress, yet to detain from her the knowledge of my religion?—but she shall know that a

Catholic has as much gratitude as a Puritan—that I have been thoughtless, but not wicked—that in my wildest moments I have loved, respected, and honoured her—and that the orphan boy might indeed be heedless, but was never ungrateful!'

He turned as these thoughts passed through his mind, and began hastily to retread his footsteps towards the castle. But he checked the first eagerness of his repentant haste, when he reflected on the scorn and contempt with which the family were likely to see the return of the fugitive, humbled, as they must necessarily suppose him, into a supplicant, who requested pardon for his fault, and permission to return to his service. He slackened his pace, but he stood not still.

'I care not,' he resolutely determined; 'let them wink, point, nod, sneer, speak of the conceit which is humbled, of the pride which has had a fall—I care not: it is a penance due to my folly, and I will endure it with patience. But if she also, my benefactress, if she also should think me sordid and weak-spirited enough to beg, not for her pardon alone, but for a renewal of the advantages which I derived from her favour—*her* suspicion of my meanness I cannot—I will not brook.'

He stood still, and his pride, rallying with constitutional obstinacy against his more just feeling, urged that he would incur the scorn of the Lady of Avenel, rather than obtain her favour, by following the course which the first ardour of his repentant feelings had dictated to him.

'If I had but some plausible pretext,' he thought, 'some ostensible reason for my return, some excuse to allege which might show I came not as a degraded supplicant, or a discarded menial, I might go thither—but as I am I cannot—my heart would leap from its place and burst.'

As these thoughts swept through his mind, something passed in the air so near him as to dazzle his eyes, and almost to brush the plume in his cap. He looked up—it was the favourite falcon of Sir Halbert, which, flying around his head, seemed to claim his attention, as that of a well-known friend. Roland extended his arm, and gave the accustomed whoop, and the falcon instantly settled on his wrist, and began to prune itself, glancing at the youth from time to time an acute and brilliant beam of its hazel eye, which seemed to ask, why he caressed it not with his usual fondness.

'Ah, Diamond!' he said, as if the bird understood him, 'thou and I must be strangers henceforward. Many a gallant stoop have I seen thee make, and many a brave heron strike down; but that is all gone and over, and there is no hawking more for me!'

'And why not, Master Roland,' said Adam Woodcock the falconer, who came at that instant from behind a few alder bushes which had concealed him from view, 'why should there be no more hawking for you? Why, man, what e our life without our sports?—thou knowest jolly old song—

'd rather would Allan in dungeon lie,
an live at large where the falcon cannot fly;
And Allan would rather lie in Sexton's pound,
Than live where he follow'd not the merry hawk
and hound.'

The voice of the falconer was hearty and friendly, and the tone in which he half-sung, half-recited, his rude ballad, implied honest frankness and cordiality. But remembrance of their quarrel, and its consequences, embarrassed Roland, and prevented his reply. The falconer saw his hesitation, and guessed the cause.

'What now,' said he, 'Master Roland? do you, who are half an Englishman, think that I, who am a whole one, would keep up anger against you, and you in distress? That were like some of the Scots (my master's reverence always excepted), who can be fair and false, and wait their time, and keep their mind, as they say, to themselves, and touch pot and flagon with you, and hunt and hawk with you, and, after all, when time serves, pay off some old feud with the point of the dagger. Canny Yorkshire has no memory for such old sores. Why, man, an you had hit me a rough blow, maybe I would rather have taken it from you than a rough word from another; for you have a good notion of falconry, though you stand up for washing the meat for the eyases. So give us your hand, man, and bear no malice.'

Roland, though he felt his proud blood rebel at the familiarity of honest Adam's address, could not resist its downright frankness. Covering his face with the one hand, he held out the other to the falconer, and returned with readiness his friendly grasp.

'Why, this is hearty now,' said Woodcock; 'I always said you had a kind heart, though you have a spice of the devil in your disposition, that is certain. I came this way with the falcon on purpose to find you, and yon half-bred lubbard told me which way you took flight. You ever thought too much of that kestrel-kite, Master Roland, and he knows nought of sport after all, but what he caught from you. I saw how it had been betwixt you, and I sent him out of my company with a wanion—I would rather have a rifler on my perch than a false knave at my elbow.—And now, Master Roland, tell me what way wing ye?'

'That is as God pleases,' replied the page, with a sigh which he could not suppress.

'Nay, man, never droop a feather for being cast off,' said the falconer; 'who knows but you may soar the better and fairer flight for all this yet?—Look at Diamond there, 'tis a noble bird, and shows gallantly with his hood, and bells, and jesses; but there is many a wild falcon in Norway that would not change properties with him—And that is what I would say of you. You are no longer my lady's page, and you will not clothe so fair, or feed so well, or sleep so soft, or show so gallant—What of all that? if you are not her page, you are your own man, and may go where you will, without minding whoop or whistle. The worst is the loss of the sport, but who knows what you may come to? They say that Sir Halbert himself, I speak with reverence, was once glad to be the Abbot's forester, and now he has hounds and hawks of his own, and Adam Woodcock for a falconer to the boot.'

'You are right, and say well, Adam,' answered the youth, the blood mantling in his cheeks; 'the falcon will soar higher without his bells than with them, though the bells be made of silver.'

'That is cheerily spoken,' replied the falconer; 'and whither now?'

'I thought of going to the Abbey of Kennaquhair,' answered Roland Græme, 'to ask the counsel of Father Ambrose.'

'And joy go with you,' said the falconer, 'though it is likely you may find the old monks in some sorrow; they say the commons are threatening to turn them out of their cells, and make a devil's mass of it in the old church, thinking they have forborne that sport too long; and troth I am clear of the same opinion.'

'Then will Father Ambrose be the better of having a friend beside him!' said the page manfully.

'Ay, but, my young fearnought,' replied the falconer, 'the friend will scarce be the better of being beside Father Ambrose—he may come by the redder's lick, and that is ever the worst of the battle.'

'I care not for that,' said the page, 'the dread of a lick should not hold me back; but I fear I may bring trouble between the brothers by visiting Father Ambrose. I will tarry to-night at Saint Cuthbert's cell, where the old priest will give me a night's shelter; and I will send to Father Ambrose to ask his advice before I go down to the convent.'

'By Our Lady,' said the falconer, 'and that is a likely plan—and now,' he continued, exchanging his frankness of manner for a sort of awkward embarrassment, as if he had somewhat to say that he had no ready means to bring out—'and now, you wot well that I wear a pouch for my hawk's meat,* and so forth; but wot you what it is lined with, Master Roland?'

'With leather, to be sure,' replied Roland, somewhat surprised at the hesitation with which Adam Woodcock asked a question apparently so simple.

'With leather, lad?' said Woodcock; 'ay, and with silver to the boot of that. See here,' he said, showing a secret slit in the lining of his bag of office—'here they are, thirty good Harry groats as ever were struck in bluff old Hal's time, and ten of them are right heartily at your service; and now the murder is out.'

Roland's first idea was to refuse his assistance; but he recollected the vows of humility which he had just taken upon him, and it occurred that this was the opportunity to put his new-formed resolution to the test. Assuming a strong command of himself, he answered Adam Woodcock with as much frankness as his nature permitted him to wear, in doing what was so contrary to his inclinations, that he accepted thankfully of his kind offer, while, to soothe his own reviving pride, he could not help adding, 'he hoped soon to requite the obligation.'

'That as you list—that as you list, young man,' said the falconer, with glee, counting out and delivering to his young friend the supply he had so generously offered, and then adding, with great cheerfulness,—'Now you may go through the world; for he that can back a horse, wind a horn, hollo a greyhound, fly a hawk, and play at sword and buckler, with a whole pair of shoes, a green jacket, and ten lily-white groats in his pouch, may bid Father Care hang himself in his own jesses. Farewell, and God be with you!'

So saying, and as if desirous to avoid the thanks of his companion, he turned hastily round, and left Roland Græme to pursue his journey alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

The sacred tapers' lights are gone,
Grey moss has clad the altar stone,
The holy image is o'erthrown,
The bell has ceased to toll.
The long ribb'd aisles are burst and shrunk,
The holy shrines to ruin sunk,
Departed is the pious monk,
God's blessing on his soul! REDIVIVA.

THE cell of Saint Cuthbert, as it was called, marked, or was supposed to mark, one of those resting-places which that venerable saint was pleased to assign to his monks, when his convent, being driven from Lindisfern by the Danes, became a peripatetic society of religionists, and, bearing their patron's body on their shoulders, transported him from place to place through Scotland and the borders of England, until he was pleased at length to spare them the pain of carrying him farther, and to choose his ultimate place of rest in the lordly towers of Durham. The odour of his sanctity remained behind him at each place where he had granted the monks a transient respite from their labours; and proud were those who could assign, as his temporary resting-place, any spot within their vicinity. There were few cells more celebrated and honoured than that of Saint Cuthbert, to which Roland Græme now bent his way, situated considerably to the north-west of the great Abbey of Kennaquhair, on which it was dependent. In the neighbourhood were some of those recommendations which weighed with the experienced priesthood of Rome, in choosing their sites for places of religion.

There was a well, possessed of some medicinal qualities, which, of course, claimed the saint for its guardian and patron, and occasionally produced some advantage to the recluse who inhabited his cell, since none could reasonably expect to benefit by the fountain who did not extend their bounty to the saint's chaplain. A few roods of fertile land afforded the monk his plot of garden-ground; an eminence well clothed with trees rose behind the cell, and sheltered it from the north and the east, while the front, opening to the south-west, looked up a wild but pleasant valley, down which wandered a lively brook, which battled with every stone that interrupted its passage.

The cell itself was rather plainly than rudely constructed—a low Gothic building with tw[illegible] small apartments, one of which served the pri[illegible] for his dwelling-place, the other for his cha[illegible] As there were few of the secular clergy who [illegible] venture to [illegible] so near the Border, the as[illegible] ance of this monk in spiritual affairs had not

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* This same bag, like everything belonging to falconry, was esteemed an honourable distinction, and worn often by the nobility and gentry. One of the Somervilles of Cambethan was called *Sir John with the red bag*, because it was his wont to wear his hawking pouch covered with satin of that colour.

been useless to the community, while the Catholic religion retained the ascendency; as he could marry, christen, and administer the other sacraments of the Roman Church. Of late, however, as the Protestant doctrines gained ground, he had found it convenient to live in close retirement, and to avoid, as much as possible, drawing upon himself observation or animadversion. The appearance of his habitation, however, when Roland Græme came before it in the close of the evening, plainly showed that his caution had been finally ineffectual.

The page's first movement was to knock at the door, when he observed, to his surprise, that it was open, not from being left unlatched, but because, beat off its upper hinge, it was only fastened to the door-post by the lower, and could therefore no longer perform its functions. Somewhat alarmed at this, and receiving no answer when he knocked and called, Roland began to look more at leisure upon the exterior of the little dwelling before he ventured to enter it. The flowers, which had been trained with care against the walls, seemed to have been recently torn down, and trailed their dishonoured garlands on the earth; the latticed window was broken and dashed in. The garden, which the monk had maintained by his constant labour in the highest order and beauty, bore marks of having been lately trod down and destroyed by the hoofs of animals and the feet of men.

The sainted spring had not escaped. It was wont to rise beneath a canopy of ribbed arches, with which the devotion of elder times had secured and protected its healing waters. These arches were now almost entirely demolished, and the stones of which they were built were tumbled into the well, as if for the purpose of choking up and destroying the fountain, which, as it had shared in other days the honour of the saint, was, in the present, doomed to partake his unpopularity. Part of the roof had been pulled down from the house itself, and an attempt had been made with crows and levers upon one of the angles, by which several large corner-stones had been forced out of their place; but the solidity of ancient mason-work had proved too great for the time or patience of the assailants, and they had relinquished their task of destruction. Such dilapidated buildings, after the lapse of years, during which nature has gradually covered the effects of violence with creeping plants and with weather-stains, exhibit, amid their decay, a melancholy beauty. But when the visible effects of violence appear raw and recent, there is no feeling to mitigate the sense of devastation with which they impress the spectators; and such was now the scene on which the youthful page gazed, with the painful feelings it was qualified to excite.

When his first momentary surprise was over, Roland Græme was at no loss to conjecture the cause of these ravages. The destruction of the Popish edifices did not take place at once throughout Scotland, but at different times, and according to the spirit which actuated the reformed clergy, some of whom instigated their hearers to these acts of demolition, and others, with better taste and feeling, endeavoured to protect the ancient shrines, while they desired to see them purified from the objects which had attracted idolatrous devotion. From time to time, therefore, the populace of the Scottish towns and villages, when instigated either by their own feelings of abhorrence for Popish superstition, or by the doctrines of the most zealous preachers, resumed the work of destruction, and exercised it upon some sequestered church, chapel, or cell, which had escaped the first burst of their indignation against the religion of Rome. In many places, the vices of the Catholic clergy, arising out of the wealth and the corruption of that tremendous hierarchy, furnished too good an apology for wreaking vengeance upon the splendid edifices which they inhabited; and of this an old Scottish historian gives a remarkable instance.

'Why mourn ye,' said an aged matron, seeing the discontent of some of the citizens, while a stately convent was burnt by the multitude,—'why mourn ye for its destruction? If you knew half the flagitious wickedness which has been perpetrated within that house, you would rather bless the divine judgment, which permits not even the senseless walls that screened such profligacy any longer to cumber Christian ground.'

But although, in many instances, the destruction of the Roman Catholic buildings [illegible]
in the matron's way of judging [illegible]
and in others an act [illegible]
that the hu[illegible]
ancient pie[illegible]
poor country [illegible]
chance of their being replaced, was both [illegible]
mischievous, and barbarous.

In the present instance, the unpretendi[illegible]
quiet seclusion of the monk [illegible]
had hitherto saved him from the [illegible]
but it would seem ruin had no[illegible]
reached him. Anxious to discove[illegible]
at least escaped personal harm, Rola[illegible]
entered the half-ruined cell.

The interior of the bu[illegible]
which fully justified the [illegible]
from its external injuries. Th[illegible]
of the solitary's hut were brok[illegible]
scattered on the floor, where [illegible]
fire had been made with some of [illegible]
to destroy the rest of his proper[illegible]
sume, in particular, the rude [illegible]
Cuthbert, in his episco[illegible]
the hearth like Dagon [illegible]
the axe and scorched with the [illegible]
partially destroyed. In the [illegible]
which served as a chapel, the [illegible]
thrown, and the four huge sto[illegible]
had been once [illegible]posed lay [illegible]
the floor. The large stone cru[illegible]
pied the niche behind the altar, [illegible]
supplicant while he paid his dev[illegible]
been pulled down and dashed by [illegible]
into three fragments. There [illegible]
sledge-hammers on each of these [illegible]
had been saved from utter dem[illegible]
size and strength of the remain[illegible]
which, though much injured, ret[illegible]
of the original sculpture to show what it had been intended to represent.*

Roland Græme, secretly nursed in the tenets

* Note B. Cell of Saint Cuthbert.

of Rome, saw with horror the profanation of the most sacred emblem, according to his creed, of our holy religion.

'It is the badge of our redemption,' he said, 'which the felons have dared to violate—would to God my weak strength were able to replace it—my humble strength to atone for the sacrilege!'

He stooped to the task he first meditated, and with a sudden, and to himself almost an incre lible exertion of power, he lifted up the one extremity of the lower shaft of the cross, and rested it upon the edge of the large stone which served for its pedestal. Encouraged by this success, he applied his force to the other extremity, and, to his own astonishment, succeeded so far as to erect the lower end of the limb into the socket, out of which it had been forced, and to place this fragment of the image upright.

..le he was employed in this labour, or her at the very moment when he had accomp..hed the elevation of the fragment, a voice, d..hrilling and well-known accents, spoke be... him these words :—'Well done, thou good f...aithful servant! Thus would I again meet b..hild of my love—the hope of my aged nig...

prie..

send t..

I go ..d turned round in astonishment, and ..p..commanding form of Magdalen Græme is a ..side him. She was arrayed in a sort of chang..bit, in form like that worn by penitents awkwar..e countri..but black in colour, and to say..ing as near to a pilgrim's cloak as it —'an.. to wear, in a country where the sus-for m..f Catholic devotion in many places en-what ..d the safety of those who were suspected 'Wi..hment to the ancient faith. Roland somew..rew himself at her feet. She raised Adam W..ed him, with affection, indeed, but simple. ..ed with gravity which amounted 'With lea..ness.

and with silver to ..,' she said, 'the bird in he said, showing .. as a youth, thou hast his bag of off.. ..mongst heretics—thou hast Harry groats as ..d mine own amongst thine Hal's time, and ..hen I parted from you—I who at your servic..en shed tears, less for thy death Roland's fir..ritual danger—I dared not even but he recolle..e a last farewell—my grief, my he had just taken ..aved me to these heretics. that this was the opp.. ..ful—down, down on formed resoluti..e holy sign, which evil men strong command ..me; down, and praise saints Woodcock with ..grace they have done thee, in permitted him ..rom the leprous plague which contrary to his ..use in wh.. ..u wert nur-thankfully of hi..

own reviving ..r,—so I must ever call you,' he hoped soon, ..if I am returned such as thou

'That as yo.. thou must thank the care of man,' said the ..r Ambrose, whose instructions and delivering ..arly precepts, and ..aught me at had so genero..ful and to be silent.'

great cheerful..ed for it!' said she, 'blessed in .. the field, in the pulpit and at .. ..the saints rain blessings on him!—they are just, and employ his pious care to counteract the evils which his detested brother works against the realm and the Church,—but he knew not of thy lineage?'

'I could not myself tell him that,' answered Roland. 'I knew but darkly from your words that Sir Halbert Glendinning holds mine inheritance, and that I am of blood as noble as runs in the veins of any Scottish baron—these are things not to be forgotten, but for the explanation I must now look to you.'

'And when time suits, thou shalt not look for it in vain. But men say, my son, that thou art bold and sudden; and those who bear such tempers are not lightly to be trusted with what will strongly move them.'

'Say rather, my mother,' returned Roland Græme, 'that I am laggard and cold-blooded—what patience or endurance can you require of which *he* is not capable, who for years has heard his religion ridiculed and insulted, yet failed to plunge his dagger into the blasphemer's bosom?'

'Be contented, my child,' replied Magdalen Græme; 'the time, which then and even now demands patience, will soon ripen to that of effort and action—great events are on the wing, and thou—thou shalt have thy share in advancing them. Thou hast relinquished the service of the Lady of Avenel?'

'I have been dismissed from it, my mother—I have lived to be dismissed, as if I were the meanest of the train.'

'It is the better, my child,' replied she; 'thy mind will be the more hardened to undertake that which must be performed.'

'Let it be nothing, then, against the Lady of Avenel,' said the page, 'as thy look and words seem to imply. I have eaten her bread—I have experienced her favour—I will neither injure nor betray her.'

'Of that hereafter, my son,' said she; 'but learn this, that it is not for thee to capitulate in thy duty, and to say this will I do, and that will I leave undone—No, Roland! God and man will no longer abide the wickedness of this generation. Seest thou these fragments—knowest thou what they represent?—and canst thou think it is for thee to make distinctions amongst a race so accursed by Heaven, that they renounce, violate, blaspheme, and destroy, whatsoever we are commanded to believe in, whatsoever we are commanded to reverence?'

As she spoke, she bent her head towards the broken image, with a countenance in which strong resentment and zeal were mingled with an expression of ecstatic devotion; she raised her left hand aloft as in the act of making a vow, and thus proceeded:—'Bear witness for me, blessed symbol of our salvation, bear witness, holy saint, within whose violated temple we stand, that as it is not for vengeance of my own that my hate pursues these people, so neither, for any favour or earthly affection towards any amongst them, will I withdraw my hand from the plough when it shall pass through the devoted furrow! Bear witness, holy saint, once thyself a wanderer and fugitive as we are now—bear witness, Mother of Mercy, Queen of Heave.. bear witness, saints and angels!'

In this high strain of enthusiasm, she stood,

* An expression used by Sir Ralph Percy, slain in the battle of Hedgely Moor in 1464, when dying, to express his having preserved unstained his fidelity to the House of Lancaster.

raising her eyes through the fractured roof of the vault, to the stars which now began to twinkle through the pale twilight, while the long grey tresses which hung down over her shoulders waved in the night-breeze, which the chasm and fractured windows admitted freely.

Roland Græme was too much awed by early habits, as well as by the mysterious import of her words, to ask for further explanation of the purpose she obscurely hinted at. Nor did she further press him on the subject; for, having concluded her prayer or obtestation, by clasping her hands together with solemnity, and then signing herself with the cross, she again addressed her grandson, in a tone more adapted to the ordinary business of life.

'Thou must hence,' she said, 'Roland, thou must hence, but not till morning—And now, how wilt thou shift for thy night's quarters?—thou hast been more softly bred than when we were companions in the misty hills of Cumberland and Liddesdale.'

'I have at least preserved, my good mother, the habits which I then learned—can lie hard, feed sparingly, and think it no hardship. Since I was a wanderer with thee on the hills, I have been a hunter, and fisher, and fowler, and each of these is accustomed to sleep freely in a worse shelter than sacrilege has left us here.'

'Than sacrilege has left us here!' said the matron, repeating his words, and pausing on them. 'Most true, my son; and God's faithful children are now worst sheltered, when they lodge in God's own house and the demesne of his blessed saints. We shall sleep cold here, under the night-wind, which whistles through the breaches which heresy has made. They shall lie warmer who made them—ay, and through a long hereafter.'

Notwithstanding the wild and singular expression of this female, she appeared to retain towards Roland Græme, in a strong degree, that affectionate and sedulous love which women bear to their nurslings, and the children dependent on their care. It seemed as if she would not permit him to do aught for himself which in former days her attention had been used to do for him, and that she considered the tall stripling before her as being equally dependent on her careful attention as when he was the orphan child, who had owed all to her affectionate solicitude.

'What hast thou to eat now?' she said, as, leaving the chapel, they went into the deserted habitation of the priest; 'or what means of kindling a fire, to defend thee from this raw and inclement air? Poor child! thou hast made slight provision for a long journey; nor hast thou skill to help thyself by wit, when means are scanty. But Our Lady has placed by thy side one to whom want, in all its forms, is as familiar as plenty and splendour have formerly been. And with want, Roland, come the arts of which she is the inventor.'

With an active and officious diligence, which strangely contrasted with her late abstracted and high tone of Catholic devotion, she set about her domestic arrangements for the evening. A pouch, which was hidden under her garment, produced a flint and steel, and from the scattered fragments around (those pertaining to the image of Saint Cuthbert scrupulously excepted) she obtained splinters sufficient to raise a sparkling and cheerful fire on the hearth of the deserted cell.

'And now,' she said, 'for needful food.'

'Think not of it, mother,' said Roland, 'unless you yourself feel hunger. It is a little thing for me to endure a night's abstinence, and a small atonement for the necessary transgression of the rules of the Church upon which I was compelled during my stay in the castle.'

'Hunger for myself!' answered the matron—'Know, youth, that a mother knows not hunger till that of her child is satisfied.' And with affectionate inconsistency, totally different from her usual manner, she added, 'Roland, you must not fast; you have dispensation; you are young, and to youth food and sleep are necessaries not to be dispensed with. Husband your strength, my child—your sovereign, your religion, your country, require it. Let age macerate by fast and vigil a body which can only suffer; let youth, in these active times, nourish the limbs and the strength which action requires.'

While she thus spoke, the scrip, which had produced the means of striking fire, furnished provision for a meal; of which she herself scarce partook, but anxiously watched her charge, taking a pleasure, resembling that of an epicure, in each morsel which he swallowed with a youthful appetite which abstinence had rendered unusually sharp. Roland readily obeyed her recommendations, and ate the food which she so affectionately and earnestly placed before him. But she shook her head when invited by him in return to partake of the refreshment her own cares had furnished; and when his solicitude [illegible] more pressing, she refused him in a loftier tone of rejection.

'Young man,' she said, 'you know not to whom or of what you speak. They to whom Heaven declares its purpose must merit its communication by mortifying the senses; they have that within which requires not the superfluity of earthly nutriment, which is necessary to those who are without the sphere of the Vision. To them the watch spent in prayer is a refreshing slumber, and the sense of doing the will of Heaven is a richer banquet than the tables of monarchs can spread before them!—But do thou sleep soft, my son,' she said, relapsing from the tone of fanaticism into that of maternal affection and tenderness; 'do thou sleep sound while life is but young with thee, and the cares of the day can be drowned in the slumbers of the evening. Different is thy duty and mine, and as different the means by which we must qualify and strengthen ourselves to perform [illegible]. From thee is demanded strength of body—from me strength of soul.'

While she thus spoke, she prepared with ready address a pallet couch, composed partly of the dried leaves which had once furnished a bed to the solitary, and the guests who occasionally received his hospitality, and which, neglected by the destroyers of his humble cell, had remained little disturbed in the corner allotted for them. To these her care added some of the vestures which lay torn and scattered on the floor. With a zealous hand she selected all such as appeared to have made any part of the sacerdotal vestments, laying them aside as sacred from ordinary purposes, and with the rest she made, with

dexterous promptness, such a bed as a weary man might willingly stretch himself on; and during the time she was preparing it, rejected, even with acrimony, any attempt which the youth made to assist her, or any entreaty which he urged, that she would accept of the place of rest for her own use. 'Sleep thou,' said she, 'Roland Græme, sleep thou—the persecuted, the disinherited orphan—the son of an ill-fated mother—sleep thou! I go to pray in the chapel beside thee.'

Her manner was too enthusiastically earnest, too obstinately firm, to permit Roland Græme to dispute her will any further. Yet he felt some shame in giving way to it. It seemed as if she had forgotten the years that had passed away since their parting; and expected to meet, in the tall, indulged, and wilful youth, whom she had recovered, the passive obedience of the child whom she had left in the Castle of Avenel. This did not fail to hurt her grandson's characteristic and constitutional pride. He obeyed, indeed, awed into submission by the sudden recurrence of former subordination, and by feelings of affection and gratitude. Still, however, he felt the yoke.

'Have I relinquished the hawk and the hound,' he said, 'to become the pupil of her pleasure, as if I were still a child?—I, whom even my envious mates allowed to be superior in those exercises which they took most pains to acquire, and which came to me naturally, as if a knowledge of them [illegible] been my [illegible]right? This may not, and must not be. I will be no reclaimed sparrow-hawk, who is carried hooded on a woman's wrist, and has his quarry only shown to him when his eyes are [illegible] for his flight. I will know her purpose e[illegible]proposed to me to aid it.'

These and other thoughts streamed through the mind of Roland Græme; and although wearied with the fatigues of the day, it was long ere he could compose himself to rest.

CHAPTER IX.

> Kneel with me—swear it—'tis not in words I trust,
> Save when they're fenced with an appeal to Heaven.
>
> OLD PLAY.

AFTER passing the night in that sound sleep for which agitation and fatigue had prepared him, Roland was awakened by the fresh morning air, and by the beams of the rising sun. His first feeling was that of surprise: for, instead of looking forth from a turret window on the waters of the lake of Avenel, w[illegible] his [illegible] an unlatched aperture [illegible] him the view of the demolished garden of the banished anchorite. He sat up on his couch of leaves, and arranged in his memory, not without wonder, the singular events of the preceding day, which appeared the more surprising the more he considered them. He had lost the protectress of his youth, and, in the same day, he had recovered the guide and guardian of his childhood. The former deprivation he felt ought to be matter of unceasing regret, and it seemed as if the latter could hardly be the subject of unmixed self-congratulation. He remembered this person, who had stood to him in the relation of a mother, as equally affectionate in her attention and absolute in her authority. A singular mixture of love and fear attended upon his early remembrances as they were connected with her; and the fear that she might desire to resume the same absolute control over his motions—a fear which her conduct of yesterday did not tend much to dissipate—weighed heavily against the joy of this second meeting.

'She cannot mean,' said his rising pride, 'to lead and direct me as a pupil, when I am at the age of judging of my own actions?—this she cannot mean, or, meaning it, will feel herself strangely deceived.'

A sense of gratitude towards the person against whom his heart thus rebelled, checked his course of feeling. He resisted the thoughts which involuntarily arose in his mind, as he would have resisted an actual instigation of the foul fiend; and, to aid him in his struggle, he felt for his beads. But, in his hasty departure from the Castle of Avenel, he had forgotten and left them behind him.

'This is yet worse,' he said; 'but two things I learned of her under the most deadly charge of secrecy—to tell my beads, and to conceal that I did so; and I have kept my word till now; and when she shall ask me for the rosary, I must say I have forgotten it! Do I deserve she should believe me when I say I have kept the secret of my faith, when I set so light by its symbol?'

He paced the floor in anxious agitation. In fact, his attachment to his faith was of a nature very different from that which animated the enthusiastic matron, but which, notwithstanding, it would have been his last thought to relinquish.

The early charges impressed on him by his grandmother had been instilled into a mind and memory of a character peculiarly tenacious. Child as he was, he was proud of the confidence reposed in his discretion, and resolved to show that it had not been rashly entrusted to him. At the same time, his resolution was no more than that of a child, and must necessarily have gradually faded away under the operation both of precept and example, during his residence at the Castle of Avenel, but for the exhortations of Father Ambrose, who, in his lay estate, had been called Edward Glendinning. This zealous monk had been apprised, by an unsigned letter placed in his hand by a pilgrim, that a child educated in the Catholic faith was now in the Castle of Avenel, perilously situated (so was the scroll expressed), as ever the three children who were cast into the fiery furnace of persecution. The letter threw upon Father Ambrose the fault, should this solitary lamb, unwillingly left within the demesnes of the prowling wolf, become his final prey. There needed no further exhortation to the monk than the idea that a soul might be endangered, and that a Catholic might become an apostate; and he made his visits more frequent than usual to the Castle of Avenel, lest, through want of the private encouragement and instruction, which he always found some opportunity of dispensing, the Church should lose a proselyte, and, according to the Romish creed, the devil acquire a soul.

Still these interviews were rare; and, though they encouraged the solitary boy to keep his secret and hold fast his religion, they were neither

frequent nor long enough to inspire him with anything beyond a blind attachment to the observances which the priest recommended. He adhered to the forms of his religion rather because he felt it would be dishonourable to change that of his fathers, than from any rational conviction or sincere belief of its mysterious doctrines. It was a principal part of the distinction which, in his own opinion, singled him out from those with whom he lived, and gave him an additional, though an internal and concealed reason, for contemning those of the household who showed an undisguised dislike of him, and for hardening himself against the instructions of the chaplain, Henry Warden.

'The fanatic preacher,' he thought within himself, during some one of the chaplain's frequent discourses against the Church of Rome, 'he little knows whose ears are receiving his profane doctrine, and with what contempt and abhorrence they hear his blasphemies against the holy religion by which kings have been crowned, and for which martyrs have died!'

But in such proud feelings of defiance of heresy, as it was termed, and of its professors, which associated the Catholic religion with a sense of generous independence, and that of the Protestants with the subjugation of his mind and temper to the direction of Master Warden, began and ended the faith of Roland Græme, who, independently of the pride of singularity, sought not to understand, and had no one to expound to him, the peculiarities of the tenets which he professed. His regret, therefore, at missing the rosary which had been conveyed to him through the hands of Father Ambrose, was rather the shame of a soldier who has dropped his cockade or badge of service, than that of a zealous votary who had forgotten a visible symbol of his religion.

His thoughts on the subject, however, were mortifying, and the more so from apprehension that his negligence must reach the ears of his relative. He felt it could be no one but she who had secretly transmitted these beads to Father Ambrose for his use, and that his carelessness was but an indifferent requital of her kindness.

'Nor will she omit to ask me about them,' said he to himself; 'for hers is a zeal which age cannot quell; and if she has not quitted her wont, my answer will not fail to incense her.'

While he thus communed with himself, Magdalen Græme entered the apartment. 'The blessing of the morning on your youthful head, my son,' she said, with a solemnity of expression which thrilled the youth to the heart, so sad and earnest did the benediction flow from her lips, in a tone where devotion was blended with affection. 'And thou hast started thus early from thy couch to catch the first breath of the dawn? But it is not well, my Roland. Enjoy slumber while thou canst; the time is not far behind when the waking eye must be thy portion as well as mine.'

She uttered these words with an affectionate and anxious tone, which showed that, devotional as were the habitual exercises of her mind, the thoughts of her nursling yet bound her to earth with the cords of human affection and passion.

But she abode not long in a mood which she probably regarded as a momentary dereliction of her imaginary high calling.—'Come,' she said, 'youth, up and be doing—It is time that we leave this place.'

'And whither do we go?' said the young man; 'or what is the object of our journey?'

The matron stepped back, and gazed on him with surprise, not unmingled with displeasure.

'To what purpose such a question?' she said; 'is it not enough that I lead the way? Hast thou lived with heretics till thou hast learned to instal the vanity of thine own private judgment in place of due honour and obedience?'

'The time,' thought Roland Græme within himself, 'is already come, when I must establish my freedom, or be a willing thrall for ever—I feel that I must speedily look to it.'

She instantly fulfilled his foreboding, by recurring to the theme by which her thoughts seemed most constantly engrossed, although, when she pleased, no one could so perfectly disguise her religion.

'Thy beads, my son—hast thou told thy beads?'

Roland Græme coloured high; he felt the storm was approaching, but scorned to avert it by a falsehood.

'I have forgotten my rosary,' he said, 'at the Castle of Avenel.'

'Forgotten thy rosary!' she exclaimed; 'false both to religion and to natural duty, hast thou lost what was sent so far, and at such risk, a token of the truest affection, that should have been, every bead of it, as dear to thee as thine eyeballs?'

'I am grieved it should have so chanced, mother,' replied the youth, 'and much did I value the token as coming from you. For what remains, I trust to win gold enough, when I push my way in the world; and till then, beads of black oak, or a rosary of nuts, must serve the turn.'

'Hear him!' said his grandmother; 'young as he is, he hath learned already the lessons of the devil's school! The rosary, consecrated by the Holy Father himself, and sanctified by his blessing, is but a few knobs of gold, whose value may be replaced by the wages of his profane labour, and whose virtue may be supplied by a string of hazel nuts!—This is heresy—So Henry Warden, the wolf who ravages the flock of the Shepherd, hath taught thee to speak and to think.'

'Mother,' said Roland Græme, 'I am no heretic; I believe and I pray according to the rules of our Church—This misfortune I regret, but I [illegible] amend it.'

[illegible] demanded [illegible] 'Thou canst repent it, [illegible] spiritual directress, [illegible]ke, she prepared with ready atone for it by fast[illegible], prayer, [illegible]partly of the instead of looking on me with a countenance as light as if thou hadst lost but a button from thy cap.'

'Mother,' said Roland, 'be appeased; I will remember my fault in the next confession which I have space and opportunity to make, and will do whatever the priest may require of me in atonement. For the heaviest fault I can do no more.—But, mother,' he added, after a moment's pause, 'let me not incur your further displeasure, if I ask whither our journey is bound, and what

is its object. I am no longer a child, but a man, and at my own disposal, with down upon my chin, and a sword by my side—I will go to the end of the world with you to do your pleasure; but I owe it to myself to inquire the purpose and direction of our travels.'

'You owe it to yourself, ungrateful boy?' replied his relative, passion rapidly supplying the colour which age had long chased from her features—'to yourself you owe nothing—you can owe nothing—to me you owe everything—your life when an infant—your support while a child—the means of instruction, and the hopes of honour—and, sooner than thou shouldst abandon the noble cause to which I have devoted thee, would I see thee lie a corpse at my feet!'

Roland was alarmed at the vehement agitation with which she spoke, and which threatened to overpower her aged frame; and he hastened to reply,—'I forget nothing of what I owe to you, my dearest mother—show me how my blood can testify my gratitude, and you shall judge if I spare it. But blindfold obedience has in it as little merit as reason.'

'Saints and angels!' replied Magdalen, and do I hear these words from the child of my hopes, the nursling by whose bed I have kneeled, and for whose weal I have wearied every saint in heaven with prayers? Roland, by obedience only canst thou show thy affection and thy gratitude. What avails it that you might perchance adopt the course I propose to thee, were it to be fully explained? Thou wouldst not then follow my command, but thine own judgment; thou wouldst not do the will of Heaven, communicated through thy best friend, to whom thou owest thine all; but thou wouldst observe the blinded dictates of thine own imperfect reason. Hear me, Roland! a lot calls thee—solicits thee—demands thee—the proudest to which man can be destined, and it uses the voice of thine earliest, thy best, thine only friend. —Wilt thou resist it? Then go thy way—leave me here—my hopes on earth are gone and withered—I will kneel me down before yonder profaned altar, and when the raging heretics return, they shall dye it with the blood of a martyr.'

'But, my dearest mother,' said Roland Græme, whose early recollections of her violence were formidably renewed by these wild expressions of reckless passion, 'I will not forsake you—I will abide with you—worlds shall not force me from your side—I will protect—I will defend you—I will live with you, and die for you!'

[illegible] my son, were worth all these—say [illegible] him the view of [illegible] the banished anchorite. [illegible] replied the youth, 'I of leaves, and [illegible] art; only'——

[illegible] I receive no qualifications of thy promise,' said Magdalen Græme, catching at the word; 'the obedience which I require is absolute: and a blessing on thee, thou darling memory of my beloved child, that thou hast power to make a promise so hard to human pride! Trust me well, that in the design in which thou dost embark, thou hast for thy partners the mighty and the valiant, the power of the Church, and the pride of the noble. Succeed or fail, live or die, thy name shall be among those with whom success or failure is alike glorious, death or life alike desirable. Forward, then, forward! life is short, and our plan is laborious—Angels, saints, and the whole blessed host of heaven, have their eyes even now on this barren and blighted land of Scotland—What say I? on Scotland!—their eye is on *us*, Roland—on the frail woman, on the inexperienced youth, who, amidst the ruins which sacrilege hath made in the holy place, devote themselves to God's cause, and that of their lawful sovereign. Amen, so be it! The blessed eyes of saints and martyrs which see our resolve shall witness the execution; or their ears which hear our vow shall hear our death-groan drawn in the sacred cause!'

While thus speaking, she held Roland Græme firmly with one hand, while she pointed upward with the other, to leave him, as it were, no means of protest against the obtestation to which he was thus made a party. When she had finished her appeal to Heaven, she left him no leisure for further hesitation, or for asking any explanation of her purpose; but, passing with the same ready transition as formerly to the solicitous attentions of an anxious parent, overwhelmed him with questions concerning his residence in the Castle of Avenel, and the qualities and accomplishments he had acquired.

'It is well,' she said, when she had exhausted her inquiries; 'my gay goss-hawk * hath been well trained, and will soar high; but those who bred him will have cause to fear as well as to wonder at his flight.—Let us now,' she said, 'to our morning meal, and care not though it be a scanty one. A few hours' walk will bring us to more friendly quarters.'

They broke their fast, accordingly, on such fragments as remained of their yesterday's provision, and immediately set out on their farther journey. Magdalen Græme led the way, with a firm and active step much beyond her years, and Roland Græme followed, pensive and anxious, and far from satisfied with the state of dependence to which he seemed again to be reduced.

'Am I for ever,' he said to himself, 'to be devoured with the desire of independence and free agency, and yet to be for ever led on by circumstances to follow the will of others?'

CHAPTER X.

She dwelt unnoticed and alone
Beside the springs of Dove;
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

WORDSWORTH.

In the course of their journey the travellers spoke little to each other. Magdalen Græme chanted from time to time in a low voice a part of some one of those beautiful old Latin hymns which belong to the Catholic service, muttered an *ave* or a *credo*, and so passed on, lost in devotional contemplation. The meditations of her grandson were more bent on mundane matters; and many a time, as a moor-fowl arose from the heath and shot along the moor,

* Note C. Goss-hawk.

uttering his bold crow of defiance, he thought of the jolly Adam Woodcock and his trusty goss-hawk; or, as they passed a thicket where the low trees and bushes were intermingled with tall fern, furze, and broom, so as to form a thick and intricate cover, his dreams were of a roebuck and a brace of gaze-hounds. But frequently his mind returned to the benevolent and kind mistress whom he had left behind him offended justly, and unreconciled by any effort of his.

'My step would be lighter,' he thought, 'and so would my heart, could I but have returned to see her for one instant, and to say, Lady, the orphan boy was wild, but not ungrateful!'

Travelling in these divers moods, about the hour of noon they reached a small straggling village, in which, as usual, were seen one or two of those predominating towers or peel-houses, which, for reasons of defence elsewhere detailed, were at that time to be found in every Border hamlet. A brook flowed beside the village, and watered the valley in which it stood. There was also a mansion at the end of the village, and a little way separated from it, much dilapidated and in very bad order, but appearing to have been the abode of persons of some consideration. The situation was agreeable, being an angle formed by the stream, bearing three or four large sycamore trees, which were in full leaf, and served to relieve the dark appearance of the mansion, which was built of a deep red stone. The house itself was a large one, but was now obviously too big for the inmates; several windows were built up, especially those which opened from the lower storey; others were blockaded in a less substantial manner. The court before the door, which had once been defended with a species of low outer wall, now ruinous, was paved, but the stones were completely covered with long grey nettles, thistles, and other weeds, which, shooting up betwixt the flags, had displaced many of them from their level. Even matters demanding more peremptory attention had been left neglected, in a manner which argued sloth or poverty in the extreme. The stream, undermining a part of the bank near an angle of the ruinous wall, had brought it down, with a corner turret, the ruins of which lay in the bed of the river. The current, interrupted by the ruins which it had overthrown, and turned yet nearer to the site of the tower, had greatly enlarged the breach it had made, and was in the process of undermining the ground on which the house itself stood, unless it were speedily protected by sufficient bulwarks.

All this attracted Roland Græme's observation as they approached the dwelling by a winding path, which gave them, at intervals, a view of it from different points.

'If we go to yonder house,' he said to his mother, 'I trust it is but for a short visit. It looks as if two rainy days from the north-west would send the whole into the brook.'

'You see but with the eyes of the body,' said the old woman; 'God will defend his own, though it be forsaken and despised of men. Better to dwell on the sand, under his law, than fly to the rock of human trust.'

As she thus spoke, they entered the court before the old mansion, and Roland could observe that the front of it had formerly been considerably ornamented with carved work, in the same dark-coloured freestone of which it was built. But all these ornaments had been broken down and destroyed, and only the shattered vestiges of niches and entablatures now strewed the place which they had once occupied. The larger entrance in front was walled up, but a little footpath, which, from its appearance, seemed to be rarely trodden, [illegible]

pausing

twixt each knock, until she heard an answering tap from within. At the last knock, the wicket was opened by a pale, thin female, who said, '*Benedicti qui veniunt in nomine Domini.*' They entered, and the portress hastily shut behind them the wicket, and made fast the massive fastenings by which it was secured.

The female led the way through a narrow entrance into a vestibule of some extent, paved with stone, and having benches of the same solid material ranged around. At the upper end was an oriel window, but some of the intervals formed by the stone shafts and mullions were blocked up, so that the apartment was very gloomy.

Here they stopped, and the mistress of the mansion, for such she was, embraced Magdalen Græme, and, greeting her by the title of sister, kissed her with great solemnity on either side of the face.

'The blessing of Our Lady be upon you, my sister,' were her next words; and they left no doubt upon Roland's mind respecting the religion of their hostess, even if he could have suspected his venerable and zealous guide of resting elsewhere than in the habitation of an orthodox Catholic. They spoke together a few words in private, during which he had leisure to remark more particularly the appearance of his grandmother's friend.

Her age might be betwixt fifty and sixty; her looks had a mixture of melancholy and unhappiness that bordered on discontent, and obscured the remains of beauty which age had still left on her features. Her dress was of the plainest and most ordinary description, of a dark colour, and, like Magdalen Græme's, something approaching to a religious habit. Strict neatness and cleanliness of person seemed to intimate that, if poor, she was not reduced to squalid or heart-broken distress, and that she was still sufficiently attached to life to retain a taste for its decencies, if not its elegancies. Her manner, as well as her features and appearance, argued an original condition and education far above the meanness of her present appearance. In short, the whole figure was such as to excite the idea, 'That female must have had a history worth knowing.' While Roland Græme was making this very reflection, the whispers of the two females ceased, and the mistress of the mansion, approaching him, looked on his face and person with much attention, and, as it seemed, some interest.

'This, then,' she said, addressing his relative, 'is the child of thine unhappy daughter, sister Magdalen; and him, the only shoot from your

ancient tree, you are willing to devote to the good cause?'

'Yes, by the rood,' answered Magdalen Græme, in her usual tone of resolved determination, 'to the good cause I devote him, flesh and fell, sinew and limb, body and soul.'

'Thou art a happy woman, sister Magdalen,' answered her companion, 'that, lifted so high above human affection and human feeling, thou canst bind such a victim to the horns of the altar. Had I been called to make such sacrifice—to plunge a youth so young and fair into the plots and bloodthirsty dealings of the time, not the patriarch Abraham, when he led Isaac up the mountain, would have rendered more melancholy obedience.'

She then continued to look at Roland with a mournful aspect of compassion, until the intentness of her gaze occasioned his colour to rise, and he was about to move out of its influence, when he was stopped by his grandmother with one hand, while with the other she divided the hair upon his forehead, which was now crimson with bashfulness, while she added, with a mixture of proud affection and firm resolution—'Ay, look at him well, my sister, for on a fairer face thine eye never rested. I too, when I first saw him, after a long separation, felt as the worldly feel, and was half shaken in my purpose. But no wind can tear a leaf from the withered tree which has long been stripped of its foliage, and no mere human casualty can awaken the mortal feelings which have long slept in the calm of devotion.'

While the old woman thus spoke, her manner gave the lie to her assertions, for the tears rose to her eyes while she added, 'But the fairer and more spotless the victim, is it not, my sister, the more worthy of acceptance?' She seemed glad to escape from the sensations which agitated her, and instantly added, 'He will escape, my sister—there will be a ram caught in the thicket, and the hand of our revolted brethren shall not be on the youthful Joseph. Heaven can defend its own rights, even by means of babes and sucklings, of women and beardless boys.'

'Heaven hath left us,' said the other female; 'for our sins and our fathers' the succours of the blessed saints have abandoned this accursed land. We may win the crown of martyrdom, but not that of earthly triumph. One, too, whose prudence was at this deep crisis so indispensable, has been called to a better world. The Abbot Eustatius is no more.'

'May his soul have mercy!' said Magdalen Græme; 'and may Heaven, too, have mercy upon us, who linger behind in this bloody land! His loss is indeed a perilous blow to our enterprise; for who remains behind possessing his far-fetched experience, his self-devoted zeal, his consummate wisdom, and his undaunted courage? He hath fallen with the Church's standard in his hand, but God will raise up another to lift the blessed banner. Whom have the Chapter elected in his room?'

'It is rumoured no one of the few remaining brethren dare accept the office. The heretics have sworn that they will permit no future election, and will heavily punish any attempt to create a new Abbot of Saint Mary's. *Conjuraverunt inter se principes, dicentes, Projiciamus laqueos ejus.*'

'*Quousque, Domine!*' ejaculated Magdalen; 'this, my sister, were indeed a perilous and fatal breach in our band; but I am firm in my belief that another will arise in the place of him so untimely removed. Where is thy daughter Catherine?'

'In the parlour,' answered the matron, 'but'——She looked at Roland Græme, and muttered something in the ear of her friend.

'Fear it not,' answered Magdalen Græme, 'it is both lawful and necessary—fear nothing from him—I would he were as well grounded in the faith by which alone comes safety, as he is free from thought, deed, or speech of villainy. Therein is the heretics' discipline to be commended, my sister, that they train up their youth in strong morality, and choke up every inlet to youthful folly.'

'It is but a cleansing of the outside of the cup,' answered her friend, 'a whitening of the sepulchre; but he shall see Catherine, since you, sister, judge it safe and meet.—Follow us, youth,' she added, and led the way from the apartment with her friend. These were the only words which the matron had addressed to Roland Græme, who obeyed them in silence. As they paced through several winding passages and waste apartments with a very slow step, the young page had leisure to make some reflections on his situation—reflections of a nature which his ardent temper considered as specially disagreeable. It seemed he had now got two mistresses, or tutoresses, instead of one, both elderly women, and both, it would seem, in league to direct his motions according to their own pleasure, and for the accomplishment of plans to which he was no party. This, he thought, was too much; arguing reasonably enough, that whatever right his grandmother and benefactress had to guide his motions, she was neither entitled to transfer her authority, nor to divide it with another, who seemed to assume, without ceremony, the same tone of absolute command over him.

'But it shall not long continue thus,' thought Roland; 'I will not be all my life the slave of a woman's whistle, to go when she bids, and come when she calls. No, by Saint Andrew! the hand that can hold the lance is above the control of the distaff. I will leave them the slipped collar in their hands on the first opportunity, and let them execute their own devices by their own proper force. It may save them both from peril, for I guess what they meditate is not likely to prove either safe or easy—the Earl of Murray and his heresy are too well rooted to be grubbed up by two old women.'

As he thus resolved, they entered a low room, in which a third female was seated. This apartment was the first he had observed in the mansion which was furnished with moveable seats, and with a wooden table, over which was laid a piece of tapestry. A carpet was spread on the floor, there was a grate in the chimney, and, in brief, the apartment had the air of being habitable and inhabited.

But Roland's eyes found better employment than to make observations on the accommodation of the chamber; for this second female inhab

of the mansion seemed something very different from anything he had yet seen there. At his first entry, she had greeted with a silent and low obeisance the two aged matrons, then, glancing her eyes towards Roland, she adjusted a veil which hung back over her shoulders, so as to bring it over her face; an operation which she performed with much modesty, but without either affected haste or embarrassed timidity.

During this manœuvre Roland had time to observe that the face was that of a girl apparently not much past sixteen, and that the eyes were at once soft and brilliant. To these very favourable observations was added the certainty that the fair object to whom they referred possessed an excellent shape, bordering perhaps on *embonpoint*, and therefore rather that of a Hebe than of a sylph, but beautifully formed, and shown to great advantage by the close jacket and petticoat, which she wore after a foreign fashion, the last not quite long enough to conceal a very pretty foot, which rested on a bar of the table at which she sat; her round arms and taper fingers very busily employed in repairing the piece of tapestry which was spread on it, which exhibited several deplorable fissures, enough to demand the utmost skill of the most expert sempstress.

It is to be remarked, that it was by stolen glances that Roland Græme contrived to ascertain these interesting particulars; and he thought he could once or twice, notwithstanding the texture of the veil, detect the damsel in the act of taking similar cognizance of his own person. The matrons in the meanwhile continued their separate conversation, eyeing from time to time the young people, in a manner which left Roland in no doubt that they were the subject of their conversation. At length he distinctly heard Magdalen Græme say these words—'Nay, my sister, we must give them opportunity to speak together, and to become acquainted; they must be personally known to each other, or how shall they be able to execute what they are entrusted with?'

It seemed as if the matron, not fully satisfied with her friend's reasoning, continued to offer some objections; but they were borne down by her more dictatorial friend.

'It must be so,' she said, 'my dear sister; let us therefore go forth on the balcony, to finish our conversation.—And do you,' she said, addressing Roland and the girl, 'become acquainted with each other.'

With this she stepped up to the young woman, and, raising her veil, discovered features which, whatever might be their ordinary complexion, were now covered with a universal blush.

'*Licitum sit*,' said Magdalen, looking at the other matron.

'*Vix licitum*,' replied the other, with reluctant and hesitating acquiescence; and again adjusting the veil of the blushing girl, she dropped it so as to shade, though not to conceal, her countenance, and whispered to her, in a tone loud enough for the page to hear, 'Remember, Catherine, who thou art, and for what destined.'

The matron then retreated with Magdalen Græme through one of the casements of the apartment, that opened on a large broad balcony, which, with its ponderous balustrade, had once run along the whole south front of the building which faced the brook, and formed a pleasant and commodious walk in the open air. It was now in some places deprived of the balustrade, in others broken and narrowed; but, ruinous as it was, could still be used as a pleasant promenade. Here then walked the two ancient dames, busied in their private conversation; yet not so much so, but that Roland could observe the matrons, as their thin forms darkened the casement in passing or repassing before it, dart a glance into the apartment, to see how matters were going on there.

CHAPTER XI.

Life hath its May, and it is mirthful then;
The woods are vocal, and the flowers all odour;
Its very blast has mirth in't—and the maidens,
The while they don their cloaks to screen their kirtles,
Laugh at the rain that wets them.

OLD PLAY.

CATHERINE was at the happy age of innocence and buoyancy of spirit, when, after the first moment of embarrassment was over, a situation of awkwardness, like that in which she was suddenly left to make acquaintance with a handsome youth not even known to her by name, struck her, in spite of herself, in a ludicrous point of view. She bent her beautiful eyes upon the work with which she was busied, and with infinite gravity sat out the two first turns of the matrons upon the balcony; but then, glancing her deep blue eye a little towards Roland, and observing the embarrassment under which he laboured,—now shifting on his chair, and now dangling his cap, the whole man evincing that he was perfectly at a loss how to open the conversation,—she could keep her composure no longer, but after a vain struggle broke out into a sincere, though a very involuntary fit of laughing, so richly accompanied by the laughter of her merry eyes, which actually glanced through the tears which the effort filled them with, and by the waving of her rich tresses, that the goddess of smiles herself never looked more lovely than Catherine at that moment. A court page would not have left her long alone in her mirth; but Roland was country-bred, and, besides, having some jealousy as well as bashfulness, he took it into his head that he was himself the object of her inextinguishable laughter. His endeavours to sympathize with Catherine, therefore, could carry him no further than a forced giggle, which had more of displeasure than of mirth in it, and which so much enhanced that of the girl, that it seemed to render it impossible for her ever to bring her laughter to an end, with whatever anxious pains she laboured to do so. For every one has felt that, when a paroxysm of laughter has seized him at a misbecoming time and place, the efforts which he makes to suppress it, nay, the very sense of the impropriety of giving way to it, tend only to augment and prolong the irresistible impulse.

It was undoubtedly lucky for Catherine, as well as for Roland, that the latter did not share in

the excessive mirth of the former. For, seated as she was, with her back to the casement, Catherine could easily escape the observation of the two matrons during the course of their promenade; whereas Græme was so placed, with his side to the window, that his mirth, had he shared that of his companion, would have been instantly visible, and could not have failed to give offence to the personages in question. He sat, however, with some impatience, until Catherine had exhausted either her power or her desire of laughing, and was returning with good grace to the exercise of her needle, and then he observed, with some dryness, that 'there seemed no great occasion to recommend to them to improve their acquaintance, as it seemed that they were already tolerably familiar.'

Catherine had an extreme desire to set off upon a fresh score, but she repressed it strongly, and, fixing her eyes on her work, replied by asking his pardon, and promising to avoid future offence.

Roland had sense enough to feel that an air of offended dignity was very much misplaced, and that it was with a very different bearing he ought to meet the deep blue eyes which had borne such a hearty burden in the laughing scene. He tried, therefore, to extricate himself as well as he could from his blunder, by assuming a tone of correspondent gaiety, and requesting to know of the nymph, 'how it was her pleasure that they should proceed in improving the acquaintance which had commenced so merrily.'

'That,' she said, 'you must yourself discover; perhaps I have gone a step too far in opening our interview.'

'Suppose,' said Roland Græme, 'we should begin as in a tale-book, by asking each other's names and histories.'

'It is right well imagined,' said Catherine, 'and shows an argute judgment. Do you begin, and I will listen, and only put in a question or two at the dark parts of the story. Come, unfold then your name and history, my new acquaintance.'

'I am called Roland Græme, and that tall old woman is my grandmother.'

'And your tutoress?—good. Who are your parents?'

'They are both dead,' replied Roland.

'Ay, but who were they? you *had* parents, I presume?'

'I suppose so,' said Roland, 'but I have never been able to learn much of their history. My father was a Scottish knight, who died gallantly in his stirrups—my mother was a Græme of Heathergill, in the Debateable Land—most of her family were killed when the Debateable country was burned by the Lord Maxwell and Herries of Caerlaverock.'

'Is it long ago?' said the damsel.

'Before I was born,' answered the page.

'That must be a great while since,' said she, shaking her head gravely; 'look you, I cannot weep for them.'

'It needs not,' said the youth; 'they fell with honour.'

'So much for your lineage, fair sir,' replied his companion, 'of whom I like the living specimen' (a glance at the casement) 'far less than those that are dead. Your much-honoured grandmother looks as if she could make one weep in sad earnest. And now, fair sir, for your own person—if you tell not the tale faster, it will be cut short in the middle; Mother Bridget pauses longer and longer every time she passes the window, and with her there is as little mirth as in the grave of your ancestors.'

'My tale is soon told—I was introduced into the Castle of Avenel to be page to the lady of the mansion.'

'She is a strict Huguenot, is she not?' said the maiden.

'As strict as Calvin himself. But my grandmother can play the Puritan when it suits her purpose, and she had some plan of her own for quartering me in the castle—it would have failed, however, after we had remained several weeks at the hamlet, but for an unexpected master of ceremonies'——

'And who was that?' said the girl.

'A large black dog, Wolf by name, who brought me into the castle one day in his mouth, like a hurt wild-duck, and presented me to the lady.'

'A most respectable introduction, truly,' said Catherine; 'and what might you learn at this same castle? I love dearly to know what my acquaintances can do at need.'

'To fly a hawk, hollo to a hound, back a horse, and wield lance, bow, and brand.'

'And to boast of all this when you have learned it,' said Catherine, 'which, in France at least, is the surest accomplishment of a page. But proceed, fair sir; how came your Huguenot lord and your no less Huguenot lady to receive and keep in the family so perilous a person as a Catholic page?'

'Because they knew not that part of my history, which from infancy I have been taught to keep secret—and because my grand-dame's former zealous attendance on their heretic chaplain had laid all this suspicion to sleep, most fair Callipolis,' said the page; and in so saying, he edged his chair towards the seat of the fair querist.

'Nay, but keep your distance, most gallant sir,' answered the blue-eyed maiden; 'for, unless I greatly mistake, these reverend ladies will soon interrupt our amicable conference, if the acquaintance they recommend shall seem to proceed beyond a certain point—so, fair sir, be pleased to abide by your station, and reply to my questions.—By what achievements did you prove the qualities of a page, which you had thus happily acquired?'

Roland, who began to enter into the tone and spirit of the damsel's conversation, replied to her with becoming spirit.

'In no feat, fair gentlewoman, was I found inexpert, wherein there was mischief implied. I shot swans, hunted cats, frightened serving-women, chased the deer, and robbed the orchard. I say nothing of tormenting the chaplain in various ways, for that was my duty as a good Catholic.'

'Now, as I am a gentlewoman,' said Catherine, 'I think these heretics have done Catholic penance in entertaining so all-accomplished a serving-man! And what, fair sir, might have

been the unhappy event which deprived them of an inmate altogether so estimable?'

'Truly, fair gentlewoman,' answered the youth, 'your real proverb says that the longest lane will have a turning, and mine was more—it was, in fine, a turning off.'

'Good!' said the merry young maiden, 'it is an apt play on the word—and what occasion was taken for so important a catastrophe?—Nay, start not for my learning, I do know the schools—in plain phrase, why were you sent from service?'

The page shrugged his shoulders while he replied,—'A short tale is soon told—and a short horse soon curried. I made the falconer's boy taste of my switch—the falconer threatened to make me brook his cudgel—he is a kindly clown as well as a stout, and I would rather have been cudgelled by him than any man in Christendom to choose—but I knew not his qualities at that time—so I threatened to make him brook the stab, and my lady made me brook the "Begone;" so adieu to the page's office and the fair Castle of Avenel—I had not travelled far before I met my venerable parent.—And so tell your tale, fair gentlewoman, for mine is done.'

'A happy grandmother,' said the maiden, 'who had the luck to find the stray page just when his mistress had slipped his leash, and a most lucky page that has jumped at once from a page to an old lady's gentleman-usher!'

'All this is nothing of your history,' answered Roland Græme, who began to be much interested in the congenial vivacity of this facetious young gentlewoman,—'tale for tale is fellow-traveller's justice.'

'Wait till we are fellow-travellers, then,' replied Catherine.

'Nay, you escape me not so,' said the page; 'if you deal not justly by me, I will call out to Dame Bridget, or whatever your dame be called, and proclaim you for a cheat.'

'You shall not need,' answered the maiden—'my history is the counterpart of your own; the same words might almost serve, change but dress and name. I am called Catherine Seyton, and I also am an orphan.'

'Have your parents been long dead?'

'This is the only question,' said she, throwing down her fine eyes with a sudden expression of sorrow, 'that is the only question I cannot laugh at.'

'And Dame Bridget is your grandmother?'

The sudden cloud passed away like that which crosses for an instant the summer sun, and she answered with her usual lively expression, 'Worse by twenty degrees—Dame Bridget is my maiden aunt.'

'Over gods forbode!' said Roland—'Alas! that you have such a tale to tell! and what horror comes next?'

'Your own history, exactly. I was taken upon trial for service'——

'And turned off for pinching the duenna, or affronting my lady's waiting-woman?'

'Nay, our history varies there,' said the damsel.—'Our mistress broke up house, or had her house broke up, which is the same thing, and I am a free woman of the forest.'

'And I am as glad of it as if any one had lined my doublet with cloth of gold,' said the youth.

'I thank you for your mirth,' said she, 'but the matter is not likely to concern you.'

'Nay, but go on,' said the page, 'for you will be presently interrupted; the two good dames have been soaring yonder on the balcony, like two old hooded crows, and their croak grows hoarser as night comes on; they will wing to roost presently.—This mistress of yours, fair gentlewoman, who was she, in God's name?'

'O, she has a fair name in the world,' replied Catherine Seyton. 'Few ladies kept a fairer house, or held more gentlewomen in her household; my Aunt Bridget was one of her housekeepers. We never saw our mistress's blessed face, to be sure, but we heard enough of her; were up early and down late, and were kept to long prayers and light food.'

'Out upon the penurious old beldam!' said the page.

'For Heaven's sake, blaspheme not!' said the girl, with an expression of fear.—'God pardon us both! I meant no harm. I speak of our blessed Saint Catherine of Sienna!—may God forgive me that I spoke so lightly, and made you do a great sin and a great blasphemy. This was her nunnery, in which there were twelve nuns and an abbess. My aunt was the Abbess, till the heretics turned all adrift.'

'And where are your companions?' asked the youth.

'With the last year's snow,' answered the maiden; 'east, north, south, and west—some to France, some to Flanders, some, I fear, into the world and its pleasures. We have got permission to remain, or rather, our remaining has been connived at, for my aunt has great relations among the Kerrs, and they have threatened a death-feud if any one touches us; and bow and spear are the best warrant in these times.'

'Nay, then, you sit under a sure shadow,' said the youth; 'and I suppose you wept yourself blind when Saint Catherine broke up housekeeping before you had taken arles* in her service?'

'Hush! for Heaven's sake,' said the damsel, crossing herself; 'no more of that! but I have not quite cried my eyes out,' said she, turning them upon him, and instantly again bending them upon her work. It was one of those glances which would require the threefold plate of brass around the heart, more than it is needed by the mariners, to whom Horace recommends it. Our youthful page had no defence whatever to offer.

'What say you, Catherine,' he said, 'if we two, thus strangely turned out of service at the same time, should give our two most venerable duennas the torch to hold, while we walk a merry measure with each other over the floor of this weary world?'

'A goodly proposal, truly,' said Catherine, 'and worthy the madcap brain of a discarded page!—And what shifts does your worship propose we should live by?—by singing ballads, cutting purses, or swaggering on the highway? for there, I think, you would find your most productive exchequer.'

* *Anglicè*—Earnest-money.

'Choose, you proud peat!' said the page, drawing off in huge disdain at the calm and unembarrassed ridicule with which his wild proposal was received. And as he spoke the words, the casement was again darkened by the forms of the matrons—it opened, and admitted Magdalen Græme and the Mother Abbess, so we must now style her, into the apartment.

CHAPTER XII.

> Nay, hear me, brother—I am elder, wiser,
> And holier than thou—And age, and wisdom,
> And holiness, have peremptory claims,
> And will be listen'd to.
>
> OLD PLAY.

WHEN the matrons re-entered, and put an end to the conversation which we have detailed in the last chapter, Dame Magdalen Græme thus addressed her grandson and his pretty companion: 'Have you spoke together, my children?—Have you become known to each other as fellow-travellers on the same dark and dubious road, whom chance hath brought together, and who study to learn the tempers and dispositions of those by whom their perils are to be shared?'

It was seldom the light-hearted Catherine could suppress a jest, so that she often spoke when she would have acted more wisely in holding her peace.

'Your grandson admires the journey which you propose so very greatly, that he was even now preparing for setting out upon it instantly.'

'This is to be too forward, Roland,' said the dame, addressing him, 'as yesterday you were over slack—the just mean lies in obedience, which both waits for the signal to start, and obeys it when given.—But once again, my children, have you so perused each other's countenances, that when you meet, in whatever disguise the times may impose upon you, you may recognise each in the other the secret agent of the mighty work in which you are to be leagued?—Look at each other, know each line and lineament of each other's countenance. Learn to distinguish by the step, by the sound of the voice, by the motion of the hand, by the glance of the eye, the partner whom Heaven hath sent to aid in working its will.—Wilt thou know that maiden, whensoever or wheresover you shall again meet her, my Roland Græme?'

As readily as truly did Roland answer in the affirmative. 'And thou, my daughter, wilt thou again remember the features of this youth?'

'Truly, mother,' replied Catherine Seyton, 'I have not seen so many men of late, that I should immediately forget your grandson, though I mark not much about him that is deserving of special remembrance.'

'Join hands, then, my children,' said Magdalen Græme; but in saying so was interrupted by her companion, whose conventual prejudices had been gradually giving her more and more uneasiness, and who could remain acquiescent no longer.

'Nay, my good sister, you forget,' said she to Magdalen, 'Catherine is the betrothed bride of Heaven—these intimacies cannot be.'

'It is in the cause of Heaven that I command them to embrace,' said Magdalen, with the full force of her powerful voice; 'the end, sister, sanctifies the means we must use.'

'They call me Lady Abbess, or Mother at the least, who address me,' said Dame Bridget, drawing herself up, as if offended at her friend's authoritative manner—'the Lady of Heathergill forgets that she speaks to the Abbess of Saint Catherine.'

'When I was what you call me,' said Magdalen, 'you indeed were the Abbess of Saint Catherine, but both names are now gone, with all the rank that the world and that the Church gave to them; and we are now, to the eye of human judgment, two poor, despised, oppressed women, dragging our dishonoured old age to a humble grave. But what are we in the eye of Heaven?—Ministers, sent forth to work his will—in whose weakness the strength of the Church shall be manifested—before whom shall be humbled the wisdom of Murray, and the dark strength of Morton.—And to such wouldst thou apply the narrow rules of thy cloistered seclusion?—or hast thou forgotten the order which I showed thee from thy Superior, subjecting thee to me in these matters?'

'On thy head, then, be the scandal and the sin,' said the Abbess sullenly.

'On mine be they both,' said Magdalen. 'I say, embrace each other, my children.'

But Catherine, aware, perhaps, how the dispute was likely to terminate, had escaped from the apartment, and so disappointed the grandson at least as much as the old matron.

'She is gone,' said the Abbess, 'to provide some little refreshment. But it will have little savour to those who dwell in the world; for I, at least, cannot dispense with the rules to which I am vowed, because it is the will of wicked men to break down the sanctuary in which they wont to be observed.'

'It is well, my sister,' replied Magdalen, 'to pay each even the smallest tithes of mint and cummin which the Church demands, and I blame not thy scrupulous observance of the rules of thine Order. But they were established by the Church, and for the Church's benefit; and reason it is that they should give way when the salvation of the Church herself is at stake.'

The Abbess made no reply.

One more acquainted with human nature than the inexperienced page might have found amusement in comparing the different kinds of fanaticism which these two females exhibited. The Abbess, timid, narrow-minded, and discontented, clung to ancient usages and pretensions, which were ended by the Reformation; and was in adversity, as she had been in prosperity, scrupulous, weak-spirited, and bigoted; while the fiery and more lofty spirit of her companion suggested a wider field of effort, and would not be limited by ordinary rules in the extraordinary schemes which were suggested by her bold and irregular imagination. But Roland Græme, instead of tracing these peculiarities of character in the two old dames, only waited with great anxiety for the return of Catherine, expecting probably that the proposal of the fraternal embrace would be renewed, as his grandmother seemed to carry matters with a high hand.

His expectations, or hopes, if we may call them so, were, however, disappointed; for, when Catherine re-entered on the summons of the Abbess, and placed on the table an earthen pitcher of water, and four wooden platters, with cups of the same materials, the Dame of Heathergill, satisfied with the arbitrary mode in which she had borne down the opposition of the Abbess, pursued her victory no further—a moderation for which her grandson, in his heart, returned her but slender thanks.

In the meanwhile, Catherine continued to place upon the table the slender preparations for the meal of a recluse, which consisted almost entirely of colewort, boiled and served up in a wooden platter, having no better seasoning than a little salt, and no better accompaniment than some coarse barley-bread, in very moderate quantity. The water-pitcher already mentioned furnished the only beverage. After a Latin grace, delivered by the Abbess, the guests sat down to their spare entertainment. The simplicity of the fare appeared to produce no distaste in the females, who ate of it moderately, but with the usual appearance of appetite. But Roland Græme had been used to better cheer. Sir Halbert Glendinning, who affected even an unusual degree of nobleness in his housekeeping, maintained it in a style of genial hospitality, which rivalled that of the northern barons of England. He might think, perhaps, that by doing so he acted yet more completely the part for which he was born—that of a great baron and a leader. Two bullocks and six sheep, weekly, were the allowance when the baron was at home, and the number was not greatly diminished during his absence. A boll of malt was weekly brewed into ale, which was used by the household at discretion. Bread was baked in proportion for the consumption of his domestics and retainers; and in this scene of plenty had Roland Græme now lived for several years. It formed a bad introduction to lukewarm greens and spring-water; and probably his countenance indicated some sense of the difference, for the Abbess observed, 'It would seem, my son, that the tables of the heretic baron, whom you have so long followed, are more daintily furnished than those of the suffering daughters of the Church; and yet, not upon the most solemn nights of festival, when the nuns were permitted to eat their portion at mine own table, did I consider the cates, which were then served up, as half so delicious as these vegetables and this water, on which I prefer to feed, rather than do aught which may derogate from the strictness of my vow. It shall never be said that the mistress of this house made it a house of feasting, when days of darkness and of affliction were hanging over the Holy Church, of which I am an unworthy member.'

'Well hast thou said, my sister,' replied Magdalen Græme; 'but now it is not only time to suffer in the good cause, but to act in it. And since our pilgrim's meal is finished, let us go apart to prepare for our journey to-morrow, and to advise on the manner in which these children shall be employed, and what measures we can adopt to supply their thoughtlessness and lack of discretion.'

Notwithstanding his indifferent cheer, the heart of Roland Græme bounded high at this proposal, which he doubted not would lead to another *tête-à-tête* betwixt him and the pretty novice. But he was mistaken. Catherine, it would seem, had no mind so far to indulge him; for, moved either by delicacy or caprice, or some of those indescribable shades betwixt the one and the other, with which women love to tease, and at the same time to captivate, the ruder sex, she reminded the Abbess that it was necessary she should retire for an hour before vespers; and, receiving the ready and approving nod of her Superior, she arose to withdraw. But before leaving the apartment, she made obeisance to the matrons, bending herself till her hands touched her knees, and then made a lesser reverence to Roland, which consisted in a slight bend of the body and gentle depression of the head. This she performed very demurely; but the party on whom the salutation was conferred thought he could discern in her manner an arch and mischievous exultation over his secret disappointment.—'The devil take the saucy girl,' he thought in his heart, though the presence of the Abbess should have repressed all such profane imaginations,—'she is as hard-hearted as the laughing hyæna that the story-books tell of—she has a mind that I shall not forget her this night at least.'

The matrons now retired also, giving the page to understand that he was on no account to stir from the convent, or to show himself at the windows, the Abbess assigning as a reason the readiness with which the rude heretics caught at every occasion of scandalizing the religious Orders.

'This is worse than the rigour of Master Henry Warden himself,' said the page, when he was left alone; 'for, to do him justice, however strict in requiring the most rigid attention during the time of his homilies, he left us to the freedom of our own wills afterwards—ay, and would take a share in our pastimes, too, if he thought them entirely innocent. But these old women are utterly wrapped up in gloom, mystery, and self-denial.—Well, then, if I must neither stir out of the gate nor look out at window, I will at least see what the inside of the house contains that may help to pass away one's time—peradventure I may light on that blue-eyed laugher in some corner or other.'

Going, therefore, out of the chamber by the entrance opposite to that through which the two matrons had departed (for it may be readily supposed that he had no desire to intrude on *their* privacy), he wandered from one chamber to another, through the deserted edifice, seeking, with boyish eagerness, some source of interest or amusement. Here he passed through a long gallery, opening on either hand into the little cells of the nuns, all deserted, and deprived of the few trifling articles of furniture which the rules of the Order admitted.

'The birds are flown,' thought the page; 'but whether they will find themselves worse off in the open air than in these damp narrow cages, I leave my Lady Abbess and my venerable relative to settle betwixt them. I think the wild young lark whom they have left behind

them, would like best to sing under God's free sky.'

A winding stair, strait and narrow, as if to remind the nuns of their duties of fast and maceration, led down to a lower suite of apartments, which occupied the ground storey of the house. These rooms were even more ruinous than those which he had left, for, having encountered the first fury of the assailants by whom the nunnery had been wasted, the windows had been dashed in, the doors broken down, and even the partitions betwixt the apartments, in some places, destroyed. As he thus stalked from desolation to desolation, and began to think of returning from so uninteresting a research to the chamber which he had left, he was surprised to hear the low of a cow very close to him. The sound was so unexpected at the time and place, that Roland Græme started as if it had been the voice of a lion, and laid his hand on his dagger, while at the same moment the light and lovely form of Catherine Seyton presented itself at the door of the apartment from which the sound had issued.

'Good even to you, valiant champion!' said she. 'Since the days of Guy of Warwick, never was one more worthy to encounter a dun cow.'

'Cow?' said Roland Græme; 'by my faith, I thought it had been the devil that roared so near me. Who ever heard of a convent containing a cow-house?'

'Cow and calf may come hither now,' answered Catherine, 'for we have no means to keep out either. But I advise you, kind sir, to return to the place from whence you came.'

'Not till I see your charge, fair sister,' answered Roland, and made his way into the apartment, in spite of the half serious, half laughing remonstrances of the girl.

The poor solitary cow, now the only severe recluse within the nunnery, was quartered in a spacious chamber, which had once been the refectory of the convent. The roof was graced with groined arches, and the wall with niches, from which the images had been pulled down. These remnants of architectural ornaments were strangely contrasted with the rude crib constructed for the cow in one corner of the apartment, and the stack of fodder which was piled beside it for her food.*

'By my faith,' said the page, 'Crombie is more lordly lodged than any one here!'

'You had best remain with her,' said Catherine, 'and supply by your filial attentions the offspring she has had the ill luck to lose.'

'I will remain, at least, to help you to prepare her night's lair, pretty Catherine,' said Roland, seizing upon a pitchfork.

'By no means,' said Catherine; 'for, besides that you know not in the least how to do her that service, you will bring a chiding my way, and I get enough of that in the regular course of things.'

'What! for accepting my assistance?' said the page,—'for accepting *my* assistance, who am to be your confederate in some deep matter of import? That were altogether unreasonable—and; now I think on it, tell me if you can, what is this mighty emprise to which I am destined?'

'Robbing a bird's nest, I should suppose,' said Catherine, 'considering the champion whom they have selected.'

'By my faith,' said the youth, 'and he that has taken a falcon's nest in the Scaurs of Polmoodie, has done something to brag of, my fair sister.—But that is all over now—a murrain on the nest, and the eyases and their food, washed or unwashed, for it was all anon of cramming these worthless kites that I was sent upon my present travels. Save that I have met with you, pretty sister, I could eat my dagger-hilt for vexation at my own folly. But, as we are to be fellow-travellers'——

'Fellow-labourers! not fellow-travellers!' answered the girl; 'for, to your comfort be it known, that the Lady Abbess and I set out earlier than you and your respected relative tomorrow, and that I partly endure your company at present, because it may be long ere we meet again.'

'By Saint Andrew, but it shall not, though,' answered Roland; 'I will not hunt at all unless we are to hunt in couples.'

'I suspect, in that and in other points, we must do as we are bid,' replied the young lady. —'But, hark! I hear my aunt's voice.'

The old lady entered in good earnest, and darted a severe glance at her niece, while Roland had the ready wit to busy himself about the halter of the cow.

'The young gentleman,' said Catherine gravely, 'is helping me to tie the cow up faster to her stake, for I find that last night, when she put her head out of window and lowed, she alarmed the whole village; and we shall be suspected of sorcery among the heretics if they do not discover the cause of the apparition, or lose our cow if they do.'

'Relieve yourself of that fear,' said the Abbess, somewhat ironically; 'the person to whom she is now sold comes for the animal presently.'

'Good night, then, my poor companion,' said Catherine, patting the animal's shoulders; 'I hope thou hast fallen into kind hands, for my happiest hours of late have been spent in tending thee—I would I had been born to no better task!'

'Now, out upon thee, mean-spirited wench!' said the Abbess; 'is that a speech worthy of the name of Seyton, or of the mouth of a sister of this house, treading the path of election—and to be spoken before a stranger youth, too?—Go to my oratory, minion—there read your *Hours* till I come thither, when I will read you such a lecture as shall make you prize the blessings which you possess.'

Catherine was about to withdraw in silence, casting a half-sorrowful, half-comic glance at Roland Græme, which seemed to say—'You see to what your untimely visit has exposed me,' when, suddenly changing her mind, she came forward to the page, and extended her hand as she bid him good evening. Their palms had pressed each other ere the astonished matron could interfere, and Catherine had time to say—'Forgive me, mother; it is long since we have

* Note D. Chapel of Saint Bridget.

seen a face that looked with kindness on us. Since these disorders have broken up our peaceful retreat, all has been gloom and malignity. I bid this youth kindly farewell, because he has come hither in kindness, and because the odds are great, that we may never again meet in this world. I guess better than he that the schemes on which you are rushing are too mighty for your management, and that you are now setting the stone a-rolling which must surely crush you in its descent. I bid farewell,' she added, 'to my fellow-victim!'

This was spoken with a tone of deep and serious feeling, altogether different from the usual levity of Catherine's manner, and plainly showed that beneath the giddiness of extreme youth and total inexperience there lurked in her bosom a deeper power of sense and feeling than her conduct had hitherto expressed.

The Abbess remained a moment silent after she had left the room. The proposed rebuke died on her tongue, and she appeared struck with the deep and foreboding tone in which her niece had spoken her good-even. She led the way in silence to the apartment which they had formerly occupied, and where there was prepared a small refection, as the Abbess termed it, consisting of milk and barley-bread. Magdalen Græme, summoned to take share in this collation, appeared from an adjoining apartment, but Catherine was seen no more. There was little said during the hasty meal, and, after it was finished, Roland Græme was dismissed to the nearest cell, where some preparations had been made for his repose.

The strange circumstances in which he found himself had their usual effect in preventing slumber from hastily descending on him, and he could distinctly hear, by a low but earnest murmuring in the apartment which he had left, that the matrons continued in deep consultation to a late hour. As they separated, he heard the Abbess distinctly express herself thus:—'In a word, my sister, I venerate your character and the authority with which my Superiors have invested you; yet it seems to me that, ere entering on this perilous course, we should consult some of the fathers of the Church.'

'And how and where are we to find a faithful bishop or abbot at whom to ask counsel? The faithful Eustatius is no more—he is withdrawn from a world of evil, and from the tyranny of heretics. May Heaven and Our Lady assoilzie him of his sins, and abridge the penance of his mortal infirmities!—Where shall we find another with whom to take counsel?'

'Heaven will provide for the Church,' said the Abbess; 'and the faithful fathers who yet are suffered to remain in the house of Kennaquhair will proceed to elect an Abbot. They will not suffer the staff to fall down, or the mitre to be unfilled, for the threats of heresy.'

'That will I learn to-morrow,' said Magdalen Græme; 'yet who now takes the office of an hour, save to partake with the spoilers in their work of plunder?—to-morrow will tell us if one of the thousand saints who are sprung from the house of Saint Mary's continues to look down on her in its misery.—Farewell, my sister—we meet at Edinburgh.'

'Benedicite!' answered the Abbess, and they parted.

'To Kennaquhair and to Edinburgh we bend our way,' thought Roland Græme. 'That information have I purchased by a sleepless hour—it suits well with my purpose. At Kennaquhair I shall see Father Ambrose;—at Edinburgh I shall find the means of shaping my own course through this bustling world, without burdening my affectionate relation—at Edinburgh, too, I shall see again the witching novice, with her blue eyes and her provoking smile.'—He fell asleep, and it was to dream of Catherine Seyton.

CHAPTER XIII.

What, Dagon up again!—I thought we had hurl'd him
Down on the threshold, never more to rise.
Bring wedge and axe; and, neighbours, lend your hands,
And rive the idol into winter fagots!

Athelstane, or the Converted Dane.

Roland Græme slept long and sound, and the sun was high over the horizon, when the voice of his companion summoned him to resume their pilgrimage; and when, hastily arranging his dress, he went to attend her call, the enthusiastic matron stood already at the threshold, prepared for her journey. There was in all the deportment of this remarkable woman a promptitude of execution, and a sternness of perseverance, founded on the fanaticism which she nursed so deeply, and which seemed to absorb all the ordinary purposes and feelings of mortality. One only human affection gleamed through her enthusiastic energies, like the broken glimpses of the sun through the rising clouds of a storm. It was her maternal fondness for her grandson—a fondness carried almost to the verge of dotage, in circumstances where the Catholic religion was not concerned, but which gave way instantly when it chanced either to thwart or come in contact with the more settled purpose of her soul, and the more devoted duty of her life. Her life she would willingly have laid down to save the earthly object of her affection; but that object itself she was ready to hazard, and would have been willing to sacrifice, could the restoration of the Church of Rome have been purchased with his blood. Her discourse by the way, excepting on the few occasions in which her extreme love of her grandson found opportunity to display itself in anxiety for his health and accommodation, turned entirely on the duty of raising up the fallen honours of the Church, and replacing a Catholic sovereign on the throne. There were times at which she hinted, though very obscurely and distantly, that she herself was foredoomed by Heaven to perform a part in this important task; and that she had more than mere human warranty for the zeal with which she engaged in it. But on this subject she expressed herself in such general language, that it was not easy to decide whether she made any actual pretensions to a direct and supernatural call, like the celebrated Elizabeth Barton, commonly called the Nun of

Kent;* or whether she only dwelt upon the general duty which was incumbent on all Catholics of the time, and the pressure of which she felt in an extraordinary degree.

Yet though Magdalen Græme gave no direct intimation of her pretensions to be considered as something beyond the ordinary class of mortals, the demeanour of one or two persons amongst the travellers whom they occasionally met, as they entered the more fertile and populous part of the valley, seemed to indicate their belief in her superior attributes. It is true, that two clowns, who drove before them a herd of cattle —one or two village wenches, who seemed bound for some merry-making—a strolling soldier, in a rusted morion—and a wandering student, as his threadbare black cloak and his satchel of books proclaimed him—passed our travellers without observation, or with a look of contempt; and, moreover, that two or three children, attracted by the appearance of a dress so nearly resembling that of a pilgrim, joined in hooting and calling, 'Out upon the mass-monger!' But one or two, who nourished in their bosoms respect for the downfallen hierarchy,—casting first a timorous glance around, to see that no one observed them,—hastily crossed themselves—bent their knee to Sister Magdalen, by which name they saluted her—kissed her hand, or even the hem of her dalmatique—received with humility the benedicite with which she repaid their obeisance; and then starting up, and again looking timidly round to see that they had been unobserved, hastily resumed their journey. Even while within sight of persons of the prevailing faith, there were individuals bold enough, by folding their arms and bending their heads, to give distant and silent intimation that they recognised Sister Magdalen, and honoured alike her person and her purpose.

She failed not to notice to her grandson these marks of honour and respect which from time to time she received. 'You see,' she said, 'my son, that the enemies have been unable altogether to suppress the good spirit, or to root out the true seed. Amid heretics and schismatics, spoilers of the Church's lands, and scoffers at saints and sacraments, there is left a remnant.'

'It is true, my mother,' said Roland Græme; 'but methinks they are of a quality which can help us but little. See you not all those who wear steel at their side, and bear marks of better quality, ruffle past as they would pass the meanest beggars? for those who give us any marks of sympathy are the poorest of the poor, and most outcast of the needy, who have neither bread to share with us, nor swords to defend us, nor skill to use them if they had. That poor wretch that last kneeled to you with such deep devotion, and who seemed emaciated by the touch of some wasting disease within, and the grasp of poverty without—that pale, shivering, miserable caitiff, how can he aid the great schemes you meditate?'

'Much, my son,' said the matron, with more mildness than the page perhaps expected. 'When that pious son of the Church returns from the shrine of Saint Ringan, whither he now travels by my counsel, and by the aid of good Catholics,—when he returns, healed of his wasting malady, high in health, and strong in limb, will not the glory of his faithfulness, and its miraculous reward, speak louder in the ears of this besotted people of Scotland, than the din which is weekly made in a thousand heretical pulpits?'

'Ay, but, mother, I fear the saint's hand is out. It is long since we have heard of a miracle performed at Saint Ringan's.'

The matron made a dead pause, and, with a voice tremulous with emotion, asked, 'Art thou so unhappy as to doubt the power of the blessed saint?'

'Nay, mother,' the youth hastened to reply, 'I believe as the Holy Church commands, and doubt not Saint Ringan's power of healing; but, be it said with reverence, he hath not of late showed the inclination.'

'And has this land deserved it?' said the Catholic matron, advancing hastily while she spoke, until she attained the summit of a rising ground, over which the path led, and then standing again still. 'Here,' she said, 'stood the Cross, the limits of the Halidome of Saint Mary's—here—on this eminence—from which the eye of the holy pilgrim might first catch a view of that ancient Monastery, the light of the land, the abode of saints, and the grave of monarchs—Where is now that emblem of our faith? It lies on the earth—a shapeless block, from which the broken fragments have been carried off, for the meanest uses, till now no semblance of its original form remains. Look towards the east, my son, where the sun was wont to glitter on stately spires—from which crosses and bells have now been hurled, as if the land had been invaded once more by barbarous heathens—Look at yonder battlements, of which we can, even at this distance, descry the partial demolition; and ask if this land can expect from the blessed saints, whose shrines and whose images have been profaned, any other miracles but those of vengeance? How long,' she exclaimed, looking upward, 'how long shall it be delayed?' She paused, and then resumed with enthusiastic rapidity, 'Yes, my son, all on earth is but for a period—joy and grief, triumph and desolation, succeed each other like cloud and sunshine;—the vineyard shall not be for ever trodden down, the gaps shall be amended, and the fruitful branches once more dressed and trimmed. Even this day—ay, even this hour, I trust to hear news of importance. Dally not—let us on—time is brief, and judgment is certain.'

She resumed the path which led to the Abbey—a path which, in ancient times, was carefully marked out by posts and rails, to assist the pilgrim in his journey—these were now torn up and destroyed. A half-hour's walk placed them in front of the once splendid Monastery,

* A fanatic nun, called the Holy Maid of Kent, who pretended to the gift of prophecy and power of miracles. Having denounced the doom of speedy death against Henry VIII. for his marriage with Anne Boleyn, the prophetess was attainted in Parliament, and executed with her accomplices. Her imposture was for a time so successful, that even Sir Thomas More was disposed to be a believer.

which, although the church was as yet entire, had not escaped the fury of the times. The long range of cells and of apartments for the use of the brethren, which occupied two sides of the great square, were almost entirely ruinous, the interior having been consumed by fire, which only the massive architecture of the outward walls had enabled them to resist. The Abbot's house, which formed the third side of the square, was, though injured, still inhabited, and afforded refuge to the few brethren, who yet, rather by connivance than by actual authority, were permitted to remain at Kennaquhair. Their stately offices—their pleasant gardens—the magnificent cloisters constructed for their recreation—were all dilapidated and ruinous; and some of the building materials had apparently been put into requisition by persons in the village and in the vicinity, who, formerly vassals of the Monastery, had not hesitated to appropriate to themselves a part of the spoils. Roland saw fragments of Gothic pillars, richly carved, occupying the place of door-posts to the meanest huts; and here and there a mutilated statue, inverted or laid on its side, made the door-post, or threshold, of a wretched cow-house. The church itself was less injured than the other buildings of the Monastery. But the images which had been placed in the numerous niches of its columns and buttresses, having all fallen under the charge of idolatry, to which the superstitious devotion of the Papists had justly exposed them, had been broken and thrown down, without much regard to the preservation of the rich and airy canopies and pedestals on which they were placed; nor, if the devastation had stopped short at this point, could we have considered the preservation of these monuments of antiquity as an object to be put in the balance with the introduction of the reformed worship.

Our pilgrims saw the demolition of these sacred and venerable representations of saints and angels--for as sacred and venerable they had been taught to consider them—with very different feelings. The antiquary may be permitted to regret the necessity of the action, but to Magdalen Græme it seemed a deed of impiety, deserving the instant vengeance of Heaven,—a sentiment in which her relative joined for the moment as cordially as herself. Neither, however, gave vent to their feelings in words, and uplifted hands and eyes formed their only mode of expressing them. The page was about to approach the great eastern gate of the church, but was prevented by his guide. 'That gate,' she said, 'has long been blockaded, that the heretical rabble may not know there still exist among the brethren of Saint Mary's men who dare worship where their predecessors prayed while alive, and were interred when dead—follow me this way, my son.'

Roland Græme followed accordingly; and Magdalen, casting a hasty glance to see whether they were observed (for she had learned caution from the danger of the times), commanded her grandson to knock at a little wicket which she pointed out to him. 'But knock gently,' she added, with a motion expressive of caution. After a little space, during which no answer was returned, she signed to Roland to repeat his summons for admission; and the door at length partially opening, discovered a glimpse of the thin and timid porter, by whom the duty was performed, skulking from the observation of those who stood without; but endeavouring at the same time to gain a sight of them without being himself seen. How different from the proud consciousness of dignity with which the porter of ancient days offered his important brow and his goodly person to the pilgrims who repaired to Kennaquhair! His solemn '*Intrate, mei filii*,' was exchanged for a tremulous 'You cannot enter now—the brethren are in their chambers.' But when Magdalen Græme asked, in an under-tone of voice, 'Hast thou forgotten me, my brother?' he changed his apologetic refusal to 'Enter, my honoured sister, enter speedily, for evil eyes are upon us.'

They entered accordingly, and, having waited until the porter had, with jealous haste, barred and bolted the wicket, were conducted by him through several dark and winding passages. As they walked slowly on, he spoke to the matron in a subdued voice, as if he feared to trust the very walls with the avowal which he communicated.

'Our fathers are assembled in the chapter-house, worthy sister—yes, in the chapter-house—for the election of an Abbot.—Ah, Benedicite! there must be no ringing of bells—no high mass—no opening of the great gates now, that the people might see and venerate their spiritual father! Our fathers must hide themselves, rather like robbers who choose a leader, than godly priests who elect a mitred Abbot.'

'Regard not that, my brother,' answered Magdalen Græme; 'the first successors of Saint Peter himself were elected, not in sunshine, but in tempests--not in the halls of the Vatican, but in the subterranean vaults and dungeons of heathen Rome—they were not gratulated with shouts and salvos of cannon-shot and of musketry, and the display of artificial fire—no, my brother—but by the hoarse summons of lictors and prætors, who came to drag the fathers of the Church to martyrdom. From such adversity was the Church once raised, and by such will it now be purified.—And mark me, brother! not in the proudest days of the mitred Abbey, was a Superior ever chosen, whom his office shall so much honour, as *he* shall be honoured, who now takes it upon him in these days of tribulation. On whom, my brother, will the choice fall?'

'On whom can it fall—or, alas! who would dare to reply to the call, save the worthy pupil of the sainted Eustatius—the good and valiant Father Ambrose?'

'I know it,' said Magdalen; 'my heart told me long ere your lips had uttered his name. Stand forth, courageous champion, and man the fatal breach!—Rise, bold and experienced pilot, and seize the helm while the tempest rages!—Turn back the battle, brave raiser of the fallen standard!—Wield crook and sling, noble shepherd of a scattered flock!'

'I pray you, hush, my sister!' said the porter, opening a door which led into the great church. 'The brethren will be presently here to celebrate their election with a solemn mass—I must

marshal them the way to the high altar—all the offices of this venerable house have now devolved on one poor decrepit old man.'

He left the church, and Magdalen and Roland remained alone in that great vaulted space, whose style of rich yet chaste architecture referred its origin to the early part of the fourteenth century, the best period of Gothic building. But the niches were stripped of their images in the inside as well as the outside of the church; and in the pell-mell havoc, the tombs of warriors and of princes had been included in the demolition of the idolatrous shrines. Lances and swords of antique size, which had hung over the tombs of mighty warriors of former days, lay now strewed among relics, with which the devotion of pilgrims had graced those of their peculiar saints; and the fragments of the knights and dames, which had once lain recumbent, or kneeled in an attitude of devotion, where their mortal relics were reposed, were mingled with those of the saints and angels of the Gothic chisel, which the hand of violence had sent headlong from their stations.

The most fatal symptom of the whole appeared to be, that, though this violence had now been committed for many months, the fathers had lost so totally all heart and resolution, that they had not adventured even upon clearing away the rubbish, or restoring the church to some decent degree of order. This might have been done without much labour. But terror had overpowered the scanty remains of a body once so powerful, and, sensible they were only suffered to remain in this ancient seat by connivance and from compassion, they did not venture upon taking any steps which might be construed into an assertion of their ancient rights, contenting themselves with the secret and obscure exercise of their religious ceremonial, in as unostentatious a manner as was possible.

Two or three of the more aged brethren had sunk under the pressure of the times, and the ruins had been partly cleared away to permit their interment. One stone had been laid over Father Nicolas, which recorded of him in special, that he had taken the vows during the incumbency of Abbot Ingilram, the period to which his memory so frequently recurred. Another flag-stone, yet more recently deposited, covered the body of Philip the sacristan, eminent for his aquatic excursion with the phantom of Avenel; and a third, the most recent of all, bore the outline of a mitre, and the words, *Hic jacet Eustatius Abbas*; for no one dared to add a word of commendation in favour of his learning, and strenuous zeal for the Roman Catholic faith.

Magdalen Græme looked at and perused the brief records of these monuments successively, and paused over that of Father Eustace. 'In a good hour for thyself,' she said, 'but O! in an evil hour for the Church, wert thou called from us. Let thy spirit be with us, holy man—encourage thy successor to tread in thy footsteps—give him thy bold and inventive capacity, thy zeal and thy discretion—even *thy* piety exceeds not his.' As she spoke, a side door, which closed a passage from the Abbot's house into the church, was thrown open, that the fathers might enter the choir, and conduct to the high altar the Superior whom they had elected.

In former times, this was one of the most splendid of the many pageants which the hierarchy of Rome had devised to attract the veneration of the faithful. The period during which the abbacy remained vacant was a state of mourning, or, as their emblematical phrase expressed it, of widowhood; a melancholy term, which was changed into rejoicing and triumph when a new Superior was chosen. When the folding doors were on such solemn occasions thrown open, and the new Abbot appeared on the threshold in full-blown dignity, with ring and mitre, and dalmatique and crosier, his hoary standard-bearers and his juvenile dispensers of incense preceding him, and the venerable train of monks behind him, with all besides which could announce the supreme authority to which he was now raised, his appearance was a signal for the magnificent *jubilate* to rise from the organ and music-loft, and to be joined by the corresponding bursts of Alleluiah from the whole assembled congregation. Now all was changed. In the midst of rubbish and desolation, seven or eight old men, bent and shaken as much by grief and fear as by age, shrouded hastily in the proscribed dress of their Order, wandered like a procession of spectres, from the door which had been thrown open, up through the encumbered passage, to the high altar, there to install their elected Superior a chief of ruins. It was like a band of bewildered travellers choosing a chief in the wilderness of Arabia; or a shipwrecked crew electing a captain upon the barren island on which fate has thrown them.

They who, in peaceful times, are most ambitious of authority among others, shrink from the competition at such eventful periods, when neither ease nor parade attend the possession of it, and when it gives only a painful pre-eminence both in danger and in labour, and exposes the ill-fated chieftain to the murmurs of his discontented associates, as well as to the first assault of the common enemy. But he on whom the office of the Abbot of Saint Mary's was now conferred, had a mind fitted for the situation to which he was called. Bold and enthusiastic, yet generous and forgiving—wise and skilful, yet zealous and prompt—he wanted but a better cause than the support of a decaying superstition, to have raised him to the rank of a truly great man. But as the end crowns the work, it also forms the rule by which it must be ultimately judged; and those who, with sincerity and generosity, fight and fall in an evil cause, posterity can only compassionate as victims of a generous but fatal error. Amongst these we must rank Ambrosius, the last Abbot of Kennaquhair, whose designs must be condemned, as their success would have riveted on Scotland the chains of antiquated superstition and spiritual tyranny; but whose talents commanded respect, and whose virtues, even from the enemies of his faith, extorted esteem.

The bearing of the new Abbot served of itself to dignify a ceremonial which was deprived of all other attributes of grandeur. Conscious of the peril in which they stood, and recalling, doubtless, the better days they had seen, there

hung over his brethren an appearance of mingled terror, and grief, and shame, which induced them to hurry over the office in which they were engaged, as something at once degrading and dangerous.

But not so Father Ambrose. His features, indeed, expressed a deep melancholy, as he walked up the centre aisle, amid the ruin of things which he considered as holy, but his brow was undejected, and his step firm and solemn. He seemed to think that the dominion which he was about to receive depended in no sort upon the external circumstances under which it was conferred; and if a mind so firm was accessible to sorrow or fear, it was not on his own account, but on that of the Church to which he had devoted himself.

At length he stood on the broken steps of the high altar, barefooted, as was the rule, and holding in his hand his pastoral staff, for the gemmed ring and jewelled mitre had become secular spoils. No obedient vassals came, man after man, to make their homage, and to offer the tribute which should provide their spiritual Superior with palfrey and trappings. No bishop assisted at the solemnity, to receive into the higher ranks of the Church nobility a dignitary whose voice in the legislature was as potential as his own. With hasty and maimed rites, the few remaining brethren stepped forward alternately to give their new Abbot the kiss of peace, in token of fraternal affection and spiritual homage. Mass was then hastily performed, but in such precipitation as if it had been hurried over rather to satisfy the scruples of a few youths, who were impatient to set out on a hunting party, than as if it made the most solemn part of a solemn ordination. The officiating priest faltered as he spoke the service, and often looked around as if he expected to be interrupted in the midst of his office; and the brethren listened as to that which, short as it was, they wished yet more abridged.*

These symptoms of alarm increased as the ceremony proceeded, and, as it seemed, were not caused by mere apprehension alone; for amid the pauses of the hymn there were heard without sounds of a very different sort, beginning faintly, and at a distance, but at length approaching close to the exterior of the church, and stunning with dissonant clamour those engaged in the service. The winding of horns, blown with no regard to harmony or concert; the jangling of bells, the thumping of drums, the squeaking of bagpipes, and the clash of cymbals—the shouts of a multitude, now as in laughter, now as in anger—the shrill tones of female voices, and of those of children, mingling with the deeper clamour of men, formed a Babel of sounds, which first drowned, and then awed into utter silence, the official hymns of the convent. The cause and result of this extraordinary interruption will be explained in the next chapter.

* In Catholic countries, in order to reconcile the pleasures of the great with the observances of religion, it was common, when a party was bent for the chase, to celebrate mass, abridged and maimed of its rites, called a hunting mass, the brevity of which was designed to correspond with the impatience of the audience.

CHAPTER XIV.

Not the wild billow, when it breaks its barrier—
Not the wild wind, escaping from its cavern—
Not the wild fiend, that mingles both together,
And pours their rage upon the ripening harvest,
Can match the wild freaks of this mirthful meeting—
Comic, yet fearful—droll, and yet destructive.
THE CONSPIRACY.

THE monks ceased their song, which, like that of the choristers in the legend of the Witch of Berkeley, died away in a quaver of consternation; † and, like a flock of chickens disturbed by the presence of the kite, they at first made a movement to disperse and fly in different directions, and then, with despair rather than hope, huddled themselves around their new Abbot; who, retaining the lofty and undismayed look which had dignified him through the whole ceremony, stood on the higher step of the altar, as if desirous to be the most conspicuous mark on which danger might discharge itself, and to save his companions by his self-devotion, since he could afford them no other protection.

Involuntarily, as it were, Magdalen Græme and the page stepped from the station which hitherto they had occupied unnoticed, and approached to the altar, as desirous of sharing the fate which approached the monks, whatever that might be. Both bowed reverently low to the Abbot; and while Magdalen seemed about to speak, the youth, looking towards the main entrance, at which the noise now roared most loudly, and which was at the same time assailed with much knocking, laid his hand upon his dagger.

The Abbot motioned to both to forbear: 'Peace, my sister,' he said, in a low tone, but which, being in a different key from the tumultuary sounds without, could be distinctly heard, even amidst the tumult;—'Peace,' he said, 'my sister; let the new Superior of Saint Mary's himself receive and reply to the grateful acclamations of the vassals who come to celebrate his installation.—And thou, my son, forbear, I charge thee, to touch thy earthly weapon;—if it is the pleasure of our protectress that her shrine be this day desecrated by deeds of violence, and polluted by blood-shedding, let it not, I charge thee, happen through the deed of a Catholic son of the Church.'

The noise and knocking at the outer gate became now every moment louder; and voices were heard impatiently demanding admittance. The Abbot, with dignity, and with a step which even the emergency of danger rendered neither faltering nor precipitate, moved towards the portal, and demanded to know, in a tone of authority, 'who it was that disturbed their worship, and what they desired?'

† [The 'Witch of Berkeley,'—evidently referring to Southey's Ballad, founded in a legend contained in Matthew of Westminster, A.D. 852, 'showing how an old woman rode double, and who rode before her.'

And the taper's light was extinguished quite,
And the choristers faintly sung,
And the priests, dismay'd, panted and pray'd,
And on all saints in heaven for aid
They call'd with trembling tongue.

And in he came with eyes of flame,
The Devil to fetch the dead.]

There was a moment's silence, and then a loud laugh from without. At length a voice replied, 'We desire entrance into the church; and when the door is opened you will soon see who we are.'

'By whose authority do you require entrance?' said the father.

'By authority of the Right Reverend Lord Abbot of Unreason,'* replied the voice from without; and, from the laugh which followed, it seemed as if there was something highly ludicrous couched under this reply.

'I know not, and seek not to know, your meaning,' replied the Abbot, 'since it is probably a rude one. But begone, in the name of God, and leave his servants in peace. I speak this, as having lawful authority to command here.'

'Open the door,' said another rude voice, 'and we will try titles with you, Sir Monk, and show you a Superior we must all obey.'

'Break open the doors if he dallies any longer,' said a third, 'and down with the carrion monks who would bar us of our privilege!' A general shout followed. 'Ay, ay, our privilege! our privilege! down with the doors, and with the lurdane monks, if they make opposition!'

The knocking was now exchanged for blows with great hammers, to which the doors, strong as they were, must soon have given way. But the Abbot, who saw resistance would be in vain, and who did not wish to incense the assailants by an attempt at offering it, besought silence earnestly, and with difficulty obtained a hearing. 'My children,' said he, 'I will save you from committing a great sin. The porter will presently undo the gate—he is gone to fetch the keys—meantime I pray you to consider with yourselves, if you are in a state of mind to cross the holy threshold.'

'Tillyvally for your papistry!' was answered from without; 'we are in the mood of the monks when they are merriest, and that is when they sup beef-brewis for lenten-kail. So, if your porter hath not the gout, let him come speedily, or we heave away readily.—Said I well, comrades?'

'Bravely said, and it shall be as bravely done,' said the multitude; and had not the keys arrived at that moment, and the porter in hasty terror performed his office, throwing open the great door, the populace would have saved him the trouble. The instant he had done so, the affrighted janitor fled, like one who has drawn the bolts of a flood-gate, and expects to be overwhelmed by the rushing inundation. The monks, with one consent, had withdrawn themselves behind the Abbot, who alone kept his station, about three yards from the entrance, showing no signs of fear or perturbation. His brethren—partly encouraged by his devotion, partly ashamed to desert him, and partly animated by a sense of duty—remained huddled close together, at the back of their Superior. There was a loud laugh and huzza when the doors were opened; but, contrary to what might have been expected, no crowd of enraged assailants rushed into the church. On the contrary, there was a cry of 'A halt!—a halt—to order, my masters! and let the two reverend fathers greet each other as beseems them.'

The appearance of the crowd who were thus called to order was grotesque in the extreme. It was composed of men, women, and children, ludicrously disguised in various habits, and presenting groups equally diversified and grotesque. Here one fellow with a horse's head painted before him, and a tail behind, and the whole covered with a long foot-cloth, which was supposed to hide the body of the animal, ambled, caracoled, pranced, and plunged, as he performed the celebrated part of the hobby-horse,† so often alluded to in our ancient drama; and which still flourishes on the stage in the battle that concludes Bayes's tragedy. To rival the address and agility displayed by this character, another personage advanced, in the more formidable character of a huge dragon, with gilded wings, open jaws, and a scarlet tongue, cloven at the end, which made various efforts to overtake and devour a lad, dressed as the lovely Sabæa, daughter of the King of Egypt, who fled before him; while a martial Saint George, grotesquely armed with a goblet for a helmet, and a spit for a lance, ever and anon interfered, and compelled the monster to relinquish his prey. A bear, a wolf, and one or two other wild animals, played their parts with the discretion of Snug the joiner; for the decided preference which they gave to the use of their hind legs was sufficient, without any formal annunciation, to assure the most timorous spectators that they had to do with habitual bipeds. There was a group of outlaws with Robin Hood and Little John at their head‡—the best representation exhibited at the time; and no great wonder, since most of the actors were, by profession, the banished men and thieves whom they presented. Other masqueraders there were, of a less marked description. Men were disguised as women, and women as men—children wore the dress of aged people, and tottered with crutch-sticks in their hands, furred gowns on their little backs, and caps on their round heads—while grandsires assumed the infantine tone as well as the dress of children. Besides these, many had their faces painted, and wore their shirts over the rest of their dress; while coloured pasteboard and ribbons furnished out decorations for others. Those who wanted all these properties, blacked their faces, and turned their jackets inside out; and thus the transmutation of the whole assembly into a set of mad, grotesque mummers was at once completed.

The pause which the masqueraders made, waiting apparently for some person of the highest authority amongst them, gave those within the Abbey Church full time to observe all these absurdities. They were at no loss to comprehend their purpose and meaning.

Few readers can be ignorant, that at an early period, and during the plenitude of her power, the Church of Rome not only connived at, but even encouraged, such saturnalian licences as the inhabitants of Kennaquhair and the neighbourhood had now in hand, and that the vulgar,

* Note E. The Abbot of Unreason.

† Note F. The hobby-horse.
‡ Note G. Robin Hood and Little John.

on such occasions, were not only permitted but encouraged by a number of gambols, sometimes puerile and ludicrous, sometimes immoral and profane, to indemnify themselves for the privations and penances imposed on them at other seasons. But, of all other topics for burlesque and ridicule, the rites and ceremonial of the Church itself were most frequently resorted to; and, strange to say, with the approbation of the clergy themselves.

While the hierarchy flourished in full glory, they do not appear to have dreaded the consequences of suffering the people to become so irreverently familiar with things sacred; they then imagined the laity to be much in the condition of a labourer's horse, which does not submit to the bridle and the whip with greater reluctance, because, at rare intervals, he is allowed to frolic at large in his pasture, and fling out his heels in clumsy gambols at the master who usually drives him. But, when times changed — when doubt of the Roman Catholic doctrine, and hatred of their priesthood, had possessed the reformed party, the clergy discovered, too late, that no small inconvenience arose from the established practice of games and merry-makings, in which they themselves, and all they held most sacred, were made the subject of ridicule. It then became obvious to duller politicians than the Romish churchmen, that the same actions have a very different tendency when done in the spirit of sarcastic insolence and hatred, than when acted merely in exuberance of rude and uncontrollable spirits. They therefore, though of the latest, endeavoured, where they had any remaining influence, to discourage the renewal of these indecorous festivities. In this particular the Catholic clergy were joined by most of the reformed preachers, who were more shocked at the profanity and immorality of many of these exhibitions, than disposed to profit by the ridiculous light in which they placed the Church of Rome and her observances. But it was long ere these scandalous and immoral sports could be abrogated; — the rude multitude continued attached to their favourite pastimes, and, both in England and Scotland, the mitre of the Catholic — the rochet of the reformed bishop — and the cloak and band of the Calvinistic divine — were, in turn, compelled to give place to those jocular personages, the Pope of Fools, the Boy-Bishop, and the Abbot of Unreason.*

It was the latter personage who now, in full costume, made his approach to the great door of the church of Saint Mary's, accoutred in such a manner as to form a caricature, or practical parody, on the costume and attendants of the real Superior, whom he came to beard on the very day of his installation, in the presence of his clergy, and in the chancel of his church. The mock dignitary was a stout-made, under-sized fellow, whose thick squab form had been rendered grotesque by a supplemental paunch, well stuffed. He wore a mitre of leather, with the front like a grenadier's cap, adorned with mock embroidery and trinkets of tin. This surmounted a visage, the nose of which was the most prominent feature, being of unusual size, and at least as richly gemmed as his head-gear. His robe was of buckram, and his cope of canvas, curiously painted, and cut into open work. On one shoulder was fixed the painted figure of an owl; and he bore in the right hand his pastoral staff, and in the left a small mirror having a handle to it, thus resembling a celebrated jester, whose adventures, translated into English, were whilom extremely popular, and which may still be procured in black letter, for about one sterling pound per leaf.

The attendants of this mock dignitary had their proper dresses and equipage, bearing the same burlesque resemblance to the officers of the convent which their leader did to the Superior. They followed their leader in regular procession, and the motley characters, which had waited his arrival, now crowded into the church in his train, shouting as they came, — 'A hall, a hall! for the venerable Father Howleglas, the learned Monk of Misrule, and the Right Reverend Abbot of Unreason!'

The discordant minstrelsy of every kind renewed its din; the boys shrieked and howled, and the men laughed and hallooed, and the women giggled and screamed, and the beasts roared, and the dragon walloped and hissed, and the hobby-horse neighed, pranced, and capered, and the rest frisked and frolicked, clashing their hobnailed shoes against the pavement, till it sparkled with the marks of their energetic caprioles.

It was, in fine, a scene of ridiculous confusion, that deafened the ear, made the eyes giddy, and must have altogether stunned any indifferent spectator; the monks, whom personal apprehension, and a consciousness that much of the popular enjoyment arose from the ridicule being directed against them, were, moreover, little comforted by the reflection that, bold in their disguise, the mummers who whooped and capered around them might, on slight provocation, turn their jest into earnest, or at least proceed to those practical pleasantries, which at all times arise so naturally out of the frolicsome and mischievous disposition of the populace. They looked to their Abbot amid the tumult, with such looks as landsmen cast upon the pilot when the storm is at the highest—looks which express that they are devoid of all hope arising from their own exertions, and not very confident in any success likely to attend those of their Palinurus.

The Abbot himself seemed at a stand; he felt no fear, but he was sensible of the danger of expressing his rising indignation, which he was scarcely able to suppress. He made a gesture with his hand as if commanding silence, which was at first only replied to by redoubled shouts and peals of wild laughter. When, however, the same motion, and as nearly in the same manner, had been made by Howleglas, it was immediately obeyed by his riotous companions, who expected fresh food for mirth in the conversation betwixt the real and mock Abbot, having no small confidence in the vulgar wit and impudence of their leader. Accordingly, they began to shout, 'To it, fathers—to it!'—'Fight monk, fight madcap—Abbot against abbot is fair

* From the interesting novel entitled Anastasius, by Thomas Hope (1820), it seems the same burlesque ceremonies were practised in the Greek Church.

play, and so is reason against unreason, and malice against monkery!'

'Silence, my mates!' said Howleglas; 'cannot two learned fathers of the Church hold communion together, but you must come here with your bear-garden whoop and hollo, as if you were hounding forth a mastiff upon a mad bull? I say silence! and let this learned father and me confer, touching matters affecting our mutual state and authority.'

'My children'—said Father Ambrose.

'*My* children, too,—and happy children they are!' said his burlesque counterpart; 'many a wise child knows not its own father, and it is well they have two to choose betwixt.'

'If thou hast aught in thee, save scoffing and ribaldry,' said the real Abbot, 'permit me, for thine own soul's sake, to speak a few words to these misguided men.'

'Aught in me but scoffing, sayest thou?' retorted the Abbot of Unreason; 'why, reverend brother, I have all that becomes mine office at this time a-day—I have beef, ale, and brandy-wine, with other condiments not worth mentioning; and for speaking, man—why, speak away, and we will have turn about like honest fellows.'

During this discussion the wrath of Magdalen Græme had risen to the uttermost; she approached the Abbot, and, placing herself by his side, said in a low and yet distinct tone—'Wake and arouse thee, father—the sword of Saint Peter is in thy hand—strike and avenge Saint Peter's patrimony!—Bind them in the chains which, being riveted by the Church on earth, are riveted in heaven'——

'Peace, sister!' said the Abbot; 'let not their madness destroy our discretion—I pray thee, peace, and let me do mine office. It is the first, peradventure it may be the last time I shall be called on to discharge it.'

'Nay, my holy brother!' said Howleglas, 'I rede you, take the holy sister's advice—never throve convent without woman's counsel.'

'Peace, vain man!' said the Abbot; 'and you, my brethren'——

'Nay, nay!' said the Abbot of Unreason, 'no speaking to the lay people, until you have conferred with your brother of the cowl. I swear by bell, book, and candle, that no one of my congregation shall listen to one word you have to say; so you had as well address yourself to me who will.'

To escape a conference so ludicrous, the Abbot again attempted an appeal to what respectful feelings might yet remain amongst the inhabitants of the Halidome, once so devoted to their spiritual superiors. Alas! the Abbot of Unreason had only to flourish his mock crosier, and the whooping, the hallooing, and the dancing were renewed with a vehemence which would have defied the lungs of Stentor.

'And now, my mates,' said the Abbot of Unreason, 'once again dight your gabs and be hushed—let us see if the Cock of Kennaquhair will fight or flee the pit.'

There was again a dead silence of expectation, of which Father Ambrose availed himself to address his antagonist, seeing plainly that he could gain an audience on no other terms. 'Wretched man!' said he, 'hast thou no better employment for thy carnal wit, than to employ it in leading these blind and helpless creatures into the pit of utter darkness?'

'Truly, my brother,' replied Howleglas, 'I can see little difference betwixt your employment and mine, save that you make a sermon of a jest, and I make a jest of a sermon.'

'Unhappy being,' said the Abbot, 'who hast no better subject of pleasantry than that which should make thee tremble, no sounder jest than thine own sins, and no better objects for laughter than those who can absolve thee from the guilt of them!'

'Verily, my reverend brother,' said the mock Abbot, 'what you say might be true, if, in laughing at hypocrites, I meant to laugh at religion. —O, it is a precious thing to wear a long dress, with a girdle and a cowl—we become a holy pillar of Mother Church, and a boy must not play at ball against the walls for fear of breaking a painted window!'

'And will you, my friends,' said the Abbot, looking round and speaking with a vehemence which secured him a tranquil audience for some time,—'will you suffer a profane buffoon, within the very church of God, to insult his ministers? Many of you—all of you, perhaps—have lived under my holy predecessors, who were called upon to rule in this church where I am called upon to suffer. If you have worldly goods, they are their gift; and, when you scorned not to accept better gifts—the mercy and forgiveness of the Church—were they not ever at your command?—did we not pray while you were jovial—wake while you slept?'

'Some of the good wives of the Halidome were wont to say so,' said the Abbot of Unreason; but his jest met in this instance but slight applause, and Father Ambrose, having gained a moment's attention, hastened to improve it.

'What!' said he; 'and is this grateful—is it seemly—is it honest—to assail with scorn a few old men, from whose predecessors you hold all, and whose only wish is to die in peace among these fragments of what was once the light of the land, and whose daily prayer is, that they may be removed ere that hour comes when the last spark shall be extinguished, and the land left in the darkness which it has chosen rather than light? We have not turned against you the edge of the spiritual sword, to revenge our temporal persecution; the tempest of your wrath hath despoiled us of land, and deprived us almost of our daily food, but we have not repaid it with the thunders of excommunication—we only pray your leave to live and die within the church which is our own, invoking God, Our Lady, and the holy saints to pardon your sins, and our own, undisturbed by scurril buffoonery and blasphemy.'

This speech, so different in tone and termination from that which the crowd had expected, produced an effect upon their feelings unfavourable to the prosecution of their frolic. The morris-dancers stood still—the hobby-horse surceased his capering—pipe and tabor were mute, and 'silence, like a heavy cloud,' seemed to descend on the once noisy rabble. Several of the beasts were obviously moved to compunction; the bear could not restrain his sobs, and a huge fox was observed to wipe his eyes with his tail. But in especial the

dragon, lately so formidably rampant, now relaxed the terror of his claws, uncoiled his tremendous rings, and grumbled out of his fiery throat in a repentant tone, 'By the mass, I thought no harm in exercising our old pastime, but an I had thought the good father would have taken it so to heart, I would as soon have played your devil as your dragon.'

In this momentary pause, the Abbot stood amongst the miscellaneous and grotesque forms by which he was surrounded, triumphant as Saint Anthony, in Callot's Temptations; but Howleglas would not so resign his purpose.

'And how now, my masters!' said he, 'is this fair play or no? Have you not chosen me Abbot of Unreason, and is it lawful for any of you to listen to common sense to-day? Was I not formally elected by you in solemn chapter, held in Lucky Martin's change-house, and will you now desert me, and give up your old pastime and privilege? Play out the play—and he that speaks the next word of sense or reason, or bids us think or consider, or the like of that, which befits not the day, I will have him solemnly ducked in the mill-dam!'

The rabble, mutable as usual, huzzaed, the pipe and tabor struck up, the hobby-horse pranced, the beasts roared, and even the repentant dragon began again to coil up his spires, and prepare himself for fresh gambols. But the Abbot might still have overcome, by his eloquence and his entreaties, the malicious designs of the revellers, had not Dame Magdalen Græme given loose to the indignation which she had long suppressed.

'Scoffers,' she said, 'and men of Belial—Blasphemous heretics, and truculent tyrants'——

'Your patience, my sister, I entreat and I command you!' said the Abbot; 'let me do my duty—disturb me not in mine office!'

But Dame Magdalen continued to thunder forth her threats in the name of popes and councils, and in the name of every saint, from Saint Michael downward.

'My comrades!' said the Abbot of Unreason, 'this good dame hath not spoken a single word of reason, and therein may esteem herself free from the law. But what she spoke was meant for reason, and, therefore, unless she confesses and avouches all which she has said to be nonsense, it shall pass for such, so far as to incur our statutes. Wherefore, holy dame, pilgrim, or Abbess, or whatever thou art, be mute with thy mummery, or beware the mill-dam. We will have neither spiritual nor temporal scolds in our Diocese of Unreason!'

As he spoke thus, he extended his hand towards the old woman, while his followers shouted, 'A doom—a doom!' and prepared to second his purpose, when lo! it was suddenly frustrated. Roland Græme had witnessed with indignation the insults offered to his old spiritual preceptor, but yet had wit enough to reflect he could render him no assistance, but might well, by ineffective interference, make matters worse. But when he saw his aged relative in danger of personal violence, he gave way to the natural impetuosity of his temper, and, stepping forward, struck his poniard into the body of the Abbot of Unreason, whom the blow instantly prostrated on the pavement.

CHAPTER XV.

As when in tumults rise the ignoble crowd,
Mad are their motions, and their tongues are loud;
And stones and brands in rattling furies fly,
And all the rustic arms which fury can supply—
Then if some grave and pious man appear,
They hush their noise, and lend a listening ear.

DRYDEN'S VIRGIL.

A DREADFUL shout of vengeance was raised by the revellers, whose sport was thus so fearfully interrupted; but for an instant, the want of weapons amongst the multitude, as well as the inflamed features and brandished poniard of Roland Græme, kept them at bay, while the Abbot, horror-struck at the violence, implored with uplifted hands pardon for bloodshed committed within the sanctuary. Magdalen Græme alone expressed triumph in the blow her descendant had dealt to the scoffer, mixed, however, with a wild and anxious expression of terror for her grandson's safety. 'Let him perish,' she said, 'in his blasphemy—let him die on the holy pavement which he has insulted!'

But the rage of the multitude, the grief of the Abbot, the exultation of the enthusiastic Magdalen, were all mistimed and unnecessary. Howleglas, mortally wounded as he was supposed to be, sprung alertly up from the floor, calling aloud, 'A miracle, a miracle, my masters! as brave a miracle as ever was wrought in the Kirk of Kennaquhair. And I charge you, my masters, as your lawfully chosen Abbot, that you touch no one without my command.—You, wolf and bear, will guard this pragmatic youth, but without hurting him.—And you, reverend brother, will, with your comrades, withdraw to your cells; for our conference has ended like all conferences, leaving each of his own mind as before; and if we fight, both you, and your brethren, and the kirk, will have the worst on't—Wherefore, pack up your pipes and begone.'

The hubbub was beginning again to awaken, but still Father Ambrose hesitated, as uncertain to what path his duty called him, whether to face out the present storm, or to reserve himself for a better moment. His brother of Unreason observed his difficulty, and said, in a tone more natural and less affected than that with which he had hitherto sustained his character, 'We came hither, my good sir, more in mirth than in mischief—our bark is worse than our bite—and, especially, we mean you no personal harm—wherefore, draw off while the play is good; for it is ill whistling for a hawk when she is once on the soar, and worse to snatch the quarry from the ban-dog—Let these fellows once begin their brawl, and it will be too much for madness itself, let alone the Abbot of Unreason, to bring them back to the lure.'

The brethren crowded around Father Ambrosius, and joined in urging him to give place to the torrent. The present revel was, they said, an ancient custom which his predecessors had permitted, and old Father Nicolas himself had played the dragon in the days of the Abbot Ingilram.

'And we now reap the fruit of the seed which they have so unadvisedly sown,' said Ambrosius;

'they taught men to make a mock of what is holy, what wonder that the descendants of scoffers become robbers and plunderers? But be it as you list, my brethren—move towards the dortour.—And you, dame, I command you, by the authority which I have over you, and by your respect for that youth's safety, that you go with us without further speech.—Yet, stay—what are your intentions towards that youth whom you detain prisoner?—Wot ye,' he continued, addressing Howleglas in a stern tone of voice, 'that he bears the livery of the House of Avenel? They who fear not the anger of Heaven, may at least dread the wrath of man.'

'Cumber not yourself concerning him,' answered Howleglas; 'we know right well who and what he is.'

'Let me pray,' said the Abbot, in a tone of entreaty, 'that you do him no wrong for the rash deed which he attempted in his imprudent zeal.'

'I say, cumber not yourself about it, father,' answered Howleglas, 'but move off with your train, male and female, or I will not undertake to save yonder she-saint from the ducking-stool—And as for bearing of malice, my stomach has no room for it; it is,' he added, clapping his hand on his portly belly, 'too well bumbasted out with straw and buckram—gramercy to them both—they kept out that madcap's dagger as well as a Milan corselet could have done.'

In fact, the home-driven poniard of Roland Græme had lighted upon the stuffing of the fictitious paunch, which the Abbot of Unreason wore as a part of his characteristic dress, and it was only the force of the blow which had prostrated that reverend person on the ground for a moment.

Satisfied in some degree by this man's assurances, and compelled to give way to superior force, the Abbot Ambrosius retired from the church at the head of the monks, and left the court free for the revellers to work their will. But, wild and wilful as these rioters were, they accompanied the retreat of the religionists with none of those shouts of contempt and derision with which they had at first hailed them. The Abbot's discourse had affected some of them with remorse, others with shame, and all with a transient degree of respect. They remained silent until the last monk had disappeared through the side-door which communicated with their dwelling-place, and even then it cost some exhortations on the part of Howleglas, some caprioles of the hobby-horse, and some wallops of the dragon, to rouse once more the rebuked spirit of revelry.

'And how now, my masters?' said the Abbot of Unreason; 'and wherefore look on me with such blank Jack-a-Lent visages? Will you lose your old pastime for an old wife's tale of saints and Purgatory? Why, I thought you would have made all split long since—Come, strike up, tabor and harp; strike up, fiddle and rebeck—dance and be merry to-day, and let care come to-morrow. Bear and wolf, look to your prisoner,—prance, hobby—hiss, dragon, and halloo, boys,—we grow older every moment we stand idle, and life is too short to be spent in playing mumchance.'

This pithy exhortation was attended with the effect desired. They fumigated the church with burnt wool and feathers instead of incense, put foul water into the holy water basins, and celebrated a parody on the church-service, the mock Abbot officiating at the altar; they sung ludicrous and indecent parodies, to the tunes of church hymns; they violated whatever vestments or vessels belonging to the Abbey they could lay their hands upon; and, playing every freak which the whim of the moment could suggest to their wild caprice, at length they fell to more lasting deeds of demolition, pulled down and destroyed some carved wood-work, dashed out the painted windows which had escaped former violence, and in their rigorous search after sculpture dedicated to idolatry, began to destroy what ornaments yet remained entire upon the tombs, and around the cornices of the pillars.

The spirit of demolition, like other tastes, increases by indulgence; from these lighter attempts at mischief, the more tumultuous part of the meeting began to meditate destruction on a more extended scale.—'Let us heave it down altogether, the old crow's nest,' became a general cry among them; 'it has served the Pope and his rooks too long;' and up they struck a ballad which was then popular among the lower classes:*

"The Paip, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded us ower lang,
For where the blind the blind doth lead,
No marvel baith gae wrang.
Like prince and king,
He led the ring
Of all iniquity.
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree.

The bishop rich, he could not preach
For sporting with the lasses;
The silly friar behoved to fleech
For awmous as he passes;
The curate his creed
He could not read,—
Shame fa' the company!
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree."

Thundering out this chorus of a notable hunting song, which had been pressed into the service of some polemical poet, the followers of the Abbot of Unreason were turning every moment more tumultuous, and getting beyond the management even of that reverend prelate himself, when a knight in full armour, followed by two or three men-at-arms, entered the church, and in a stern voice commanded them to forbear their riotous mummery.

His visor was up, but if it had been lowered, the cognisance of the holly-branch sufficiently distinguished Sir Halbert Glendinning, who, on

* These rude rhymes are taken, with some trifling alterations, from a ballad called Trim-go-trix. It occurs in a [illegible]

[illegible] of prophane sanges, for avoyding of sin and harlotrie, with Augmentation of sundrie Gude and Godly Ballates. Edinburgh, printed by Andro Hart.' This curious collection has been reprinted in Sir J. G. Dalyell's Scottish Poems of the sixteenth century. Edin. 1801, 2 vols. 12mo. [There is also a separate publication of 'the Gude and Godly Ballates' from the earlier edition of 1578, at Edin. 1868, 12mo.]

his homeward road, was passing through the village of Kennaquhair; and moved, perhaps, by anxiety for his brother's safety, had come directly to the church on hearing of the uproar.

'What is the meaning of this,' he said, 'my masters? Are ye Christian men, and the king's subjects, and yet waste and destroy church and chancel like so many heathens?'

All stood silent, though doubtless there were several disappointed and surprised at receiving chiding instead of thanks from so zealous a Protestant.

The dragon, indeed, did at length take upon him to be spokesman, and growled from the depth of his painted maw, that they did but sweep Popery out of the church with the besom of destruction.

'What! my friends,' replied Sir Halbert Glendinning, 'think you this mumming and masking has not more of Popery in it than have these stone walls? Take the leprosy out of your flesh, before you speak of purifying stone walls—abate your insolent licence, which leads but to idle vanity and sinful excess; and know, that what you now practise is one of the profane and unseemly sports introduced by the priests of Rome themselves, to mislead and to brutify the souls which fell into their net.'

'Marry come up—are you there with your bears?' muttered the dragon, with a draconic sullenness, which was in good keeping with his character; 'we had as good have been Romans still, if we are to have no freedom in our pastimes!'

'Dost thou reply to me so?' said Halbert Glendinning, 'or is there any pastime in grovelling on the ground there like a gigantic kail-worm?—Get out of thy painted case, or, by my knighthood, I will treat you like the beast and reptile you have made yourself.'

'Beast and reptile?' retorted the offended dragon; 'setting aside your knighthood, I hold myself as well a born man as thyself.'

The knight made no answer in words, but bestowed two such blows with the butt of his lance on the petulant dragon, that, had not the hoops which constituted the ribs of the machine been pretty strong, they would hardly have saved those of the actor from being broken. In all haste the masker crept out of his disguise, unwilling to abide a third buffet from the lance of the enraged knight. And when the ex-dragon stood on the floor of the church, he presented to Halbert Glendinning the well-known countenance of Dan of the Howlet-hirst, an ancient comrade of his own, ere fate had raised him so high above the rank to which he was born. The clown looked sulkily upon the knight, as if to upbraid him for his violence towards an old acquaintance, and Glendinning's own good-nature reproached him for the violence he had acted upon him.

'I did wrong to strike thee,' he said, 'Dan; but, in truth, I knew thee not—thou wert ever a mad fellow—Come to Avenel Castle, and we shall see how my hawks fly.'

'And if we show him not falcons that will mount as merrily as rockets,' said the Abbot of Unreason, 'I would your honour laid as hard on my bones as you did on his even now.'

'How now, Sir Knave,' said the knight, 'and what has brought you hither?'

The Abbot, hastily ridding himself of the false nose which mystified his physiognomy, and the supplementary belly which made up his disguise, stood before his master in his real character of Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel.

'How, varlet!' said the knight; 'hast thou dared to come here and disturb the very house my brother was dwelling in?'

'And it was even for that reason, craving your honour's pardon, that I came hither—for I heard the country was to be up to choose an Abbot of Unreason, and sure, thought I, I that can sing, dance, leap backwards over a broadsword, and am as good a fool as ever sought promotion, have all chance of carrying the office; and if I gain my election, I may stand his honour's brother in some stead, supposing things fall roughly out at the Kirk of Saint Mary's.'

'Thou art but a cogging knave,' said Sir Halbert, 'and well I wot, that love of ale and brandy, besides the humour of riot and frolic, would draw thee a mile, when love of my house would not bring thee a yard. But, go to—carry thy roisterers elsewhere—to the alehouse if they list, and there are crowns to pay your charges—make out the day's madness without doing more mischief, and be wise men to-morrow—and hereafter learn to serve a good cause better than by acting like buffoons or ruffians.'

Obedient to his master's mandate, the falconer was collecting his discouraged followers, and whispering into their ears—'Away, away—*tace* is Latin for a candle—never mind the good knight's Puritanism—we will play the frolic out over a stand of double ale in Dame Martin the brewster's barn-yard—draw off, harp and tabor, bagpipe and drum—mum till you are out of the church-yard, then let the welkin ring again—move on, wolf and bear—keep the hind legs till you cross the kirk-stile, and then show yourselves beasts of mettle—What devil sent him here to spoil our holiday!—but anger him not, my hearts; his lance is no goose-feather, as Dan's ribs can tell.'

'By my soul,' said Dan, 'had it been another than my ancient comrade, I would have made my father's old fox* fly about his ears!'

'Hush! hush, man!' replied Adam Woodcock, 'not a word that way, as you value the safety of your bones—what, man? we must take a clink as it passes, so it is not bestowed in downright ill-will.'

'But I will take no such thing,' said Dan of the Howlet-hirst, suddenly resisting the efforts of Woodcock, who was dragging him out of the church; when, the quick military eye of Sir Halbert Glendinning detecting Roland Græme betwixt his two guards, the knight exclaimed, 'So ho! falconer—Woodcock—knave, hast thou brought my lady's page, in mine own livery, to assist at this hopeful revel of thine, with your wolves and bears? Since you were at such mummings, you might, if you would, have at least saved the credit of my household, by dressing him up as a jackanapes—Bring him hither, fellows!'

Adam Woodcock was too honest and downright

* *Fox*. An old-fashioned broadsword was often so called.

to permit blame to light upon the youth when it was undeserved. 'I swear,' he said, 'by Saint Martin of Bullions'*——

'And what hast thou to do with Saint Martin?'

'Nay, little enough, sir, unless when he sends such rainy days that we cannot fly a hawk—but I say to your worshipful knighthood, that as I am a true man'——

'As you are a false varlet, had been the better obtestation.'

'Nay, if your knighthood allows me not to speak,' said Adam, 'I can hold my tongue—but the boy came not hither by my bidding, for all that.'

'But to gratify his own malapert pleasure, I warrant me,' said Sir Halbert Glendinning.—'Come hither, young springald, and tell me whether you have your mistress's licence to be so far absent from the castle, or to dishonour my livery by mingling in such a May-game?'

'Sir Halbert Glendinning,' answered Roland Græme, with steadiness, 'I have obtained the permission, or rather the commands, of your lady, to dispose of my time hereafter according to my own pleasure. I have been a most unwilling spectator of this May-game, since it is your pleasure so to call it; and I only wear your livery until I can obtain clothes which bear no such badge of servitude.'

'How am I to understand this, young man?' said Sir Halbert Glendinning; 'speak plainly, for I am no reader of *riddles*. That my lady favoured thee, I know. What hast thou done to disoblige her, and occasion thy dismissal?'

'Nothing to speak of,' said Adam Woodcock, answering for the boy—'a foolish quarrel with me, which was more foolishly told over again to my honoured lady, cost the poor boy his place. For my part, I will say freely that I was wrong from beginning to end, except about the washing of the eyas's meat. There I stand to it that I was right.'

With that, the good-natured falconer repeated to his master the whole history of the squabble which had brought Roland Græme into disgrace with his mistress, but in a manner so favourable for the page, that Sir Halbert could not but suspect his generous motive.

'Thou art a good-natured fellow,' he said, 'Adam Woodcock.'

'As ever had falcon upon fist,' said Adam; 'and for that matter so is Master Roland; but, being half a gentleman by his office, his blood is soon up, and so is mine.'

'Well,' said Sir Halbert, 'be it as it will, my lady has acted hastily, for this was no great matter of offence to discard the lad whom she had trained up for years; but he, I doubt not, made it worse by his prating—it jumps well with a purpose, however, which I had in my mind. Draw off these people, Woodcock,—and you, Roland Græme, attend me.'

The page followed him in silence into the Abbot's house, where, stepping into the first apartment which he found open, he commanded one of his attendants to let his brother, Master Edward Glendinning, know that he desired to speak with him. The men-at-arms went gladly off to join their comrade, Adam Woodcock, and the jolly crew whom he had assembled at Dame Martin's, the hostler's wife, and the page and knight were left alone in the apartment. Sir Halbert Glendinning paced the floor for a moment in silence, and then thus addressed his attendant:

'Thou mayest have remarked, stripling, that I have but seldom distinguished thee by much notice;—I see thy colour rises, but do not speak till thou hearest me out. I say I have never much distinguished thee, not because I did not see that in thee which I might well have praised, but because I saw something blameable, which such praises might have made worse. Thy mistress, dealing according to her pleasure in her own household, as no one had better reason or title, had picked thee from the rest, and treated thee more like a relation than a domestic; and if thou didst show some vanity and petulance under such distinction, it were injustice not to say that thou hast profited both in thy exercises and in thy breeding, and hast shown many sparkles of a gentle and manly spirit. Moreover, it were ungenerous, having bred thee up freakish and fiery, to dismiss thee to want or wandering, for showing that very peevishness and impatience of discipline which arose from thy too delicate nurture. Therefore, and for the credit of my own household, I am determined to retain thee in my train, until I can honourably dispose of thee elsewhere, with a fair *prospect of thy going through the world* with credit to the house that brought thee up.'

If there was something in Sir Halbert Glendinning's speech which flattered Roland's pride, there was also much that, according to his mode of thinking, was an alloy to the compliment. And yet his conscience instantly told him that he ought to accept, with grateful deference, the offer which was made him by the husband of his kind protectress; and his prudence, however slender, could not but admit he should enter the world under very different auspices as a retainer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, so famed for wisdom, courage, and influence, from those under which he might partake the wanderings, and become an agent in the visionary schemes, for such they appeared to him, of Magdalen, his relative. Still, a strong reluctance to re-enter a service from which he had been dismissed with contempt, almost counterbalanced these considerations.

Sir Halbert looked on the youth with surprise, and resumed—'You seem to hesitate, young man. Are your own prospects so inviting, that you should pause ere you accept those which I offer to you? or must I remind you, that although you have offended your benefactress, even to the point of her dismissing you, yet I am convinced, the knowledge that you have gone unguided on your own wild way, into a world so disturbed as ours of Scotland, cannot, in the upshot, but give her sorrow and pain; from which it is, in gratitude, your duty to preserve her, no less than it is in common wisdom your duty to accept my offered protection, for your own sake, where body and soul are alike endangered, should you refuse it.'

Roland Græme replied in a respectful tone, but at the same time with some spirit, 'I am not ungrateful for such countenance as has been

* The Saint Swithin, or weeping saint of Scotland. If Saint Swithin's festival (15th July) prove wet, forty days of rain are expected.

afforded me by the Lord of Avenel, and I am glad to learn, for the first time, that I have not had the misfortune to be utterly beneath his observation, as I had thought—And it is only needful to show me how I can testify my duty and my gratitude towards my early and constant benefactress with my life's hazard, and I will gladly peril it.' He stopped.

'These are but words, young man,' answered Glendinning; 'large protestations are often used to supply the place of effectual service. I know nothing in which the peril of your life can serve the Lady of Avenel; I can only say, she will be pleased to learn you have adopted some course which may insure the safety of your person, and the weal of your soul—What ails you, that you accept not that safety when it is offered you?'

'My only relative who is alive,' answered Roland, 'at least the only relative whom I have ever seen, has rejoined me since I was dismissed from the Castle of Avenel, and I must consult with her whether I can adopt the line to which you now call me, or whether her increasing infirmities, or the authority which she is entitled to exercise over me, may not require me to abide with her.'

'Where is this relation?' said Sir Halbert Glendinning.

'In this house,' answered the page.

'Go then and seek her out,' said the Knight of Avenel; '*more than meet it is that thou shouldst have her approbation, yet worse than foolish would she show herself in denying it.*'

Roland left the apartment to seek for his grandmother; and, as he retreated, the Abbot entered.

The two brothers met as brothers who loved each other fondly, yet meet rarely together. Such indeed was the case. Their mutual affection attached them to each other; but in every pursuit, habit, or sentiment, connected with the discords of the times, the friend and counsellor of Murray stood opposed to the Roman Catholic priest; nor, indeed, could they have held very much society together, without giving cause of offence and suspicion to their confederates on each side. After a close embrace on the part of both, and a welcome on that of the Abbot, Sir Halbert Glendinning expressed his satisfaction that he had come in time to appease the riot raised by Howleglas and his tumultuous followers.

'And yet,' he said, 'when I look on your garments, brother Edward, I cannot help thinking there still remains an Abbot of Unreason within the bounds of the Monastery.'

'And wherefore carp at my garments, brother Halbert?' said the Abbot; 'it is the spiritual armour of my calling, and, as such, beseems me as well as breastplate and baldric become your own bosom.'

'Ay, but there were small wisdom, methinks, in putting on armour where we have no power to fight; it is but a dangerous temerity to defy the foe whom we cannot resist.'

'For that, my brother, no one can answer,' said the Abbot, 'until the battle be fought; and, were it even as you say, methinks a brave man, though desperate of victory, would rather desire to fight and fall, than to resign sword and shield on some mean and dishonourable composition with his insulting antagonist. But let not you and me make discord of a theme on which we cannot agree, but rather stay and partake, though a heretic, of my admission feast. You need not fear, my brother, that your zeal for restoring the primitive discipline of the Church will, on this occasion, be offended with the rich profusion of a conventual banquet. The days of our old friend Abbot Boniface are over; and the Superior of Saint Mary's has neither forests nor fishings, woods nor pastures nor cornfields;—neither flocks nor herds, bucks nor wild-fowl—granaries of wheat, nor storehouses of oil and wine, of ale and of mead. The refectioner's office is ended; and such a meal as a hermit in romance can offer to a wandering knight, is all we have to set before you. But if you will share it with us, we shall eat it with a cheerful heart, and thank you, my brother, for your timely protection against these rude scoffers.'

'My dearest brother,' said the knight, 'it grieves me deeply I cannot abide with you; but it would sound ill for us both were one of the reformed congregation to sit down at your admission feast; and if I can ever have the satisfaction of affording you effectual protection, it will be much owing to my remaining unsuspected of countenancing or approving your religious rites and ceremonies. It will demand whatever consideration I can acquire among my own friends, to shelter the bold man, who, contrary to law and the edicts of parliament, has dared to take up the office of Abbot of Saint Mary's.'

'Trouble not yourself with the task, my brother,' replied Father Ambrosius. 'I would lay down my dearest blood to know that you defended the Church for the Church's sake; but, while you remain unhappily her enemy, I would not that you endangered your own safety, or diminished your own comforts, for the sake of my individual protection.—But who comes hither to disturb the few minutes of fraternal communication which our evil fate allows us?'

The door of the apartment opened as the Abbot spoke, and Dame Magdalen entered.

'Who is this woman?' said Sir Halbert Glendinning, somewhat sternly, 'and what does she want?'

'That you know me not,' said the matron, 'signifies little; I come by your own order, to give my free consent that the stripling Roland Græme return to your service; and, having said so, I cumber you no longer with my presence. Peace be with you!' She turned to go away, but was stopped by the inquiries of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

'Who are you?—what are you?—and why do you not await to make me answer?'

'I was,' she replied, 'while yet I belonged to the world, a matron of no vulgar name; now I am Magdalen, a poor pilgrimer for the sake of Holy Kirk.'

'Yea,' said Sir Halbert, 'art thou a Catholic? I thought my dame said that Roland Græme came of reformed kin.'

'His father,' said the matron, 'was a heretic,

or rather one who regarded neither orthodoxy nor heresy—neither the temple of the Church or of antichrist. I, too, for the sins of the times make sinners, have seemed to conform to your unhallowed rites—but I had my dispensation and my absolution.'

'You see, brother,' said Sir Halbert, with a smile of meaning towards his brother, 'that we accuse you not altogether without grounds of mental equivocation.'

'My brother, you do us injustice,' replied the Abbot; 'this woman, as her bearing may of itself warrant you, is not in her perfect mind. Thanks, I must needs say, to the persecution of your marauding barons, and of your latitudinarian clergy.'

'I will not dispute the point,' said Sir Halbert; 'the evils of the time are unhappily so numerous, that both Churches may divide them, and have enow to spare.' So saying, he leaned from the window of the apartment, and winded his bugle.

'Why do you sound your horn, my brother?' said the Abbot; 'we have spent but few minutes together.'

'Alas!' said the elder brother, 'and even these few have been sullied by disagreement. I sound to horse, my brother—the rather that, to avert the consequences of this day's rashness on your part [illegible] hasty efforts on mine.—Dame, you [illegible] by letting your young relative know that we mount instantly. I intend not that he shall return to Avenel with me—it would lead to new quarrels betwixt him and my household; at least to taunts which his proud heart could ill brook, and my wish is to do him kindness. He shall, therefore, go forward to Edinburgh with one of my retinue, whom I shall send back to say what has chanced here. —You seem rejoiced at this?' he added, fixing his eyes keenly on Magdalen Græme, who returned his gaze with calm indifference.

'I would rather,' she said, 'that Roland, a poor and friendless orphan, were the jest of the world at large, than of the menials at Avenel.'

'Fear not, dame—he shall be scorned by neither,' answered the knight.

'It may be,' she replied—'It may well be—but I will trust more to his own bearing than to your countenance.' She left the room as she spoke.

The knight looked after her as she departed, but turned instantly to his brother, and expressing, in the most affectionate terms, his wishes for his welfare and happiness, craved his leave to depart. 'My knaves,' he said, 'are too busy at the ale-stand, to leave their revelry for the empty breath of a bugle-horn.'

'You have freed them from higher restraint, Halbert,' answered the Abbot, 'and therein taught them to rebel against your own.'

'Fear not that, Edward,' exclaimed Halbert, who never gave his brother his monastic name of Ambrosius; 'none obey the command of real duty so well as those who are free from the observance of slavish bondage.'

He was turning to depart, when the Abbot said,—'Let us not yet part, my brother—here comes some light refreshment. Leave not the house which I must now call mine, till force expel me from it, until you have at least broken bread with me.'

The poor lay brother, the same who acted as porter, now entered the apartment, bearing some simple refreshment, and a flask of wine. 'He had found it,' he said, with officious humility, 'by rummaging through every nook of the cellar.'

The knight filled a small silver cup, and, quaffing it off, asked his brother to pledge him, observing, the wine was Bacharac, of the first vintage, and great age.

'Ay,' said the poor lay brother, 'it came out of the nook which old Brother Nicolas (may his soul be happy!) was wont to call Abbot Ingilram's corner; and Abbot Ingilram was bred at the Convent of Wurtzburg, which I understand to be near where that choice wine grows.'

'True, my reverend sir,' said Sir Halbert; 'and therefore I entreat my brother and you to pledge me in a cup of this orthodox vintage.'

The thin old porter looked with a wishful glance towards the Abbot. '*Do veniam*,' said his Superior; and the old man seized, with a trembling hand, a beverage to which he had been long unaccustomed; drained the cup with protracted delight, as if dwelling on the flavour and perfume, and set it down with a melancholy smile and shake of the head, as if bidding adieu in future to such delicious potations. The brothers smiled. But when Sir Halbert motioned to the Abbot to take up his cup and do him reason, the Abbot, in turn, shook his head, and replied—'This is no day for the Abbot of Saint Mary's to eat the fat and drink the sweet. In water from Our Lady's well,' he added, filling a cup with the limpid element, 'I wish you, my brother, all happiness, and, above all, a true sight of your spiritual errors.'

'And to you, my beloved Edward,' replied Glendinning, 'I wish the free exercise of your own free reason, and the discharge of more important duties than are connected with the idle name which you have so rashly assumed.'

The brothers parted with deep regret; and yet, each confident in his opinion, felt somewhat relieved by the absence of one whom he respected so much, and with whom he could agree so little.

Soon afterwards the sound of the Knight of Avenel's trumpets was heard, and the Abbot went to the top of the tower, from whose dismantled battlements he could soon see the horsemen ascending the rising ground in the direction of the drawbridge. As he gazed, Magdalen Græme came to his side.

'Thou art come,' he said, 'to catch the last glimpse of thy grandson, my sister. Yonder he wends, under the charge of the best knight in Scotland, his faith ever excepted.'

'Thou canst bear witness, my father, that it was no wish either of mine or of Roland's,' replied the matron, 'which induced the Knight of Avenel, as he is called, again to entertain my grandson in his household—Heaven, which confounds the wise with their own wisdom, and the wicked with their own policy, hath placed him where, for the services of the Church, I would most wish him to be.'

'I know not what you mean, my sister,' said the Abbot.

'Reverend father,' replied Magdalen, 'hast thou never heard that there are spirits powerful to rend the walls of a castle asunder when once admitted, which yet cannot enter the house unless they are invited, nay, dragged over the threshold?* Twice hath Roland Græme been thus drawn into the household of Avenel by those who now hold the title. Let them look to the issue.'

So saying, she left the turret; and the Abbot, after pausing a moment on her words, which he imputed to the unsettled state of her mind, followed down the winding stair to celebrate his admission to his high office by fast and prayer, instead of revelling and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER XVI.

Youth! thou wear'st to manhood now,
Darker lip and darker brow,
Statelier step, more pensive mien,
In thy face and gait are seen;
Thou must now brook midnight watches,
Take thy food and sport by snatches;
For the gambol and the jest,
Thou wert wont to love the best,
Graver follies must thou follow,
But as senseless, false, and hollow.

LIFE—A POEM.

YOUNG Roland Græme now trotted gaily forward in the train of Sir Halbert Glendinning. He was relieved from his most galling apprehension,—the encounter of the scorn and taunt which might possibly hail his immediate return to the Castle of Avenel. 'There will be a change ere they see me again,' he thought to himself; 'I shall wear the coat of plate, instead of the green jerkin, and the steel morion for the bonnet and feather. They will be bold that may venture to break a gibe on the man-at-arms for the follies of the page; and I trust that, ere we return, I shall have done something more worthy of note than hallooing a hound after a deer, or scrambling a crag for a kite's nest.' He could not, indeed, help marvelling that his grandmother, with all her religious prejudices, leaning, it would seem, to the other side, had consented so readily to his re-entering the service of the house of Avenel; and yet more, at the mysterious joy with which she took leave of him at the Abbey.

'Heaven,' said the dame, as she kissed her young relation, and bade him farewell, 'works its own work, even by the hands of those of our enemies who think themselves the strongest and the wisest. Thou, my child, be ready to act upon the call of thy religion and country; and remember, each earthly bond which thou canst form is, compared to the ties which bind thee to them, like the loose flax to the twisted cable. Thou hast not forgot the face or form of the damsel Catherine Seyton?'

Roland would have replied in the negative, but the word seemed to stick in his throat, and Magdalen continued her exhortations.

* Note H. Inability of evil spirits to enter a house uninvited.

'Thou must not forget her, my son; and here I entrust thee with a token, which I trust thou wilt speedily find an opportunity of delivering with care and secrecy into her own hand.'

She put here into Roland's hand a very small packet, of which she again enjoined him to take the strictest care, and to suffer it to be seen by no one save Catherine Seyton, who, she again (very unnecessarily) reminded him, was the young maiden he had met on the preceding day. She then bestowed on him her solemn benediction, and bade God speed him.

There was something in her manner and her conduct which implied mystery; but Roland Græme was not of an age or temper to waste much time in endeavouring to decipher her meaning. All that was obvious to his perception in the present journey, promised pleasure and novelty. He rejoiced that he was travelling towards Edinburgh, in order to assume the character of a man, and lay aside that of a boy. He was delighted to think that he would have an opportunity of rejoining Catherine Seyton, whose bright eyes and lively manners had made so favourable an impression on his imagination; and, as an inexperienced, yet high-spirited youth, entering for the first time upon active life, his heart bounded at the thought that he was about to see all those scenes of courtly splendour and warlike adventures, of which the followers of Sir Halbert used to boast on their occasional visits to Avenel, to the wonderment and envy of those who, like Roland, knew courts and camps only by hearsay, and were condemned to the solitary sports and almost monastic seclusion of Avenel, surrounded by its lonely lake, and embosomed among its pathless mountains. 'They shall mention my name,' he said to himself, 'if the risk of my life can purchase me opportunities of distinction, and Catherine Seyton's saucy eye shall rest with more respect on the distinguished soldier, than that with which she laughed to scorn the raw and inexperienced page.'—There was wanting but one accessory to complete the sense of rapturous excitation, and he possessed it by being once more mounted on the back of a fiery and active horse, instead of plodding along on foot, as had been the case during the preceding days.

Impelled by the liveliness of his own spirits, which so many circumstances tended naturally to exalt, Roland Græme's voice and his laughter were soon distinguished amid the trampling of the horses of the retinue, and more than once attracted the attention of their leader, who remarked with satisfaction that the youth replied with good-humoured raillery to such of the train as jested with him on his dismissal and return to the service of the house of Avenel.

'I thought the holly-branch in your bonnet had been blighted, Master Roland?' said one of the men-at-arms.

'Only pinched with half-an-hour's frost; you see it flourishes as green as ever.'

'It is too grave a plant to flourish on so hot a soil as that headpiece of thine, Master Roland Græme,' retorted the other, who was an old equerry of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

'If it will not flourish alone,' said Roland, 'I will mix it with the laurel and the myrtle—

and I will carry them so near the sky, that it shall make amends for their stinted growth.'

Thus speaking, he dashed his spurs into his horse's sides, and, checking him at the same time, compelled him to execute a lofty caracole. Sir Halbert Glendinning looked at the demeanour of his new attendant with that sort of melancholy pleasure with which those who have long followed the pursuits of life, and are sensible of their vanity, regard the gay, young, and buoyant spirits to whom existence, as yet, is only hope and promise.

In the meanwhile, Adam Woodcock, the falconer, stripped of his masquing habit, and attired, according to his rank and calling, in a green jerkin, with a hawking-bag on the one side, and a short hanger on the other, a glove on his left hand which reached half-way up his arm, and a bonnet and feather upon his head, came after the party as fast as his active little Galloway-nag could trot, and immediately entered into parley with Roland Græme.

'So, my youngster, you are once more under shadow of the holly-branch?'

'And in case to repay you, my good friend,' answered Roland, 'your ten groats of silver.'

'Which, but an hour since,' said the falconer, 'you had nearly paid me with ten inches of steel. On my faith, it is written in the book of our destiny that I must brook your dagger after all.'

'Nay, speak not of that, my good friend,' said the youth; 'I would rather have broached my own bosom than yours; but who could have known you in the mumming dress you wore?'

'Yes,' the falconer resumed—for both as a poet and actor he had his own professional share of self-conceit—'I think I was as good a Howleglas as ever played part at a Shrovetide revelry, and not a much worse Abbot of Unreason. I defy the Old Enemy to unmask me when I choose to keep my vizard on. What the devil brought the knight on us before we had the game out? You would have heard me hollo my own new ballad with a voice should have reached to Berwick. But I pray you, Master Roland, be less free of cold steel on slight occasions; since, but for the stuffing of my reverend doublet, I had only left the kirk to take my place in the kirkyard.'

'Nay, spare me that feud,' said Roland Græme, 'we shall have no time to fight it out; for, by our lord's command, I am bound for Edinburgh.'

'I know it,' said Adam Woodcock, 'and even therefore we shall have time to solder up this rent by the way, for Sir Halbert has appointed me your companion and guide.'

'Ay? and with what purpose?' said the page.

'That,' said the falconer, 'is a question I cannot answer, but I know that, be the food of the eyases washed or unwashed, and, indeed, whatever becomes of perch and mew, I am to go with you to Edinburgh, and see you safely delivered to the Regent at Holyrood.'

'How, to the Regent?' said Roland, in surprise.

'Ay, by my faith, to the Regent,' replied Woodcock; 'I promise you that, if you are not to enter his service, at least you are to wait upon him in the character of a retainer of our Knight of Avenel.'

'I know no right,' said the youth, 'which the Knight of Avenel hath to transfer my service, supposing that I owe it to himself.'

'Hush, hush!' said the falconer; 'that is a question I advise no one to stir in until he has the mountain or the lake, or the march of another kingdom, which is better than either, betwixt him and his feudal superior.'

'But Sir Halbert Glendinning,' said the youth, 'is not my feudal superior; nor has he aught of authority'——

'I pray you, my son, to rein your tongue,' answered Adam Woodcock; 'my lord's displeasure, if you provoke it, will be worse to appease than my lady's. The touch of his least finger were heavier than her hardest blow. And, by my faith, he is a man of steel, as true and as pure, but as hard and as pitiless. You remember the Cock of Capperlaw, whom he hanged over his gate for a mere mistake—a poor yoke of oxen taken in Scotland, when he thought he was taking them in English land? I loved the Cock of Capperlaw; the Kerrs had not an honester man in their clan, and they have had men that might have been a pattern to the Border—men that would not have lifted under twenty cows at once, and would have held themselves dishonoured if they had taken a drift of sheep, or the like, but always managed their raids in full credit and honour.—But see, his worship halts, and we are close by the bridge. Ride up—ride up—we must have his last instructions.'

It was as Adam Woodcock said. In the hollow way descending towards the bridge, which was still in the guardianship of Peter Bridgeward, as he was called, though he was now very old, Sir Halbert Glendinning halted his retinue, and beckoned to Woodcock and Græme to advance to the head of the train.

'Woodcock,' said he, 'thou knowest to whom thou art to conduct this youth. And thou, young man, obey discreetly and with diligence the orders that shall be given thee. Curb thy vain and peevish temper. Be just, true, and faithful; and there is in thee that which may raise thee many a degree above thy present station. Neither shalt thou—always supposing thine efforts to be fair and honest—want the protection and countenance of Avenel.'

Leaving them in front of the bridge, the centre tower of which now began to cast a prolonged shade upon the river, the Knight of Avenel turned to the left, without crossing the river, and pursued his way towards the chain of hills within whose recesses are situated the lake and Castle of Avenel. There remained behind, the falconer, Roland Græme, and a domestic of the knight, of inferior rank, who was left with them to look after their horses while on the road, to carry their baggage, and to attend to their convenience.

So soon as the more numerous body of riders had turned off to pursue their journey westward, those whose route lay across the river, and was directed towards the north, summoned the bridgeward, and demanded a free passage.

'I will not lower the bridge,' answered Peter, in a voice querulous with age and ill-humour.—

'Come Papist, come Protestant, ye are all the same. The Papist threatened us with purgatory, and fleeched us with pardons—the Protestant mints at us with his sword, and cuittles us with the liberty of conscience; but never a one of either says, "Peter, there is your penny." I am well tired of all this, and for no man shall the bridge fall that pays me not ready money; and I would have you know I care as little for Geneva as for Rome—as little for homilies as for pardons; and the silver pennies are the only passports I will hear of.'

'Here is a proper old chuff!' said Woodcock to his companion; then, raising his voice, he exclaimed, 'Hark thee, dog — bridgeward, villain, dost thou think we have refused thy namesake Peter's pence to Rome, to pay thine at the bridge of Kennaquhair? Let thy bridge down instantly to the followers of the house of Avenel, or by the hand of my father, and that handled many a bridle-rein, for he was a bluff Yorkshireman—I say, by my father's hand, our knight will blow thee out of thy solan goose's nest there in the middle of the water, with the light falconet which we are bringing southward from Edinburgh to-morrow.'

The bridgeward heard, and muttered, 'A plague on falcon and falconet, on cannon and demicannon, and all the barking bull-dogs whom they halloo against stone and lime in these our days! It was a merry time when there was little besides handy blows, and it may be a flight of arrows that harmed an ashler wall as little as so many hailstones. But we must jouk and let the jaw gang by.' Comforting himself in his state of diminished consequence with this pithy old proverb, Peter Bridgeward lowered the draw-bridge, and permitted them to pass over. At the sight of his white hair, albeit it discovered a visage equally peevish through age and misfortune, Roland was inclined to give him an alms, but Adam Woodcock prevented him. 'E'en let him pay the penalty of his former churlishness and greed,' he said; 'the wolf, when he has lost his teeth, should be treated no better than a cur.'

Leaving the bridgeward to lament the alteration of times, which sent domineering soldiers and feudal retainers to his place of passage, instead of peaceful pilgrims, and reduced him to become the oppressed, instead of playing the extortioner, the travellers turned them northward; and Adam Woodcock, well acquainted with that part of the country, proposed to cut short a considerable portion of the road, by traversing the little vale of Glendearg, so famous for the adventures which befell therein during the earlier part of the Benedictine's manuscript. With these, and with the thousand commentaries, representations, and misrepresentations, to which they had given rise, Roland Græme was, of course, well acquainted; for, in the Castle of Avenel, as well as in other great establishments, the inmates talked of nothing so often, or with such pleasure, as of the private affairs of their lord and lady. But while Roland was viewing with interest these haunted scenes, in which things were said to have passed beyond the ordinary laws of nature, Adam Woodcock was still regretting in his secret soul the unfinished revel and the unsung ballad, and kept every now and then breaking out with some such verses as these:—

'The Friars of Fail drank berry-brown ale,
The best that e'er was tasted;
The monks of Melrose made gude kale
On Fridays when they fasted.
Saint Monance' sister,
The grey priest kist her—
Fiend save the company!
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree.

'By my hand, friend Woodcock,' said the page, 'though I know you for a hardy gospeller, that fear neither saint nor devil, yet, if I were you, I would not sing your profane songs in this valley of Glendearg, considering what has happened here before our time.'

'A straw for your wandering spirits!' said Adam Woodcock; 'I mind them no more than an erne cares for a string of wild-geese—they have all fled since the pulpits were filled with honest men, and the people's ears with sound doctrine. Nay, I have a touch at them in my ballad, an I had but had the good luck to have it sung to end;' and again he set off in the same key:—

'From haunted spring and grassy ring,
Troop goblin, elf, and fairy;
And the kelpie must flit from the black bog-pit,
And the brownie must not tarry;
To Limbo-lake,
Their way they take,
With scarce the pith to flee.
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree.

I think,' he added, 'that, could Sir Halbert's patience have stretched till we came that length, he would have had a hearty laugh, and that is what he seldom enjoys.'

'If it be all true that men tell of his early life,' said Roland, 'he has less right to laugh at goblins than most men.'

'Ay, *if* it be all true,' answered Adam Woodcock; 'but who can insure us of that? Moreover, these were but tales the monks used to gull us simple laymen withal; they knew that fairies and hobgoblins brought aves and paternosters into repute; but, now we have given up worship of images in wood and stone, methinks it were no time to be afraid of bubbles in the water, or shadows in the air.'

'However,' said Roland Græme, 'as the Catholics say they do not worship wood or stone, but only as emblems of the holy saints, and not as things holy in themselves'——

'Pshaw! pshaw!' answered the falconer; 'a rush for their prating. They told us another story when these baptized idols of theirs brought pike-staves and sandalled shoon from all the four winds, and whillied the old women out of their corn and their candle-ends, and their butter, bacon, wool, and cheese, and when not so much as a grey groat escaped tithing.'

Roland Græme had been long taught, by necessity, to consider his form of religion as a profound secret, and to say nothing whatever in its defence when assailed, lest he should draw on himself the suspicion of belonging to the unpopular and exploded Church. He therefore suffered Adam Woodcock to triumph without further opposition, marvelling in his own mind

whether any of the goblins, formerly such active agents, would avenge his rude raillery before they left the valley of Glendearg. But no such consequences followed. They passed the night quietly in a cottage in the glen, and the next day resumed their route to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XVII.

> Edina! Scotia's darling seat,
> All hail thy palaces and towers,
> Where once, beneath a monarch's feet,
> Sat legislation's sovereign powers.
>
> BURNS.

'THIS, then, is Edinburgh?' said the youth, as the fellow-travellers arrived at one of the heights to the southward, which commanded a view of the great northern capital—'This is that Edinburgh of which we have heard so much!'

'Even so,' said the falconer; 'yonder stands Auld Reekie—you may see the smoke hover over her at twenty miles' distance, as the goss-hawk hangs over a plump of young wild-ducks—ay, yonder is the heart of Scotland, and each throb that she gives is felt from the edge of Solway to Duncansbay-head. See, yonder is the old castle; and see to the right, on yon rising ground, that is the Castle of Craigmillar, which I have known a merry place in my time.'

'Was it not there,' said the page in a low voice, 'that the Queen held her court?'

'Ay, ay,' replied the falconer, 'Queen she was then, though you must not call her so now. Well, they may say what they will—many a true heart will be sad for Mary Stuart, e'en if all be true men say of her; for, look you, Master Roland—she was the loveliest creature to look upon that I ever saw with eye, and no lady in the land liked better the fair flight of a falcon. I was at the great match on Roslin Moor betwixt Bothwell—he was a black sight to her that Bothwell—and the Baron of Roslin, who could judge a hawk's flight as well as any man in Scotland—a butt of Rhenish and a ring of gold was the wager, and it was flown as fairly for as ever was red gold and bright wine. And to see her there on her white palfrey, that flew as if it scorned to touch more than the heather blossom; and to hear her voice, as clear and sweet as the mavis's whistle, mix among our jolly whooping and whistling; and to mark all the nobles dashing round her; happiest he who got a word or a look—tearing through moss and hagg, and venturing neck and limb to gain the praise of a bold rider, and the blink of a bonnie queen's bright eye;—she will see little hawking where she lies now—ay, ay, pomp and pleasure pass away as speedily as the wap of a falcon's wing.'

'And where is this poor Queen now confined?' said Roland Græme, interested in the fate of a woman whose beauty and grace had made so strong an impression even on the blunt and careless character of Adam Woodcock.

'Where is she now imprisoned?' said honest Adam; 'why, in some castle in the north, they say—I know not where, for my part, nor is it worth while to vex one's sel' anent what cannot be mended—An she had guided her power well whilst she had it, she had not come to so evil a pass. Men say she must resign her crown to this little baby of a prince, for that they will trust her with it no longer. Our master has been as busy as his neighbours in all this work. If the Queen should come to her own again, Avenel Castle is like to smoke for it, unless he makes his bargain all the better.'

'In a castle in the north Queen Mary is confined?' said the page.

'Why, ay—they say so, at least—In a castle beyond that great river which comes down yonder, and looks like a river, but it is a branch of the sea, and as bitter as brine.'

'And amongst all her subjects,' said the page, with some emotion, 'is there none that will adventure anything for her relief?'

'That is a kittle question,' said the falconer; 'and if you ask it often, Master Roland, I am fain to tell you that you will be mewed up yourself in some of those castles, if they do not prefer twisting your head off, to save further trouble with you.—Adventure anything? Lord, why, Murray has the wind in his poop now, man, and flies so high and strong, that the devil a wing of them can match him. No, no; there she is, and there she must lie, till Heaven send her deliverance, or till her son has the management of all—But Murray will never let her loose again, he knows her too well.—And hark thee, we are now bound for Holyrood, where thou wilt find plenty of news and of courtiers to tell it—But, take my counsel, and keep a calm sough, as the Scots say—hear every man's counsel, and keep your own. And if you hap to learn any news you like, leap not up as if you were to put on armour direct in the cause.—Our old Master Wingate says—and he knows court-cattle well—that if you are told old King Coul is come alive again, you should turn it off with, "And is he in truth?—I heard not of it," and should seem no more moved than if one told you, by way of novelty, that old King Coul was dead and buried. Wherefore, look well to your bearing, Master Roland, for, I promise you, you come among a generation that are keen as a hungry hawk—And never be dagger out of sheath at every wry word you hear spoken; for you will find as hot blades as yourself, and then will be letting of blood without advice either of leech or almanac.'

'You shall see how staid I will be, and how cautious, my good friend,' said Græme; 'but, blessed Lady, what goodly house is that which is lying all in ruins so close to the city? Have they been playing at the Abbot of Unreason here, and ended the gambol by burning the church?'

'There again, now,' replied his companion, 'you go down the wind like a wild haggard, that minds neither lure nor beck—that is a question you should have asked in as low a tone as I shall answer it.'

'If I stay here long,' said Roland Græme, 'it is like I shall lose the natural use of my voice—but what are the ruins, then?'

'The Kirk of Field,' said the falconer, in a low and impressive whisper, laying at the same time his finger on his lip; 'ask no more about it—somebody got foul play, and somebody got the blame of it; and the game began there which

perhaps may not be played out in our time.—Poor Henry Darnley! to be an ass, he understood somewhat of a hawk; but they sent him on the wing through the air himself one bright moonlight night.'

The memory of this catastrophe was so recent, that the page averted his eyes with horror from the scathed ruins in which it had taken place; and the accusations against the Queen, to which it had given rise, came over his mind with such strength as to balance the compassion he had begun to entertain for her present forlorn situation.*

It was, indeed, with that agitating state of mind which arises partly from horror, but more from anxious interest and curiosity, that young Græme found himself actually traversing the scene of those tremendous events, the report of which had disturbed the most distant solitudes in Scotland, like the echoes of distant thunder rolling among the mountains.

'Now,' he thought, 'now or never shall I become a man, and bear my part in those deeds which the simple inhabitants of our hamlets repeat to each other as if they were wrought by beings of a superior order to their own. I will know now, wherefore the Knight of Avenel carries his crest so much above those of the neighbouring baronage, and how it is that men, by valour and wisdom, work their way from the hodden-grey coat to the cloak of scarlet and gold. Men say I have not much wisdom to recommend me; and if that be true, courage must do it; for I will be a man amongst living men, or a dead corpse amongst the dead.'

From these dreams of ambition he turned his thoughts to those of pleasure, and began to form many conjectures, when and where he should see Catherine Seyton, and in what manner their acquaintance was to be renewed. With such conjectures he was amusing himself, when he found that they had entered the city, and all other feelings were suspended in the sensation of giddy astonishment with which an inhabitant of the country is affected, when, for the first time, he finds himself in the streets of a large and populous city, a unit in the midst of thousands.

The principal street of Edinburgh was then, as now, one of the most spacious in Europe. The extreme height of the houses, and the variety of Gothic gables and battlements and balconies, by which the sky-line on each side was crowned and terminated, together with the width of the street itself, might have struck with surprise a more practised eye than that of young Græme. The population, close packed within the walls of the city, and at this time increased by the number of the lords of the king's party who had thronged to Edinburgh to wait upon the Regent Murray, absolutely swarmed like bees on the wide and stately street. Instead of the shop-windows which are now calculated for the display of goods, the traders had their open booths projecting on the street, in which, as in the fashion of the modern bazaars, all was exposed which they had upon sale. And though the commodities were not of the richest kinds, yet Græme thought he beheld the wealth of the whole world in the various bales of Flanders cloths, and the specimens of tapestry; and, at other places, the display of domestic utensils and pieces of plate struck him with wonder. The sight of cutlers' booths, furnished with swords and poniards which were manufactured in Scotland, and with pieces of defensive armour imported from Flanders, added to his surprise; and, every step, he found so much to admire and to gaze upon, that Adam Woodcock had no little difficulty in prevailing upon him to advance through such a scene of enchantment.

The sight of the crowds which filled the streets was equally a subject of wonder. Here a gay lady, in her muffler or silken veil, traced her way delicately, a gentleman-usher making way for her, a page bearing up her train, and a waiting-gentlewoman carrying her Bible, thus intimating that her purpose was towards the church—There he might see a group of citizens bending the same way, with their short Flemish cloaks, wide trousers, and high-caped doublets, a fashion to which, as well as to their bonnet and feather, the Scots were long faithful. Then, again, came the clergyman himself, in his black Geneva cloak and band, lending a grave and attentive ear to the discourse of several persons who accompanied him, and who were doubtless holding serious converse on the religious subject he was about to treat of. Nor did there lack passengers of a different class and appearance.

At every turn Roland Græme might see a gallant ruffle along in the newer or French mode, his doublet slashed, and his points of the same colour with the lining, his long sword on one side, and his poniard on the other, behind him a body of stout serving-men, proportioned to his estate and quality, all of whom walked with the air of military retainers, and were armed with sword and buckler, the latter being a small round shield, not unlike the Highland target, having a steel spike in the centre. Two of these parties, each headed by a person of importance, chanced to meet in the very centre of the street, or, as it was called, 'the crown of the causeway,' a post of honour as tenaciously asserted in Scotland as that of giving or taking the wall used to be in the more southern part of the island. The two leaders being of equal rank, and, most probably, either animated by political dislike, or by recollection of some feudal enmity, marched close up to each other, without yielding an inch to the right or the left; and neither showing the least purpose of giving way, they stopped for an instant, and then drew their swords. Their followers imitated their example; about a score of weapons at once flashed in the sun, and there was an immediate clatter of swords and bucklers, while the followers on either side cried their master's name; the one shouting 'Help, a Leslie! a Leslie!' while the others answered with shouts of 'Seyton! Seyton!' with the additional punning slogan, 'Set on, set on—bear the knaves to the ground!'

If the falconer found difficulty in getting the

* [The Collegiate Church of Saint Mary in the Fields, so called from being outside the walls of Edinburgh, was familiarly known as the Kirk of Field. After the catastrophe of Darnley's murder, the ruined building and adjacent grounds were acquired as a site for the University, founded in 1582.]

page to go forward before, it was now perfectly impossible. He reined up his horse, clapped his hands, and, delighted with the fray, cried and shouted as fast as any of those who were actually engaged in it.

The noise and cries thus arising on the High-gate, as it was called, drew into the quarrel two or three other parties of gentlemen and their servants, besides some single passengers, who, hearing a fray betwixt these two distinguished names, took part in it either for love or hatred.

The combat became now very sharp, and although the sword-and-buckler men made more clatter and noise than they did real damage, yet several good cuts were dealt among them; and those who wore rapiers, a more formidable weapon than the ordinary Scottish swords, gave and received dangerous wounds. Two men were already stretched on the causeway, and the party of Seyton began to give ground, being much inferior in number to the other, with which several of the citizens had united themselves, when young Roland Græme, beholding their leader, a noble gentleman, fighting bravely, and hard pressed with numbers, could withhold no longer. 'Adam Woodcock,' he said, 'an you be a man, draw, and let us take part with the Seyton.' And without waiting a reply, or listening to the falconer's earnest entreaty that he would leave alone a strife in which he had no concern, the fiery youth sprung from his horse, drew his short sword, and shouting like the rest, 'A Seyton! a Seyton! Set on! Set on!' thrust forward into the throng, and struck down one of those who was pressing hardest upon the gentleman whose cause he espoused. This sudden reinforcement gave spirit to the weaker party, who began to renew the combat with much alacrity, when four of the magistrates of the city, distinguished by their velvet cloaks and gold chains, came up with a guard of halberdiers and citizens, armed with long weapons, and well accustomed to such service, thrust boldly forward, and compelled the swordsmen to separate, who immediately retreated in different directions, leaving such of the wounded on both sides, as had been disabled in the fray, lying on the street.

The falconer, who had been tearing his beard for anger at his comrade's rashness, now rode up to him with the horse which he had caught by the bridle, and accosted him with, 'Master Roland—master goose—master madcap—will it please you to get on horse, and budge? or will you remain here to be carried to prison, and made to answer for this pretty day's work?'

The page, who had begun his retreat along with the Seytons, just as if he had been one of their natural allies, was by this unceremonious application made sensible that he was acting a foolish part; and, obeying Adam Woodcock with some sense of shame, he sprung actively on horseback, and, upsetting with the shoulder of the animal a city officer who was making towards him, he began to ride smartly down the street along with his companion, and was quickly out of the reach of the hue and cry. In fact, encounters of the kind were so common in Edinburgh at this period, that the disturbance seldom excited much attention after the affray was over, unless some person of consequence chanced to have fallen, an incident which imposed on his friends the duty of avenging his death on the first convenient opportunity. So feeble, indeed, was the arm of the police, that it was not unusual for such skirmishes to last for hours where the parties were numerous and well-matched. But at this time the Regent, a man of great strength of character, aware of the mischief which usually arose from such acts of violence, had prevailed with the magistrates to keep a constant guard on foot for preventing or separating such affrays as had happened in the present case.

The falconer and his young companion were now riding down the Canongate, and had slackened their pace to avoid attracting attention, the rather that there seemed to be no appearance of pursuit. Roland hung his head as one who was conscious his conduct had been none of the wisest, whilst his companion thus addressed him:

'Will you be pleased to tell me one thing, Master Roland Græme, and that is, whether there be a devil incarnate in you or no?'

'Truly, Master Adam Woodcock,' answered the page, 'I would fain hope there is not.'

'Then,' said Adam, 'I would fain know by what other influence or instigation you are perpetually at one end or the other of some bloody brawl? What, I pray, had you to do with these Seytons and Leslies, that you never heard the names of in your life before?'

'You are out there, my friend,' said Roland Græme; 'I have my own reasons for being a friend to the Seytons.'

'They must have been very secret reasons, then,' answered Adam Woodcock, 'for I think I could have wagered you had never known one of the name; and I am apt to believe still that it was your unhallowed passion for that clashing of cold iron, which has as much charm for you as the clatter of a brass pan hath for a hive of bees, rather than any care either for Seyton or for Leslie, that persuaded you to thrust your fool's head into a quarrel that no ways concerned you. But take this for a warning, my young master, that if you are to draw sword with every man who draws sword on the High-gate here, it will be scarce worth your while to sheathe bilbo again for the rest of your life, since, if I guess rightly, it will scarce endure on such terms for many hours—all which I leave to your serious consideration.'

'By my word, Adam, I honour your advice; and I promise you that I will practise by it as faithfully as if I were sworn apprentice to you, to the trade and mystery of bearing myself with all wisdom and safety through the new paths of life that I am about to be engaged in.'

'And therein you will do well,' said the falconer; 'and I do not quarrel with you, Master Roland, for having a grain over much spirit, because I know one may bring to the hand a wild hawk, which one never can a dunghill hen—and so betwixt two faults you have the best on't. But, besides your peculiar genius for quarrelling and lugging out your side companion, my dear Master Roland, you have also the gift of peering under every woman's muffler and screen, as if you expected to find

an old acquaintance. Though, were you to spy one, I should be as much surprised at it, well wotting how few you have seen of these same wild-fowl, as I was at your taking so deep an interest even now in the Seyton.'

'Tush, man! nonsense and folly,' answered Roland Græme, 'I but sought to see what eyes these gentle hawks have got under their hood.'

'Ay, but it's a dangerous subject of inquiry,' said the falconer, 'you had better hold out your bare wrist for an eagle to perch upon.—Look you, Master Roland, these pretty wild geese cannot be hawked at without risk—they have as many divings, boltings, and volleyings, as the most gamesome quarry that falcon ever flew at—And besides, every woman of them is manned with her husband, or her kind friend, or her brother, or her cousin, or her sworn servant at the least.—But you heed me not, Master Roland, though I know the game so well—your eye is all on that pretty damsel who trips down the [illegible] before us. By my certes, I will warrant her a blithe dancer either in reel or revel—a pair of silver morisco bells would become these pretty ankles as well as the jesses would suit the finest Norway hawk.'

'Thou art a fool, Adam,' said the page, 'and I care not a button about the girl or her ankles.—But what the foul fiend, one must look at something!'

'Very true, Master Roland Græme,' said his guide, 'but let me pray you to choose your objects better. Look you, there is scarce a woman walks this High-gate with a silk screen or a pearlin muffler, but, as I said before, she has either gentleman usher before her, or kinsman, or lover, or husband at her elbow, or it may be a brace of stout fellows with sword and buckler, not so far behind but what they can follow close.—But you heed me no more than a goss-hawk minds a yellow-yoldring.'

'O yes, I do—I do mind you,' said Roland Græme; 'but hold my nag a bit. I will be with you in the exchange of a whistle.' So saying, and ere Adam Woodcock could finish the sermon which was dying on his tongue, Roland Græme, to the falconer's utter astonishment, threw him the bridle of his jennet, jumped off horseback, and pursued down one of the closes or narrow lanes, which, opening under a vault, terminate upon the main street, the very maiden to whom his friend had accused him of showing so much attention, and who had turned down the pass in question.

'Saint Mary, Saint Magdalen, Saint Benedict, Saint Bennet,' said the poor falconer, when he found himself thus suddenly brought to a pause in the midst of the Canongate, and saw his young charge start off like a madman in quest of a damsel whom he had never, as Adam supposed, seen in his life before,—'Saint Satan and Saint Beelzebub—for this would make one swear saint and devil—what can have come over the lad, with a wanion! And what shall I do the whilst?—he will have his throat cut, the poor lad, as sure as I was born [illegible] foot of Roseberry Topping. Could I find [illegible] to hold the horses! but they are [illegible] here north away as in canny Yorkshire [illegible] and quit bridle, quit titt, as we say. [illegible] could but see one of our folks now, a holly sprig were worth a gold tassel, or could I but see one of the Regent's men—but to leave the horses to a stranger, that I cannot—and to leave the place while the lad is in jeopardy, that I wonot.'

We must leave the falconer, however, in the midst of his distress, and follow the hot-headed youth who was the cause of his perplexity.

The latter part of Adam Woodcock's sage remonstrances had been in a great measure lost upon Roland, for whose benefit it was intended; because, in one of the female forms which tripped along the street, muffled in a veil of striped silk, like the women of Brussels at this day, his eye had discerned something which closely resembled the exquisite shape and spirited bearing of Catherine Seyton.—During all the grave advice which the falconer was dinning in his ears, his eye continued intent upon so interesting an object of observation; and at length, as the damsel, just about to dive under one of the arched passages which afforded an outlet to the Canongate from the houses beneath (a passage, graced by a projecting shield of arms, supported by two huge foxes of stone), had lifted her veil for the purpose perhaps of descrying who the horseman was who for some time had eyed her so closely, young Roland saw, under the shade of the silken plaid, enough of the bright azure eyes, fair locks, and blithe features, to induce him, like an inexperienced and rash madcap, whose wilful ways never had been traversed by contradiction nor much subjected to consideration, to throw the bridle of his horse into Adam Woodcock's hand, and leave him to play the waiting gentleman, while he dashed down the paved court after Catherine Seyton—all [illegible] aforesaid.

Women's wits are proverbially quick, [illegible] apparently those of Catherine suggested no better expedient than fairly to betake herself to speed of foot, in hopes of baffling the page's vivacity, by getting safely lodged before he could discover where. But a youth of eighteen, in pursuit of a mistress, is not so easily outstripped. Catherine fled across a paved court, decorated with large formal vases of stone, in which yews, cypresses, and other evergreens vegetated in sombre sullenness, and gave a correspondent degree of solemnity to the high and heavy building in front of which they were placed as ornaments, aspiring towards a square portion of the blue hemisphere, corresponding exactly in extent to the quadrangle in which they were stationed, and all around [illegible] rose huge black walls exhibiting windows [illegible] with heavy archi[illegible] [illegible]rial and religious [illegible]

Th[illegible] Catherine Seyton flashed like a[illegible] making the best use of those pretty [illegible] had attracted the commendation [illegible] and cautious Adam Woodco[illegible] towards a large door in the [illegible] front of th[illegible] court, pulled [illegible] till, the latch fl[illegible] ensconce[illegible] the ancient m[illegible] if she [illegible], Roland G[illegible] with [illegible] and ardour of hound [illegible] for the first [illegible]. He kept her in view in spit[illegible]

it is remarkable what an advantage, in such a race, the gallant who desires to see, possesses over the maiden who wishes not to be seen—an advantage which I have known counterbalance a great start in point of distance. In short, he saw the waving of her screen, or veil, at one corner, heard the tap of her foot, light as that was, as it crossed the court, and caught a glimpse of her figure just as she entered the door of the mansion.

Roland Græme, inconsiderate and headlong as we have described him, having no knowledge of real life but from the romances which he had read, and not an idea of checking himself in the midst of any eager impulse, possessed, besides, of much courage and readiness, never hesitated for a moment to approach the door through which the object of his search had disappeared. He, too, pulled the bobbin, and the latch, though heavy and massive, answered to the summons, and arose. The page entered with the same precipitation which had marked his whole proceeding, and found himself in a large hall, or vestibule, dimly enlightened by latticed casements of painted glass, and rendered yet dimmer through the exclusion of the sunbeams, owing to the height of the walls of those buildings by which the court-yard was enclosed. The walls of the hall were surrounded with suits of ancient and rusted armour, interchanged with huge and massive stone-scutcheons, bearing double tressures, fleured and counterfleured, wheat-sheaves, coronets, and so forth, things to which Roland Græme gave not a moment's attention.

In fact, he only deigned to observe the figure of Catherine Seyton, who, deeming herself safe in the hall, had stopped to take breath after her course, and was reposing herself for a moment on a large oaken settle which stood at the upper end of the hall. The noise of Roland's entrance at once disturbed her; she started up with a faint scream of surprise, and escaped through one of the several folding-doors which opened into this apartment as a common centre. This door, which Roland Græme instantly approached, opened on a large and well-lighted gallery, at the upper end of which he could hear several voices, and the noise of hasty steps approaching towards the hall or vestibule. A little recalled to sober thought by an appearance of serious danger, he was deliberating whether he should stand fast or retire, when Catherine Seyton re-entered from a side door, running towards him with as much speed as a few minutes since she had fled from him.

'O, what mis[illegible] you [illegible]her?' sh[illegible] said; 'fly—fly, [illegible] stay—they come—flight is [illegible] came to ask for Lord Seyton.'

She sprung from him and d[illegible]rough the door by which she had [illegible]second appearance; and [illegible]air of large folding-doors [illegible]allery flew open with vehem[illegible] young gentlemen, richly dres[illegible]ard into the apartment, having [illegible]t their swords drawn.

'Who is it,' said one, 'dare [illegible]us in our own mansion?'

'Cut him to pieces,' said another; 'let him pay for this day's insolence and violence—he is some follower of the Rothes.'

'No, by Saint Mary,' said another; 'he is a follower of the arch-fiend and ennobled clown, Halbert Glendinning, who takes the style of Avenel—once a Church-vassal, now a pillager of the Church.'

'It is so,' said a fourth; 'I know him by the holly-sprig, which is their cognisance. Secure the door, he must answer for this insolence.'

Two of the gallants, hastily drawing their weapons, passed on to the door by which Roland had entered the hall, and stationed themselves there as if to prevent his escape. The others advanced on Græme, who had just sense enough to perceive that any attempt at resistance would be alike fruitless and imprudent. At once, and by various voices, none of which sounded amicably, the page was required to say who he was, whence he came, his name, his errand, and who sent him hither. The number of the questions demanded of him at once, afforded a momentary apology for his remaining silent, and ere that brief truce had elapsed, a personage entered the hall, at whose appearance those who had gathered fiercely around Roland, fell back with respect.

This was a tall man, whose dark hair was already grizzled, though his eye and haughty features retained all the animation of youth. The upper part of his person was undressed to his Holland shirt, whose ample folds were stained with blood. But he wore a mantle of crimson, lined with rich fur, cast around him, which supplied the deficiency of his dress. On his head he had a crimson velvet bonnet, looped up on one side with a small golden chain of many links, which, going thrice around the hat, was fastened by a medal, agreeable to the fashion amongst the grandees of the time.

'Whom have you here, sons and kinsmen,' said he, 'around whom you crowd thus roughly? Know you not that the shelter of this roof should secure every one fair treatment, who shall come hither either in fair peace, or in open and manly hostility?'

'But here, my lord,' answered one of the youths, 'is a knave who comes on treacherous espial!'

'I deny the charge!' said Roland Græme boldly, 'I came to inquire after my Lord Seyton.'

'A likely tale,' answered his accusers, 'in the mouth of a follower of Glendinning.'

'Stay, young men,' said the Lord Seyton, for it was that nobleman himself, 'let me look at this youth.—By Heaven, it is the very same who came so boldly to my side not very many minutes since, when some of my own knaves bore themselves with more respect to their own worshipful safety than to mine! Stand back from him, for he well deserves honour and a friendly welcome at your hands, instead of this rough treatment.'

They fell back on all sides, obedient to Lord Seyton's commands, who, taking Roland Græme by the hand, thanked him for his prompt and gallant assistance, adding, that he nothing doubted the same interest which he had taken in his cause in the affray, brought him hither to inquire after his hurt.'

Roland bowed low in acquiescence.

'Or is there anything in which I can serve you, to show my sense of your ready gallantry?'

But the page, thinking it best to abide by the apology for his visit which the Lord Seyton had so aptly himself suggested, replied, 'that to be assured of his lordship's safety, had been the only cause of his intrusion. He judged,' he added, 'he had seen him receive some hurt in the affray.'

'A trifle,' said Lord Seyton; 'I had but stripped my doublet, that the chirurgeon might put some dressing on the paltry scratch, when these rash boys interrupted us with their clamour.'

Roland Græme, making a low obeisance, was now about to depart, for, relieved from the danger of being treated as a spy, he began next to fear that his companion, Adam Woodcock, whom he had so unceremoniously quitted, would either bring him into some further dilemma, by venturing into the hotel in quest of him, or ride off and leave him behind altogether. But Lord Seyton did not permit him to escape so easily. 'Tarry,' he said, 'young man, and let me know thy rank and name. The Seyton has of late been more wont to see friends and followers shrink from his side, than to receive aid from strangers—but a new world may come round, in which he may have the chance of rewarding his well-wishers.'

'My name is Roland Græme, my lord,' answered the youth, 'a page, who, for the present, is in the service of Sir Halbert Glendinning.'

'I said so from the first,' said one of the young men; 'my life I will wager, that this is a shaft out of the heretic's quiver—a stratagem from first to last, to ingyre into your confidence some espial of his own. They know how to teach both boys and women to play the intelligencers.'

'That is false, if it be spoken of me,' said Roland; 'no man in Scotland should teach me such a foul part!'

'I believe thee, boy,' said Lord Seyton, 'for thy strokes were too fair to be dealt upon an understanding with those that were to receive them. Credit me, however, I little expected to have help at need from one of your master's household; and I would know what moved thee in my quarrel, to thine own endangering!'

'So please you, my lord,' said Roland, 'I think my master himself would not have stood by, and seen an honourable man borne to earth by odds, if his single arm could help him. Such at least is the lesson we were taught in chivalry at the Castle of Avenel.'

'The good seed hath fallen into good ground, young man,' said Seyton; 'but alas! if thou practise such honourable war in these dishonourable days, when right is everywhere borne down by mastery, thy life, my poor boy, will be but a short one.'

'Let it be short, so it be honourable,' said Roland Græme; 'and permit me now, my lord, to commend me to your grace, and to take my leave. A comrade waits with my horse in the street.'

'Take this, however, young man,' said Lord Seyton,* undoing from his bonnet the golden chain and medal, 'and wear it for my sake.'

With no little pride Roland Græme accepted the gift, which he hastily fastened around his bonnet, as he had seen gallants wear such an ornament, and, renewing his obeisance to the baron, left the hall, traversed the court, and appeared in the street, just as Adam Woodcock, vexed and anxious at his delay, had determined to leave the horses to their fate, and go in quest of his youthful comrade. 'Whose barn hast thou broken next?' he exclaimed, greatly relieved by his appearance, although his countenance indicated that he had passed through an agitating scene.

'Ask me no questions,' said Roland, leaping gaily on his horse; 'but see how short time it takes to win a chain of gold,' pointing to that which he now wore.

'Now, God forbid that thou hast either stolen it, or reft it by violence,' said the falconer; 'for, otherwise, I wot not how the devil thou couldst compass it. I have been often here, ay, for months at an end, and no one gave me either chain or medal.'

'Thou seest I have got one on shorter acquaintance with the city,' answered the page; 'but set thine honest heart at rest; that which is fairly won and freely given, is neither reft nor stolen.'

'Marry, hang thee, with thy fanfarona † about thy neck!' said the falconer; 'I think water will not drown, nor hemp strangle thee. Thou hast been discarded as my lady's page, to come in again as my lord's squire; and for following a noble young damsel into some great household, thou gettest a chain and medal, where another would have had the baton across his shoulders, if he missed having the dirk in his body.—But here we come in front of the old Abbey. Bear thy good luck with you when you cross these paved stones, and, by Our Lady, you may brag Scotland.'

As he spoke, they checked their horses, where the huge old vaulted entrance to the Abbey or Palace of Holyrood crossed the termination of the street down which they had proceeded. The court-yard of the palace opened within this gloomy porch, showing the front of an irregular pile of monastic buildings, one wing of which is still extant, forming a part of the modern palace, erected in the days of Charles II.

At the gate of the porch the falconer and page resigned their horses to the serving-man in attendance; the falconer commanding him, with an air of authority, to carry them safely to the stables.—'We follow,' he said, 'the Knight of Avenel.—We must bear ourselves for what we are here,' said he, in a whisper to Roland, 'for every one here is looked on as they demean themselves; and he that is too modest must to the wall, as the proverb says; therefore cock thy bonnet, man, and let us brook the causeway bravely.'

Assuming, therefore, an air of consequence, corresponding to what he supposed to be his master's importance and quality, Adam Woodcock led the way into the court-yard of the Palace of Holyrood.

* Note Seyton or Seton.

† A name given to the gold chains worn by the military men of the period. It is of Spanish origin; for the fashion of wearing these costly ornaments was much followed amongst the conquerors of the New World.

CHAPTER XVIII.

—— The sky is clouded, Gaspard,
And the vex'd ocean sleeps a troubled sleep,
Beneath a lurid gleam of parting sunshine.
Such slumber hangs o'er discontented lands,
While factions doubt, as yet, if they have strength
To front the open battle.

ALBION—A POEM.

THE youthful page paused on the entrance of the court-yard, and implored his guide to give him a moment's breathing space. 'Let me but look around me, man,' said he; 'you consider not I have never seen such a scene as this before. —And this is Holyrood—the resort of the gallant and gay, and the fair, and the wise, and the powerful!'

'Ay, marry is it!' said Woodcock; 'but I wish I could hood thee as they do the hawks, for thou starest as wildly as if you sought another fray or another fanfarona. I would I had thee safely housed, for thou lookest wild as a goss-hawk.'

It was indeed no common sight to Roland, the vestibule of a palace, traversed by its various groups,—some radiant with gaiety—some pensive, and apparently weighed down by affairs concerning the state, or concerning themselves. Here the hoary statesman, with his cautious yet commanding look, his furred cloak and sable pantoufles; there the soldier in buff and steel, his long sword jarring against the pavement, and his whiskered upper lip and frowning brow looking an habitual defiance of danger, which perhaps was not always made good; there again passed my lord's serving-man, high of heart and bloody of hand, humble to his master and his master's equals, insolent to all others. To these might be added the poor suitor, with his anxious look and depressed mien—the officer, full of his brief authority, elbowing his betters, and possibly his benefactors, out of the road—the proud priest who sought a better benefice—the proud baron who sought a grant of Church lands—the robber chief, who came to solicit a pardon for the injuries he had inflicted on his neighbours—the plundered franklin, who came to seek vengeance for that which he had himself received. Besides, there was the mustering and disposition of guards and soldiers—the despatching of messengers, and the receiving them—the trampling and neighing of horses without the gate—the flashing of arms, and rustling of plumes, and jingling of spurs, within it. In short, it was that gay and splendid confusion, in which the eye of youth sees all that is brave and brilliant, and that of experience much that is doubtful, deceitful, false, and hollow—hopes that will never be gratified—promises which will never be fulfilled—pride in the disguise of humility—and insolence in that of frank and generous bounty.

As, tired of the eager and enraptured attention which the page gave to a scene so new to him, Adam Woodcock endeavoured to get him to move forward, before his exuberance of astonishment should attract the observation of the sharp-witted denizens of the court, the falconer himself became an object of attention to a gay menial in a dark-green bonnet and feather, with a cloak of a corresponding colour, laid down, as the phrase then went, by six broad bars of silver lace, and welted with violet and silver. The words of recognition burst from both at once. 'What! Adam Woodcock at court!' and 'What! Michael Wing-the-wind—and how runs the hackit greyhound bitch now?'

'The waur for the wear, like ourselves, Adam, —eight years this grass—no four legs will carry a dog for ever; but we keep her for the breed, and so she 'scapes Border doom.—But why stand you gazing there? I promise you my lord has wished for you, and asked for you.'

'My Lord of Murray asked for me, and he Regent of the kingdom too!' said Adam. 'I hunger and thirst to pay my duty to my good lord;—but I fancy his good lordship remembers the day's sport on Carnwath Moor; and my Drummelzier falcon that beat the hawks from the Isle of Man, and won his lordship a hundred crowns from the Southron baron whom they called Stanley.'

'Nay, not to flatter thee, Adam,' said his court friend, 'he remembers nought of thee, or of thy falcon either. He hath flown many a higher flight since that, and struck his quarry too. But come, come hither away; I trust we are to be good comrades on the old score.'

'What!' said Adam, 'you would have me crush a pot with ye—but I must first dispose of my eyas, where he will neither have girl to chase, nor lad to draw sword upon.'

'Is the youngster such a one?' said Michael.

'Ay, by my hood, he flies at all game,' replied Woodcock.

'Then had he better come with us,' said Michael Wing-the-wind; 'for we cannot have a proper carouse just now, only I would wet my lips, and so must you. I want to hear the news from Saint Mary's before you see my lord, and I will let you know how the wind sits up yonder.'

While he thus spoke, he led the way to a side-door which opened into the court; and threading several dark passages with the air of one who knew the most secret recesses of the palace, conducted them to a small matted chamber, where he placed bread and cheese and a foaming flagon of ale before the falconer and his young companion, who immediately did justice to the latter in a hearty draught, which nearly emptied the measure. Having drawn his breath, and dashed the froth from his whiskers, he observed that his anxiety for the boy had made him deadly dry.

'Mend your draught,' said his hospitable friend, again supplying the flagon from a pitcher which stood beside. 'I know the way to the buttery-bar. And now mind what I say—this morning the Earl of Morton came to my lord in a mighty chafe.'

'What! they keep the old friendship, then?' said Woodcock.

'Ay, ay, man, what else?' said Michael; 'one hand must scratch the other. But in a mighty chafe was my Lord of Morton, who, to say truth, looketh on such occasions altogether uncanny, and, as it were, fiendish; and he says to my lord,—for I was in the chamber taking orders about a cast of hawks that are to be

fetched from Darnaway—they match your long-winged falcons, friend Adam.'

'I will believe that when I see them fly as high a pitch,' replied Woodcock, this professional observation forming a sort of parenthesis.

'However,' said Michael, pursuing his tale, 'my Lord of Morton, in a mighty chafe, asked my Lord Regent whether he was well dealt with—"for my brother," said he, "should have had a gift to be Commendator of Kennaquhair, and to have all the temporalities erected into a lordship of regality for his benefit; and here," said he, "the false monks have had the insolence to choose a new Abbot to put his claim in my brother's way; and, moreover, the rascality of the neighbourhood have burnt and plundered all that was left in the Abbey, so that my brother will not have a house to dwell in, when he hath ousted the lazy hounds of priests." And my lord, seeing him chafed, said mildly to him, "These are shrewd tidings, Douglas, but I trust they be not true, for Halbert Glendinning went southward yesterday, with a band of spears, and assuredly, had either of these chances happened, that the monks had presumed to choose an Abbot, or that the Abbey had been burnt, as you say, he had taken order on the spot for the punishment of such insolence, and had despatched us a messenger." And the Earl of Morton replied—now I pray you, Adam, to notice that I say this out of love to you and your lord, and also for old comradeship, and also because Sir Halbert had done me good, and may again—and also because I love not the Earl of Morton, as indeed more fear than like him—so then it were a foul deed in you to betray me.—"But," said the Earl to the Regent, "take heed, my lord, you trust not this Glendinning too far—he comes of churl's blood, which was never true to the nobles"—by Saint Andrew, these were his very words.—"And besides," he said, "he hath a brother, a monk in Saint Mary's, and walks all by his guidance, and is making friends on the Border with Buccleuch and with Ferniehirst,* and will join hand with them, were there likelihood of a new world." And my lord answered, like a free noble lord as he is: "Tush! my Lord of Morton, I will be warrant for Glendinning's faith; and for his brother, he is a dreamer, that thinks of nought but book and breviary—and if such hap have chanced as you tell of, I look to receive from Glendinning the cowl of a hanged monk, and the head of a riotous churl, by way of sharp and sudden justice."—And my Lord of Morton left the place, and, as it seemed to me, somewhat malcontent. But since that time, my lord has asked me more than once whether there has arrived no messenger from the Knight of Avenel. And all this I have told you that you may frame your discourse to the best purpose, for it seems to me that my lord will not be well pleased if aught has happened like what my Lord of Morton said, and if your lord hath not ta'en strict orders with it.'

There was something in this communication which fairly blanked the bold visage of Adam Woodcock, in spite of the reinforcement which his natural hardihood had received from the berry-brown ale of Holyrood.

'What was it he said about a churl's head, that grim Lord of Morton?' said the discontented falconer to his friend.

'Nay, it was my Lord Regent who said that he expected, if the Abbey was injured, your knight would send him the head of the ringleader among the rioters.'

'Nay, but is this done like a good Protestant,' said Adam Woodcock, 'or a true Lord of the Congregation? We used to be their white boys and darlings when we pulled down the convents in Fife and Perthshire.'

'Ay, but that,' said Michael, 'was when old mother Rome held her own, and her great folks were determined she should have no shelter for her head in Scotland. But, now that the priests are fled in all quarters, and their houses and lands are given to our grandees, they cannot see that we are working the work of reformation in destroying the palaces of zealous Protestants.'

'But I tell you Saint Mary's is not destroyed!' said Woodcock, in increasing agitation; 'some trash of painted windows there were broken—things that no nobleman could have brooked in his house—some stone saints were brought on their marrowbones, like old Widdrington at Chevy-Chase; but as for fire-raising, there was not so much as a lighted lunt amongst us, save the match which the dragon had to light the burning tow withal, which he was to spit against Saint George; nay, I had caution of that.'

'How! Adam Woodcock,' said his comrade, 'I trust thou hadst no hand in such a fair work? Look you, Adam, I were loth to terrify you, and you just come from a journey; but I promise you, Earl Morton hath brought you down a maiden from Halifax, you never saw the like of her—and she'll clasp you round the neck, and your head will remain in her arms.'

'Pshaw!' answered Adam, 'I am too old to have my head turned by any maiden of them all. I know my Lord of Morton will go as far for a buxom lass as any one; but what the devil took him to Halifax, all the way? and if he has got a gamester there, what hath she to do with my head?'

'Much, much!' answered Michael. 'Herod's daughter, who did such execution with her foot and ankle, danced not men's heads off more cleanly than this maiden of Morton.† 'Tis an axe, man,—an axe which falls of itself like a sash window, and never gives the headsman the trouble to wield it.'

'By my faith, a shrewd device,' said Woodcock; 'Heaven keep us free on't!'

The page, seeing no end to the conversation betwixt these two old comrades, and anxious, from what he had heard, concerning the fate of the Abbot, now interrupted their conference.

* Both these Border chieftains were great friends of Queen Mary.

† *Maiden of Morton*—a species of guillotine which the Regent Morton brought down from Halifax, certainly at a period considerably later than intimated in the tale. He was himself the first who suffered by the engine.

[This instrument, which is preserved in the Antiquarian Museum of Edinburgh, was brought to Scotland several years earlier than popular tradition assigns, and is said to have been used for the execution of criminals about twenty years before the Earl of Morton was beheaded, in 1582.]

'Methinks,' he said, 'Adam Woodcock, thou hadst better deliver thy master's letter to the Regent; questionless he hath therein stated what has chanced at Kennaquhair, in the way most advantageous for all concerned.'

'The boy is right,' said Michael Wing-the-wind, 'my lord will be very impatient.'

'The child hath wit enough to keep himself warm,' said Adam Woodcock, producing from his hawking-bag his lord's letter, addressed to the Earl of Murray, 'and for that matter so have I. So, Master Roland, you will e'en please to present this yourself to the Lord Regent; his presence will be better graced by a young page than by an old falconer.'

'Well said, canny Yorkshire!' replied his friend; 'and but now you were so earnest to see our good lord!—Why, wouldst thou put the lad into the noose that thou mayest slip tether thyself?—or dost thou think the maiden will clasp his fair young neck more willingly than thy old sunburnt weasand?'

'Go to,' answered the falconer; 'thy wit towers high an it could strike the quarry. I tell thee, the youth has nought to fear—he had nothing to do with the gambol—a rare gambol it was, Michael, as madcaps ever played: and I had made as rare a ballad, if we had had the luck to get it sung to an end. But mum for that—*tace*, as I said before, is Latin for a candle. Carry the youth to the presence, and I will remain here, with bridle in hand, ready to strike the spurs up to the rowel-heads, in case the hawk flies my way.—I will soon put Sutra Edge, I trow, betwixt the Regent and me, if he means me less than fair play.'

'Come on, then, my lad,' said Michael, 'since thou must needs take the spring before canny Yorkshire.' So saying, he led the way through winding passages, closely followed by Roland Græme, until they arrived at a large winding stone stair, the steps of which were so long and broad, and at the same time so low, as to render the ascent uncommonly easy. When they had ascended about the height of one storey, the guide stepped aside, and pushed open the door of a dark and gloomy antechamber; so dark, indeed, that his youthful companion stumbled, and nearly fell down upon a low step, which was awkwardly placed on the very threshold.

'Take heed,' said Michael Wing-the-wind, in a very low tone of voice, and first glancing cautiously round to see if any one listened—'Take heed, my young friend, for those who fall on these boards seldom rise again.—Seest thou that,' he added, in a still lower voice, pointing to some dark crimson stains on the floor, on which a ray of light, shot through a small aperture, and traversing the general gloom of the apartment, fell with mottled radiance—'Seest thou that, youth?—walk warily, for men have fallen here before you.'

'What mean you,' said the page, his flesh creeping, though he scarce knew why; 'is it blood?'

'Ay, ay,' said the domestic, in the same whispering tone, and dragging the youth on by the arm—'Blood it is,—but this is no time to question, or even to look at it. Blood it is, foully and fearfully shed, as foully and fearfully avenged. The blood,' he added, in a still more cautious tone, 'of Seignior David.'

Roland Græme's heart throbbed when he found himself so unexpectedly in the scene of Rizzio's slaughter, a catastrophe which had chilled with horror all even in that rude age, which had been the theme of wonder and pity through every cottage and castle in Scotland, and had not escaped that of Avenel. But his guide hurried him forward, permitting no further question, and with the manner of one who has already tampered too much with a dangerous subject. A tap which he made at a low door at one end of the vestibule, was answered by a huissier or usher, who, opening it cautiously, received Michael's intimation that a page waited the Regent's leisure, who brought letters from the Knight of Avenel.

'The council is breaking up,' said the usher; 'but give me the packet; his Grace the Regent will presently see the messenger.'

'The packet,' replied the page, 'must be delivered into the Regent's own hands; such were the orders of my master.'

The usher looked at him from head to foot, as if surprised at his boldness, and then replied with some asperity, 'Say you so, my young master? Thou crowest loudly to be but a chicken, and from a country barn-yard too.'

'Were it a time or place,' said Roland, 'thou shouldest see I can do more than crow; but do your duty, and let the Regent know I wait his pleasure.'

'Thou art but a pert knave to tell me of my duty,' said the courtier in office; 'but I will find a time to show you you are out of yours; meanwhile, wait there till you are wanted.' So saying, he shut the door in Roland's face.

Michael Wing-the-wind, who had shrunk from his youthful companion during this altercation, according to the established maxim of courtiers of all ranks, and in all ages, now transgressed their prudential line of conduct so far as to come up to him once more. 'Thou art a hopeful young springald,' said he, 'and I see right well old Yorkshire had reason in his caution. Thou hast been five minutes in the court, and hast employed thy time so well as to make a powerful and a mortal enemy out of the usher of the council-chamber. Why, man, you might almost as well have offended the deputy butler.'

'I care not what he is,' said Roland Græme; 'I will teach whomever I speak with to speak civilly to me in return. I did not come from Avenel to be browbeaten in Holyrood.'

'Bravo, my lad!' said Michael; 'it is a fine spirit if you can but hold it—but see, the door opens.'

The usher appeared, and, in a more civil tone of voice and manner, said that his Grace the Regent would receive the Knight of Avenel's message; and accordingly marshalled Roland Græme the way into the apartment from which the council had been just dismissed, after finishing their consultations. There was in the room a long oaken table, surrounded by stools of the same wood, with a large elbow chair, covered with crimson velvet, at the head. Writing materials and papers were lying there in apparent disorder; and one or two of the privy

councillors who had lingered behind, assuming their cloaks, bonnets, and swords, and bidding farewell to the Regent, were departing slowly by a large door, on the opposite side to that through which the page entered. Apparently the Earl of Murray had made some jest, for the smiling countenances of the statesmen expressed that sort of cordial reception which is paid by courtiers to the condescending pleasantrie of a prince.

The Regent himself was laughing heartily as he said, 'Farewell, my lords, and hold me remembered to the Cock of the North.'

He then turned slowly round towards Roland Græme, and the marks of gaiety, real or assumed, disappeared from his countenance, as completely as the passing bubbles leave the dark mirror of a still profound lake into which a traveller has cast a stone; in the course of a minute his noble features had assumed their natural expression of deep and even melancholy gravity.

This distinguished statesman, for as such his worst enemies acknowledged him, possessed all the external dignity, as well as almost all the noble qualities, which could grace the power that he enjoyed; and had he succeeded to the throne as his legitimate inheritance, it is probable he would have been recorded as one of Scotland's wisest and greatest kings. But that he held his authority by the deposition and imprisonment of his sister and benefactress, was a crime which those only can excuse who think ambition an apology for ingratitude. He was dressed plainly in black velvet, after the Flemish fashion, and wore in his high-crowned hat a jewelled clasp, which looped it up on one side, and formed the only ornament of his apparel. He had his poniard by his side, and his sword lay on the council table.

Such was the personage before whom Roland Græme now presented himself, with a feeling of breathless awe, very different from the usual boldness and vivacity of his temper. In fact, he was, from education and nature, forward, but not impudent, and was much more easily controlled by the moral superiority arising from the elevated talents and renown of those with whom he conversed, than by pretensions founded only on rank or external show. He might have braved with indifference the presence of an earl, merely distinguished by his belt and coronet; but he felt overawed in that of the eminent soldier and statesman, the wielder of a nation's power, and the leader of her armies.—The greatest and wisest are flattered by the deference of youth—so graceful and becoming in itself; and Murray took, with much courtesy, the letter from the hands of the abashed and blushing page, and answered with complaisance to the imperfect and half-muttered greeting which he endeavoured to deliver to him on the part of Sir Halbert of Avenel.* He even paused a moment, ere he broke the silk with which the letter was secured, to ask the page his name—so much he was struck with his very handsome features and form.

'Roland Graham,' he said, repeating the words after the hesitating page. 'What! of the Grahams of the Lennox?'

'No, my lord,' replied Roland; 'my parents dwelt in the Debateable Land.'

Murray made no further inquiry, but proceeded to read his despatches; during the perusal of which his brow began to assume a stern expression of displeasure, as that of one who found something which at once surprised and disturbed him. He sat down on the nearest seat, frowned till his eyebrows almost met together, read the letter twice over, and was then silent for several minutes. At length, raising his head, his eye encountered that of the usher, who in vain endeavoured to exchange the look of eager and curious observation with which he had been perusing the Regent's features, for that open and unnoticing expression of countenance which, in looking at all, seems as if it saw and marked nothing—a cast of look which may be practised with advantage by all those, of whatever degree, who are admitted to witness the familiar and unguarded hours of their superiors. Great men are as jealous of their thoughts as the wife of King Candaules was of her charms, and will as readily punish those who have, however involuntarily, beheld them in mental *déshabille* and exposure.

'Leave the apartment, Hyndman,' said the Regent sternly, 'and carry your observation elsewhere. You are too knowing, sir, for your post, which, by special order, is destined for men of blunter capacity. So! now you look more like a fool than you did'—(for Hyndman, as may easily be supposed, was not a little disconcerted by this rebuke)—'keep that confused stare, and it may keep your office. Begone, sir!'

The usher departed in dismay, not forgetting to register, amongst his other causes of dislike to Roland Græme, that he had been the witness of this disgraceful chiding. When he had left the apartment, the Regent again addressed the page:

'Your name, you say, is Armstrong?'

'No,' replied Roland, 'my name is Græme, so please you—Roland Græme, whose forebears were designated of Heathergill, in the Debateable Land.'

'Ay, I knew it was a name from the Debateable Land. Hast thou any acquaintance in Edinburgh?'

'My lord,' replied Roland, willing rather to evade this question than to answer it directly, for the prudence of being silent with respect to Lord Seyton's adventure immediately struck him, 'I have been in Edinburgh scarce an hour, and that for the first time in my life.'

'What! and thou Sir Halbert Glendinning's page?' said the Regent.

'I was brought up as my lady's page,' said the youth, 'and left Avenel Castle for the first time in my life—at least since my childhood—only three days since.'

'My lady's page!' repeated the Earl of Murray, as if speaking to himself: 'it was strange to send his lady's page on a matter of such deep concernment—Morton will say it is of a piece with the nomination of his brother to be Abbot; and yet in some sort an inexperienced youth will best serve the turn.—

* [In describing the introduction of Roland Græme to the Regent Murray, I think it very probable that Scott had in mind his own first interview with the Duke of Wellington in Paris, after the battle of Waterloo.—J. G. LOCKHART.]

What hast thou been taught, young man, in thy doughty apprenticeship?'

'To hunt, my lord, and to hawk,' said Roland Græme.

'To hunt conies, and to hawk at ousels!' said the Regent, smiling; 'for such are the sports of ladies and their followers.'

Græme's cheek reddened deeply as he replied, not without some emphasis, 'To hunt red-deer of the first head, and to strike down herons of the highest soar, my lord, which in Lothian speech may be termed, for aught I know, conies and ousels;—also I can wield a brand and couch a lance, according to our Border meaning; in inland speech these may be termed water-flags and bulrushes.'

'Thy speech rings like metal,' said the Regent, 'and I pardon the sharpness of it for the truth. —Thou knowest, then, what belongs to the duty of a man-at-arms?'

'So far as exercise can teach it without real service in the field,' answered Roland Græme; 'but our knight permitted none of his household to make raids, and I never had the good fortune to see a stricken field.'

'The good fortune!' repeated the Regent, smiling somewhat sorrowfully; 'take my word, young man, war is the only game from which both parties rise losers.'

'Not always, my lord,' answered the page, with his characteristic audacity, 'if fame speaks truth!'

'How, sir?' said the Regent, colouring in his turn, and perhaps suspecting an indiscreet allusion to the height which he himself had attained by the hap of civil war.

'Because, my lord,' said Roland Græme, without change of tone, 'he who fights well must have fame in life, or honour in death; and so war is a game from which no one can rise a loser.'

The Regent smiled and shook his head, when at that moment the door opened, and the Earl of Morton presented himself.

'I come somewhat hastily,' he said, 'and I enter unannounced because my news are of weight —It is as I said; Edward Glendinning is named Abbot, and'——

'Hush, my lord!' said the Regent; 'I know it, but'——

'And perhaps you knew it before I did, my Lord of Murray?' answered Morton, his dark red brow growing darker and redder as he spoke.

'Morton,' said Murray, 'suspect me not—touch not mine honour—I have to suffer enough from the calumnies of foes, let me not have to contend with the unjust suspicions of my friends.—We are not alone,' said he, recollecting himself, 'or I could tell you more.'

He led Morton into one of the deep embrasures which the windows formed in the massive wall, and which afforded a retiring place for their conversing apart. In this recess, Roland observed them speak together with much earnestness, Murray appearing to be grave and earnest, and Morton having a jealous and offended air, which seemed gradually to give way to the assurances of the Regent.

As their conversation grew more earnest, they became gradually louder in speech, having perhaps forgotten the presence of the page, the more readily as his position in the apartment placed him out of sight, so that he found himself unwillingly privy to more of their discourse than he cared to hear. For, page though he was, a mean curiosity after the secrets of others had never been numbered amongst Roland's failings; and moreover, with all his natural rashness, he could not but doubt the safety of becoming privy to the secret discourse of these powerful and dreaded men. Still he could neither stop his ears, nor with propriety leave the apartment; and while he thought of some means of signifying his presence, he had already heard so much, that to have produced himself suddenly would have been as awkward, and perhaps as dangerous, as in quiet to abide the end of their conference. What he overheard, however, was but an imperfect part of their communication; and although an expert politician, acquainted with the circumstances of the times, would have had little difficulty in tracing the meaning, yet Roland Græme could only form very general and vague conjectures as to the import of their discourse.

'All is prepared,' said Murray, 'and Lindesay is setting forward—She must hesitate no longer —thou seest I act by thy counsel, and harden myself against softer considerations.'

'True, my lord,' replied Morton, 'in what is necessary to gain power, you do not hesitate, but go boldly to the mark. But are you as careful to defend and preserve what you have won?—Why this establishment of domestics around her?—has not your sister men and maidens enough to tend her, but you must consent to this superfluous and dangerous retinue?'

'For shame, Morton!—a princess, and my sister, could I do less than allow her due tendance?'

'Ay,' replied Morton, 'even thus fly all your shafts—smartly enough loosened from the bow, and not unskilfully aimed—but a breath of foolish affection ever crosses in the mid volley and sways the arrow from the mark.'

'Say not so, Morton,' replied Murray; 'I have both dared and done'——

'Yes, enough to gain, but not enough to keep —reckon not that she will think and act thus— you have wounded her deeply, both in pride and in power—it signifies nought that you would tent now the wound with unavailing salves—as matters stand with you, you must forfeit the title of an affectionate brother, to hold that of a bold and determined statesman.'

'Morton!' said Murray, with some impatience, 'I brook not these taunts—what I have done I have done—what I must further do, I must and will—but I am not made of iron like thee, and I cannot but remember—Enough of this—my purpose holds.'

'And I warrant me,' said Morton, 'the choice of these domestic consolations will rest with'——

Here he whispered names which escaped Roland Græme's ear. Murray replied in a similar tone, but so much raised towards the conclusion of the sentence, that the page heard these words—'And of him I hold myself secure, by Glendinning's recommendation.'

'Ay, which may be as much trustworthy as his late conduct at the Abbey of Saint Mary's—you have heard that his brother's election has taken

place. Your favourite Sir Halbert, my Lord of Murray, has as much fraternal affection as yourself.'

'By Heaven, Morton, that taunt demanded an unfriendly answer, but I pardon it, for your brother also is concerned; but this election shall be annulled. I tell you, Earl of Morton, while I hold the sword of state in my royal nephew's name, neither lord nor knight in Scotland shall dispute my authority; and if I bear with insults from my friends, it is only while I know them to be such, and forgive their follies for their faithfulness.'

Morton muttered what seemed to be some excuse, and the Regent answered him in a milder tone, and then subjoined, 'Besides, I have another pledge than Glendinning's recommendation for this youth's fidelity—his nearest relative has placed herself in my hands as his security, to be dealt withal as his doings shall deserve.'

'That is something,' replied Morton; 'but yet in fair love and good will, I must still pray you to keep on your guard. The foes are stirring again, as horse-flies and hornets become busy so soon as the storm-blast is over. George of Seyton was crossing the causeway this morning with a score of men at his back, and had a ruffle with my friends of the house of Leslie—they met at the Tron, and were fighting hard, when the provost, with his guard of partizans, came in thirdsman, and staved them asunder with their halberds, as men part dog and bear.'

'He hath my order for such interference,' said the Regent—'Has any one been hurt?'

'George of Seyton himself, by black Ralph Leslie—the devil take the rapier that ran not through from side to side! Ralph has a bloody coxcomb, by a blow from a messan-page whom nobody knew—Dick Seyton of Windygowl is run through the arm, and two gallants of the Leslies have suffered phlebotomy. This is all the gentle blood which has been spilled in the revel; but a yeoman or two on both sides have had bones broken and ears chopped. The ostlere-wives, who are likely to be the only losers by their miscarriage, have dragged the knaves off the street, and are crying a drunken coronach over them.'

'You take it lightly, Douglas,' said the Regent; 'these broils and feuds would shame the capital of the Great Turk, let alone that of a Christian and reformed state. But if I live, this gear shall be amended; and men shall say, when they read my story, that if it were my cruel hap to rise to power by the dethronement of a sister, I employed it, when gained, for the benefit of the commonweal.'

'And of your friends,' replied Morton; 'wherefore I trust for your instant order annulling the election of this lurdane Abbot, Edward Glendinning.'

'You shall be presently satisfied,' said the Regent; and, stepping forward, he began to call, 'So ho, Hyndman!' when suddenly his eye lighted on Roland Græme.—'By my faith, Douglas,' said he, turning to his friend, 'here have been three at council!'

'Ay, but only two can keep counsel,' said Morton; 'the galliard must be disposed of.'

'For shame, Morton—an orphan boy!—Hearken thee, my child—Thou hast told me some of thy accomplishments—canst thou speak truth?'

'Ay, my lord, when it serves my turn,' replied Græme.

'It shall serve thy turn now,' said the Regent; 'and falsehood shall be thy destruction. How much hast thou heard or understood of what we two have spoken together?'

'But little, my lord,' replied Roland Græme boldly, 'which met my apprehension, saving that it seemed to me as if in something you doubted the faith of the Knight of Avenel, under whose roof I was nurtured.'

'And what hast thou to say on that point, young man?' continued the Regent, bending his eyes upon him with a keen and strong expression of observation.

'That,' said the page, 'depends on the quality of those who speak against his honour whose bread I have long eaten. If they be my inferiors, I say they lie, and will maintain what I say with my baton; if my equals, still I say they lie, and will do battle in the quarrel, if they list, with my sword; if my superiors'—he paused.

'Proceed boldly,' said the Regent—'What if thy superiors said aught that nearly touched your master's honour?'

'I would say,' replied Græme, 'that he did ill to slander the absent, and that my master was a man who could render an account of his actions to any one who should manfully demand it of him to his face.'

'And it were manfully said,' replied the Regent.—'What thinkest thou, my Lord of Morton?'

'I think,' replied Morton, 'that if the young galliard resemble a certain ancient friend of ours as much in the craft of his disposition as he does in eye and in brow, there may be a wide difference betwixt what he means and what he speaks.'

'And whom meanest thou that he resembles so closely?' said Murray.

'Even the true and trusty Julian Avenel,' replied Morton.

'But this youth belongs to the Debateable Land,' said Murray.

'It may be so; but Julian was an outlying striker of venison, and made many a fair cast when he had a fair doe in chase.'

'Pshaw!' said the Regent, 'this is but idle talk. Here, thou Hyndman—thou curiosity,' calling to the usher, who now entered,—'conduct this youth to his companion.—You will both,' he said to Græme, 'keep yourselves in readiness to travel on short notice.'—And then, motioning to him courteously to withdraw, he broke up the interview.

CHAPTER XIX.

It is and is not—'tis the thing I sought for,
Have kneel'd for, pray'd for, risk'd my fame and life for,
And yet it is not—no more than the shadow
Upon the hard, cold, flat, and polish'd mirror,
Is the warm, graceful, rounded, living substance
Which it presents in form and lineament.

OLD PLAY.

THE usher, with gravity which ill concealed a jealous scowl, conducted Roland Græme to a

lower apartment, where he found his comrade the falconer. The man of office then briefly acquainted them that this would be their residence till his Grace's further orders; that they were to go to the pantry, to the buttery, to the cellar, and to the kitchen, at the usual hours, to receive the allowances becoming their station,—instructions which Adam Woodcock's old familiarity with the court made him perfectly understand.—'For your beds,' he said, 'you must go to the hostelry of Saint Michael's, in respect the palace is now full of the domestics of the greater nobles.'

No sooner was the usher's back turned than Adam exclaimed, with all the glee of eager curiosity, 'And now, Master Roland, the news—the news—come, unbutton thy pouch, and give us thy tidings.—What says the Regent? asks he for Adam Woodcock?—and is all soldered up, or must the Abbot of Unreason strap for it?'

'All is well in that quarter,' said the page; 'and for the rest—But, hey-day, what! have you taken the chain and medal off from my bonnet?'

'And meet time it was, when yon usher, vinegar-faced rogue that he is, began to inquire what popish trangam you were wearing.—By the mass, the metal would have been confiscated for conscience' sake, like your other rattle-trap yonder at Avenel, which Mistress Lilias bears about on her shoes in the guise of a pair of shoe-buckles. This comes of carrying popish nick-nackets about you.'

'The jade!' exclaimed Roland Græme, 'has she melted down my rosary into buckles for her clumsy hoofs, which will set off such a garnish nearly as well as a cow's might?—But, hang her, let her keep them—many a dog's trick have I played old Lilias, for want of having something better to do, and the buckles will serve for a remembrance. Do you remember the verjuice I put into the comfits, when old Wingate and she were to breakfast together on Easter morning?'

'In troth do I, Master Roland—the major-domo's mouth was as crooked as a hawk's beak for the whole morning afterwards, and any other page in your room would have tasted the discipline of the porter's lodge for it. But my lady's favour stood between your skin and many a jerking—Lord send you may be the better for her protection in such matters!'

'I am at least grateful for it, Adam; and I am glad you put me in mind of it.'

'Well, but the news, my young master,' said Woodcock, 'spell me the tidings—what are we to fly at next?—what did the Regent say to you?'

'Nothing that I am to repeat again,' said Roland Græme, shaking his head.

'Why, hey-day,' said Adam, 'how prudent we are become all of a sudden! You have advanced rarely in brief space, Master Roland. You have well-nigh had your head broken, and you have gained your gold chain, and you have made an enemy, Master Usher to wit, with his two legs like hawks' perches, and you have had audience of the first man in the realm, and bear as much mystery in your brow as if you had flown in the court-sky ever since you were hatched. I believe, in my soul, you would run with a piece of the egg-shell on your head like the curlews, which (I would we were after them again) we used to call whaups in the Halidome and its neighbourhood. But sit thee down, boy; Adam Woodcock was never the lad to seek to enter into forbidden secrets—sit thee down, and I will go and fetch the vivers—I know the butler and the pantler of old.'

The good-natured falconer set forth upon his errand, busying himself about procuring their refreshment; and, during his absence, Roland Græme abandoned himself to the strange, complicated, and yet heart-stirring reflections, to which the events of the morning had given rise. Yesterday he was of neither mark nor likelihood, a vagrant boy, the attendant on a relative of whose sane judgment he himself had not the highest opinion; but now he had become, he knew not why, or wherefore, or to what extent, the custodier, as the Scottish phrase went, of some important state secret, in the safe keeping of which the Regent himself was concerned. It did not diminish from, but rather added to, the interest of a situation so unexpected, that Roland himself did not perfectly understand wherein he stood committed by the state secrets, in which he had unwittingly become participator. On the contrary, he felt like one who looks on a romantic landscape, of which he sees the features for the first time, and then obscured with mist and driving tempest. The imperfect glimpse which the eye catches of rocks, trees, and other objects around him, adds double dignity to these shrouded mountains and darkened abysses, of which the height, depth, and extent are left to imagination.

But mortals, especially at the well-appetized age which precedes twenty years, are seldom so much engaged either by real or conjectural subjects of speculation, but that their earthly wants claim their hour of attention. And with many a smile did our hero, so the reader may term him if he will, hail the reappearance of his friend Adam Woodcock, bearing on one platter a tremendous portion of boiled beef, and on another a plentiful allowance of greens, or rather what the Scotch call lang-kale. A groom followed with bread, salt, and the other means of setting forth a meal; and when they had both placed on the oaken table what they bore in their hands, the falconer observed that since he knew the court, it had got harder and harder every day to the poor gentlemen and yeomen retainers, but that now it was an absolute flaying of a flea for the hide and tallow. Such thronging to the wicket, and such churlish answers, and such bare beef-bones, such a shouldering at the buttery-hatch and cellarage, and nought to be gained beyond small insufficient single ale, or at best with a single straike of malt to counterbalance a double allowance of water. 'By the mass, though, my young friend,' said he, while he saw the food disappearing fast under Roland's active exertions, 'it is not so well to lament for former times as to take the advantage of the present, else we are like to lose on both sides.'

So saying, Adam Woodcock drew his chair towards the table, unsheathed his knife (for every one carried that minister of festive distri-

bution for himself), and imitated his young companion's example, who for the moment had lost his anxiety for the future in the eager satisfaction of an appetite sharpened by youth and abstinence.

In truth, they made, though the materials were sufficiently simple, a very respectable meal, at the expense of the royal allowance; and Adam Woodcock, notwithstanding the deliberate censure which he had passed on the household beer of the palace, had taken the fourth deep draught of the black-jack ere he remembered him that he had spoken in its dispraise. Flinging himself jollily and luxuriously back in an old danske elbow-chair, and looking with careless glee towards the page, extending at the same time his right leg, and stretching the other easily over it, he reminded his companion that he had not yet heard the ballad which he had made for the Abbot of Unreason's revel. And accordingly he struck merrily up with

'The Pope, that pagan full of pride
Has blinded us full lang'——

Roland Græme, who felt no great delight, as may be supposed, in the falconer's satire, considering its subject, began to snatch up his mantle, and fling it around his shoulders, an action which instantly interrupted the ditty of Adam Woodcock.

'Where the vengeance are you going now,' he said, 'thou restless boy? – Thou hast quicksilver in the veins of thee to a certainty, and canst no more abide any douce and sensible communing, than a hoodless hawk would keep perched on my wrist!'

'Why, Adam,' replied the page, 'if you must needs know, I am about to take a walk and look at this fair city. One may as well be still mewed up in the castle of the lake, if one is to sit the livelong night between four walls, and hearken to old ballads.'

'It is a new ballad—the Lord help thee!' replied Adam, 'and that one of the best that ever was matched with a rousing chorus.'

'Be it so,' said the page, 'I will hear it another day, when the rain is dashing against the windows, and there is neither steed stamping, nor spur jingling, nor feather waving in the neighbourhood to mar my marking it well. But even now I want to be in the world, and to look about me.'

'But the never a stride shall you go without me,' said the falconer, 'until the Regent shall take you whole and sound off my hand; and so, if you will, we may go to the hostelry of Saint Michael's, and there you will see company enough, but through the casement, mark you me; for as to rambling through the street to seek Seytons and Leslies, and having a dozen holes drilled in your new jacket with rapier and poniard, I will yield no way to it.'

'To the hostelry of Saint Michael's, then, with all my heart,' said the page; and they left the palace accordingly, rendered to the sentinels at the gate, who had now taken their posts for the evening, a strict account of their names and business, were dismissed through a small wicket of the close-barred portal, and soon reached the inn or hostelry of Saint Michael, which stood in a large court-yard, off the main street, close under the descent of the Calton Hill. The place, wide, waste, and uncomfortable, resembled rather an Eastern caravansary, where men found shelter, indeed, but were obliged to supply themselves with everything else, than one of our modern inns;

Where not one comfort shall to those be lost,
Who never ask, or never feel, the cost.

But still, to the inexperienced eye of Roland Græme, the bustle and confusion of this place of public resort furnished excitement and amusement. In the large room into which they had rather found their own way than been ushered by mine host, travellers and natives of the city entered and departed, met and greeted, gamed or drank together, forming the strongest contrast to the stern and monotonous order and silence with which matters were conducted in the well-ordered household of the Knight of Avenel. Altercation of every kind, from brawling to jesting, was going on amongst the groups around them, and yet the noise and mingled voices seemed to disturb no one, and indeed to be noticed by no others than by those who composed the group to which the speaker belonged.

The falconer passed through the apartment to a projecting latticed window, which formed a sort of recess from the room itself; and, having here ensconced himself and his companion, he called for some refreshments; and a tapster, after he had shouted for the twentieth time, accommodated him with the remains of a cold capon and a neat's tongue, together with a pewter stoup of weak French vin-de-pays. 'Fetch a stoup of brandy-wine, thou knave.—We will be jolly to-night, Master Roland,' said he, when he saw himself thus accommodated, 'and let care come to-morrow.'

But Roland had eaten too lately to enjoy the good cheer; and, feeling his curiosity much sharper than his appetite, he made it his choice to look out of the lattice, which overhung a large yard, surrounded by the stables of the hostelry, and fed his eyes on the busy sight beneath, while Adam Woodcock, after he had compared his companion to the 'Laird of Macfarlane's geese, who liked their play better than their meat,' disposed of his time with the aid of cup and trencher, occasionally humming the burden of his birth-strangled ballad, and beating time to it with his fingers on the little round table. In this exercise he was frequently interrupted by the exclamations of his companion, as he saw something new in the yard beneath, to attract and interest him.

It was a busy scene, for the number of gentlemen and nobles who were now crowded into the city, had filled all spare stables and places of public reception with their horses and military attendants. There were some score of yeomen, dressing their own or their masters' horses in the yard, whistling, singing, laughing, and upbraiding each other, in a style of wit which the good order of Avenel Castle rendered strange to Roland Græme's ears. Others were busy repairing their own arms, or cleaning those of their masters. One fellow, having just bought a bundle of twenty spears, was sitting in a corner,

employed in painting the white staves of the weapons with yellow and vermilion. Other lacqueys led large stag-hounds, or wolf-dogs, of noble race, carefully muzzled to prevent accidents to passengers. All came and went, mixed together and separated, under the delighted eye of the page, whose imagination had not even conceived a scene so gaily diversified with the objects he had most pleasure in beholding; so that he was perpetually breaking the quiet reverie of honest Woodcock, and the mental progress which he was making in his ditty, by exclaiming, 'Look here, Adam—look at the bonnie bay horse—Saint Anthony, what a gallant forehand he hath got!—and see the goodly grey, which yonder fellow in the frieze jacket is dressing as awkwardly as if he had never touched aught but a cow—I would I were nigh him to teach him his trade!—And lo you, Adam, the gay Milan armour that the yeoman is scouring, all steel and silver, like our knight's prime suit, of which old Wingate makes such account. —And see to yonder pretty wench, Adam, who comes tripping through them all with her milk-pail—I warrant me she has had a long walk from the loaning; she has a stammel waistcoat, like your favourite Cicely Sunderland, Master Adam!'

'By my hood, lad,' answered the falconer, 'it is well for thee thou wert brought up where grace grew. Even in the Castle of Avenel thou wert a wild-blood enough, but hadst thou been nurtured here, within a flight-shot of the court, thou hadst been the veriest crack-hemp of a page that ever wore feather in thy bonnet or steel by thy side: truly, I wish it may end well with thee.'

'Nay, but leave thy senseless humming and drumming, old Adam, and come to the window ere thou hast drenched thy senses in the pint-pot there. See, here comes a merry minstrel with his crowd, and a wench with him, that dances with bells at her ankles; and see, the yeomen and pages leave their horses and the armour they were cleaning, and gather round, as is very natural, to hear the music. Come, old Adam, we will thither too.'

'You shall call me cutt if I do go down,' said Adam; 'you are near as good minstrelsy as the stroller can make, if you had but the grace to listen to it.'

'But the wench in the stammel waistcoat is stopping too, Adam—by Heaven, they are going to dance! Frieze-jacket wants to dance with stammel waistcoat, but she is shy and recusant.'

Then, suddenly changing his tone of levity into one of deep interest and surprise, he exclaimed, 'Queen of heaven! what is it that I see?' and then remained silent.

The sage Adam Woodcock, who was in a sort of languid degree amused with the page's exclamations, even while he professed to despise them, became at length rather desirous to set his tongue once more a-going, that he might enjoy the superiority afforded by his own intimate familiarity with all the circumstances which excited in his young companion's mind so much wonderment.

'Well, then,' he said at last, 'what is it you do see, Master Roland, that you have become mute all of a sudden?'

Roland returned no answer.

'I say, Master Roland Græme,' said the falconer, 'it is manners in my country for a man to speak when he is spoken to.'

Roland Græme remained silent.

'The murrain is in the boy,' said Adam Woodcock; 'he has stared out his eyes, and talked his tongue to pieces, I think.'

The falconer hastily drank off his can of wine, and came to Roland, who stood like a statue, with his eyes eagerly bent on the court-yard, though Adam Woodcock was unable to detect amongst the joyous scene which it exhibited aught that could deserve such devoted attention.

'The lad is mazed!' said the falconer to himself.

But Roland Græme had good reasons for his surprise, though they were not such as he could communicate to his companion.

The touch of the old minstrel's instrument, for he had already begun to play, had drawn in several auditors from the street, when one entered the gate of the yard, whose appearance exclusively arrested the attention of Roland Græme. He was of his own age, or a good deal younger, and from his dress and bearing might be of the same rank and calling, having all the air of coxcombry and pretension, which accorded with a handsome, though slight and low figure, and an elegant dress, in part hid by a large purple cloak. As he entered, he cast a glance up towards the windows, and, to his extreme astonishment, under the purple velvet bonnet and white feather, Roland recognised the features so deeply impressed on his memory, the bright and clustered tresses, the laughing, full blue eyes, the well-formed eyebrows, the nose, with the slightest possible inclination to be aquiline, the ruby lip, of which an arch and half-suppressed smile seemed the habitual expression—in short, the form and face of Catherine Seyton; in man's attire, however, and mimicking, as it seemed, not unsuccessfully, the bearing of a youthful but forward page.

'Saint George and Saint Andrew!' exclaimed the amazed Roland Græme to himself, 'was there ever such an audacious quean!—she seems a little ashamed of her mummery, too, for she holds the lap of her cloak to her face, and her colour is heightened—but, Santa Maria, how she threads the throng, with as firm and bold a step as if she had never tied petticoat round her waist!—Holy saints! she holds up her riding-rod as if she would lay it about some of their ears, that stand most in her way—by the hand of my father! she bears herself like the very model of pagehood.—Hey! what! sure she will not strike frieze-jacket in earnest?' But he was not long left in doubt; for the lout whom he had before repeatedly noticed, standing in the way of the bustling page, and maintaining his place with clownish obstinacy or stupidity, the advanced riding-rod was, without a moment's hesitation, sharply applied to his shoulders, in a manner which made him spring aside, rubbing the part of the body which had received so unceremonious a hint that it was in the way of his betters. The party injured growled forth an oath

or two of indignation, and Roland Græme began to think of flying down-stairs to the assistance of the translated Catherine; but the laugh of the yard was against frieze-jacket, which indeed had, in those days, small chance of fair play in a quarrel with velvet and embroidery; so that the fellow, who was a menial in the inn, slunk back to finish his task of dressing the bonnie grey, laughed at by all, but most by the wench in the stammel waistcoat, his fellow-servant, who, to crown his disgrace, had the cruelty to cast an applauding smile upon the author of the injury, while, with a freedom more like the milkmaid of the town than her of the plains, she accosted him with—'Is there any one you want here, my pretty gentleman, that you seem in such haste?'

'I seek a sprig of a lad,' said the seeming gallant, 'with a sprig of holly in his cap, black hair and black eyes, green jacket, and the air of a country coxcomb—I have sought him through every close and alley in the Canongate, the fiend gore him!'

'Why, God-a-mercy, nun!' muttered Roland Græme, much bewildered.

'I will inquire him presently out for your fair young worship,' said the wench of the inn.

'Do,' said the gallant squire, 'and if you bring me to him, you shall have a groat to-night, and a kiss on Sunday when you have on a cleaner kirtle.'

'Why, God-a-mercy, nun!' again muttered Roland, 'this is a note above E La.'

In a moment after, the servant entered the room, and ushered in the object of his surprise.

While the disguised vestal looked with unabashed brow, and bold and rapid glance of her eye, through the various parties in the large old room, Roland Græme, who felt an internal awkward sense of bashful confusion, which he deemed altogether unworthy of the bold and dashing character to which he aspired, determined not to be browbeaten and put down by this singular female, but to meet her with a glance of recognition so sly, so penetrating, so expressively humorous, as should show her at once he was in possession of her secret and master of her fate, and should compel her to humble herself towards him, at least into the look and manner of respectful and deprecating observance.

This was extremely well planned; but just as Roland had called up the knowing glance, the suppressed smile, the shrewd intelligent look, which was to insure his triumph, he encountered the bold, firm, and steady gaze of his brother or sister-page, who, casting on him a falcon glance, and recognising him at once as the object of his search, walked up with the most unconcerned look, the most free and undaunted composure, and hailed him with, 'You, Sir Holly-top, I would speak with you.'

The steady coolness and assurance with which these words were uttered, although the voice was the very voice he had heard at the old convent, and although the features more nearly resembled those of Catherine when seen close than when viewed from a distance, produced, nevertheless, such a confusion in Roland's mind, that he became uncertain whether he was not still under a mistake from the beginning; the knowing shrewdness which should have animated his visage faded into a sheepish bashfulness, and the half-suppressed but most intelligible smile became the senseless giggle of one who laughs to cover his own disorder of ideas.

'Do they understand a Scotch tongue in thy country, Holly-top?' said this marvellous specimen of metamorphosis. 'I said I would speak with thee.'

'What is your business with my comrade, my young chick of the game?' said Adam Woodcock, willing to step in to his companion's assistance, though totally at a loss to account for the sudden disappearance of all Roland's usual smartness and presence of mind.

'Nothing to you, my old cock of the perch,' replied the gallant; 'go mind your hawk's castings. I guess by your bag and your gauntlet that you are squire of the body to a sort of kites.'

He laughed as he spoke, and the laugh reminded Roland so irresistibly of the hearty fit of risibility in which Catherine had indulged at his expense when they first met in the old nunnery, that he could scarce help exclaiming, 'Catherine Seyton, by Heavens!'—He checked the exclamation, however, and only said, 'I think, sir, we two are not totally strangers to each other.'

'We must have met in our dreams, then,' said the youth; 'and my days are too busy to remember what I think on at nights.'

'Or apparently to remember upon one day those whom you may have seen on the preceding eve,' said Roland Græme.

The youth in his turn cast on him a look of some surprise, as he replied, 'I know no more of what you mean than does the horse I ride on—if there be offence in your words, you shall find me as ready to take it as any lad in Lothian.'

'You know well,' said Roland, 'though it pleases you to use the language of a stranger, that with you I have no purpose to quarrel.'

'Let me do mine errand, then, and be rid of you,' said the page. 'Step hither this way, out of that old leathern fist's hearing.'

They walked into the recess of the window, which Roland had left upon the youth's entrance into the apartment. The messenger then turned his back on the company, after casting a hasty and sharp glance around to see if they were observed. Roland did the same, and the page in the purple mantle thus addressed him, taking at the same time from under his cloak a short but beautifully wrought sword, with the hilt and ornaments upon the sheath of silver, massively chased and overgilded—'I bring you this weapon from a friend, who gives it you under the solemn condition, that you will not unsheathe it until you are commanded by your rightful sovereign. For your warmth of temper is known, and the presumption with which you intrude yourself into the quarrels of others; and, therefore, this is laid upon you as a penance by those who wish you well, and whose hand will influence your destiny for good or for evil. This is what I was charged to tell you. So, if you will give a fair word for a fair sword, and pledge your promise, with hand and glove, good and

well; and if not, I will carry back Caliburn to those who sent it.'

'And may I not ask who these are?' said Roland Græme, admiring at the same time the beauty of the weapon thus offered him.

'My commission in no way leads me to answer such a question,' said he of the purple mantle.

'But if I am offended,' said Roland, 'may I not draw to defend myself?'

'Not *this* weapon,' answered the sword-bearer; 'but you have your own at command, and, besides, for what do you wear your poniard?'

'For no good,' said Adam Woodcock, who had now approached close to them, 'and that I can witness as well as any one.'

'Stand back, fellow,' said the messenger; 'thou hast an intrusive, curious face, that will come by a buffet if it is found where it has no concern.'

'A buffet, my young Master Malapert?' said Adam, drawing back, however; 'best keep down fist, or, by Our Lady, buffet will beget buffet!'

'Be patient, Adam Woodcock,' said Roland Græme;—'and let me pray you, fair sir, since by such addition you choose for the present to be addressed, may I not barely unsheathe this fair weapon, in pure simplicity of desire to know whether so fair a hilt and scabbard are matched with a befitting blade?'

'By no manner of means,' said the messenger, 'at a word, you must take it under the promise that you never draw it until you receive the commands of your lawful sovereign, or you must leave it alone.'

'Under that condition, and coming from your friendly hand, I accept of the sword,' said Roland, taking it from his hand; 'but credit me, that if we are to work together in any weighty emprise, as I am induced to believe, some confidence and openness on your part will be necessary to give the right impulse to my zeal—I press for no more at present, it is enough that you understand me.'

'I understand you!' said the page, exhibiting the appearance of unfeigned surprise in his turn —'Renounce me if I do!—here you stand jiggeting, and sniggling, and looking cunning, as if there were some mighty matter of intrigue and common understanding betwixt you and me, whom you never set your eyes on before!'

'What!' said Roland Græme, 'will you deny that we have met before?'

'Marry that I will, in any Christian court,' said the other page.

'And will you also deny,' said Roland, 'that it was recommended to us to study each other's features well, that, in whatever disguise the time might impose upon us, each should recognise in the other the secret agent of a mighty work? Do not you remember that Sister Magdalen and Dame Bridget'——

The messenger here interrupted him, shrugging up his shoulders, with a look of compassion, 'Bridget and Magdalen! why, this is madness and dreaming! Hark ye, Master Holly-top, your wits are gone on wool-gathering; comfort yourself with a caudle, thatch your brain-sick noddle with a woollen night-cap, and so God be with you!'

As he concluded this polite parting address, Adam Woodcock, who was again seated by the table on which stood the now empty can, said to him, 'Will you drink a cup, young man, in the way of courtesy, now you have done your errand, and listen to a good song?' and without waiting for an answer, he commenced his ditty:

'The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded us full lang'——

It is probable that the good wine had made some innovation in the falconer's brain, otherwise he would have recollected the danger of introducing anything like political or polemical pleasantry into a public assemblage, at a time when men's minds were in a state of great irritability. To do him justice, he perceived his error, and stopped short so soon as he saw that the word Pope had at once interrupted the separate conversations of the various parties which were assembled in the apartment; and that many began to draw themselves up, bridle, look big, and prepare to take part in the impending brawl; while others, more decent and cautious persons, hastily paid down their lawing, and prepared to leave the place ere bad should come to worse.

And to worse it was soon likely to come; for no sooner did Woodcock's ditty reach the ear of the stranger page, than, uplifting his riding-rod, he exclaimed, 'He who speaks irreverently of the Holy Father of the Church in my presence, is the cub of a heretic wolf-bitch, and I will switch him as I would a mongrel cur.'

'And I will break thy young pate,' said Adam, 'if thou darest to lift a finger to me.' And then, in defiance of the young Drawcansir's threats, with a stout heart and dauntless accent, he again uplifted the stave:

'The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded'——

But Adam was able to proceed no further, being himself unfortunately blinded by a stroke of the impatient youth's switch across his eyes. Enraged at once by the smart and the indignity, the falconer started up, and, darkling as he was, for his eyes watered too fast to permit his seeing anything, he would soon have been at close grips with his insolent adversary, had not Roland Græme, contrary to his nature, played for once the prudent man and the peacemaker, and thrown himself betwixt them, imploring Woodcock's patience. 'You know not,' he said, 'with whom you have to do.—And thou,' addressing the messenger, who stood scornfully laughing at Adam's rage, 'get thee gone, whoever thou art; if thou be'st what I guess thee, thou well knowest there are earnest reasons why thou shouldst.'

'Thou hast hit it right for once, Holly-top,' said the gallant, 'though I guess you drew your bow at a venture.—Here, host, let this yeoman have a pottle of wine to wash the smart out of his eyes—and there is a French crown for him.' So saying, he threw the piece of money on the table, and left the apartment, with a quick yet steady pace, looking firmly at right and left, as if to defy interruption; and snapping his fingers at two or three respectable burghers, who, declaring it was a shame that any one should be suffered to rant and ruffle in defence of the Pope, were labouring to find the hilts of their swords, which had got for the present unhappily entangled in the folds of their cloaks. But, as the adversary

was gone ere any of them had reached his weapon, they did not think it necessary to unsheathe cold iron, but merely observed to each other, 'This is more than masterful violence, to see a poor man stricken in the face just for singing a ballad against the whore of Babylon! If the Pope's champions are to be bangsters in our very change-houses, we shall soon have the old shavelings back again.'

'The provost should look to it,' said another, 'and have some five or six armed with partizans, to come in upon the first whistle, to teach these gallants their lesson. For, look you, neighbour Lugleather, it is not for decent householders like ourselves to be brawling with the godless grooms and pert pages of the nobles, that are bred up to little else save bloodshed and blasphemy.'

'For all that, neighbour,' said Lugleather, 'I would have curried that youngster as properly as ever I curried a lamb's hide, had not the hilt of my bilbo been for the instant beyond my grasp; and before I could turn my girdle, gone was my master!'

'Ay,' said the others, 'the devil go with him, and peace abide with us.—I give my rede, neighbours, that we pay the lawing, and be stopping homeward, like brother and brother; for old Saint Giles's is tolling curfew, and the street grows dangerous at night.'

With that the good burghers adjusted their cloaks, and prepared for their departure, while he that seemed the briskest of the three, laying his hand on his Andrea Ferrara, observed, 'that they that spoke in praise of the Pope on the Highgate of Edinburgh, had best bring the sword of Saint Peter to defend them.'

While the ill humour excited by the insolence of the young aristocrat was thus evaporating in empty menace, Roland Græme had to control the far more serious indignation of Adam Woodcock. 'Why, man, it was but a switch across the mazzard—blow your nose, dry your eyes, and you will see all the better for it.'

'By this light, which I cannot see,' said Adam Woodcock, 'thou hast been a false friend to me, young man—neither taking up my rightful quarrel, not letting me fight it out myself.'

'Fie for shame, Adam Woodcock,' replied the youth, determined to turn the tables on him, and become in turn the counsellor of good order and peaceable demeanour—'I say, fie for shame! —Alas, that you will speak thus! Here are you sent with me to prevent my innocent youth getting into snares'—

'I wish your innocent youth were cut short with a halter, with all my heart,' said Adam, who began to see which way the admonition tended.

—'And instead of setting before me,' continued Roland, 'an example of patience and sobriety becoming the falconer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, you quaff me off I know not how many flagons of ale, besides a gallon of wine, and a full measure of strong waters.'

'It was but one small pottle,' said poor Adam whom consciousness of his own indiscretion now reduced to a merely defensive warfare.

'It was enough to pottle you handsomely, however,' said the page.—'And then, instead of going to bed to sleep off your liquor, must you sit singing your roystering songs about popes and pagans, till you have got your eyes almost switched out of your head; and but for my interference, whom your drunken ingratitude accuses of deserting you, yon galliard would have cut your throat, for he was whipping out a whinger as broad as my hand, and as sharp as a razor.—And these are lessons for an inexperienced youth!—O, Adam! out upon you! out upon you!'

'Marry, amen, and with all my heart,' said Adam; 'out upon my folly for expecting anything but impertinent raillery from a page like thee, that if he saw his father in a scrape, would laugh at him instead of lending him aid.'

'Nay, but I will lend you aid,' said the page, still laughing, 'that is, I will lend thee aid to thy chamber, good Adam, where thou shalt sleep off wine and ale, ire and indignation, and awake the next morning with as much fair wit as nature has blessed thee withal. Only one thing I will warn thee, good Adam, that henceforth and for ever, when thou railest at me for being somewhat hot at hand, and rather too prompt to out with poniard or so, thy admonition shall serve as a prologue to the memorable adventure of the switching of Saint Michael's.'

With such condoling expressions he got the crestfallen falconer to his bed, and then retired to his own pallet, where it was some time ere he could fall asleep. If the messenger whom he had seen were really Catherine Seyton, what a masculine virago and termagant must she be! and stored with what an inimitable command of insolence and assurance!—The brass on her brow would furbish the front of twenty pages; 'and I should know,' thought Roland, 'what that amounts to.—And yet, her features, her look, her light gait, her laughing eye, the art with which she disposed the mantle to show no more of her limbs than needs must be seen—I am glad she had at least that grace left—the voice, the smile—it must have been Catherine Seyton or the devil in her likeness! One thing is good, I have silenced the eternal predications of that ass, Adam Woodcock, who has set up for being a preacher and a governor over me so soon as he has left the hawks' mew behind him.'

And with this comfortable reflection, joined to the happy indifference which youth hath for the events of the morrow, Roland Græme fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER XX.

> Now have you reft me from my staff, my guide,
> Who taught my youth, as men teach untamed falcons,
> To use my strength discreetly—I am reft
> Of comrade and of counsel.
>
> OLD PLAY.

IN the grey of the next morning's dawn there was a loud knocking at the gate of the hostelry; and those without, proclaiming that they came in the name of the Regent, were instantly admitted. A moment or two afterwards, Michael Wing-the-wind stood by the bedside of our travellers.

'Up! up!' he said; 'there is no slumber where Murray hath work ado.'

Both sleepers sprang up, and began to dress themselves.

'You, old friend,' said Wing-the-wind to Adam Woodcock, 'must to horse instantly, with this packet to the monks of Kennaquhair; and with this,' delivering them as he spoke, 'to the Knight of Avenel.'

'As much as commanding the monks to annul their election, I'll warrant me, of an Abbot,' quoth Adam Woodcock, as he put the packets into his bag, 'and charging my master to see it done—To hawk at one brother with another is less than fair play, methinks.'

'Fash not thy beard about it, old boy,' said Michael, 'but betake thee to the saddle presently; for if these orders are not obeyed there will be bare walls at the Kirk of Saint Mary's, and it may be at the Castle of Avenel to boot; for I heard my Lord of Morton loud with the Regent, and we are at a pass that we cannot stand with him anent trifles.'

'But,' said Adam, 'touching the Abbot of Unreason—what say they to that outbreak?—An they be shrewishly disposed, I were better pitch the packets to Satan, and take the other side of the Border for my bield.'

'Oh, that was passed over as a jest, since there was little harm done.—But, hark thee, Adam,' continued his comrade, 'if there was a dozen vacant abbacies in your road, whether of jest or earnest, reason or unreason, draw thou never one of their mitres over thy brows—The time is not fitting, man!—besides, our maiden longs to clip the neck of a fat churchman.'

'She shall never shear mine in that capacity,' said the falconer, while he knotted the kerchief in two or three double folds around his sunburnt bull-neck, calling out at the same time, 'Master Roland, Master Roland, make haste! we must back to perch and mew, and, thank Heaven more than our own wit, with our bones whole, and without a stab in the stomach.'

'Nay, but,' said Wing-the-wind, 'the page goes not back with you, the Regent has other employment for him.'

'Saints and sorrows!' exclaimed the falconer—'Master Roland Græme to remain here, and I to return to Avenel!—Why, it cannot be—the child cannot manage himself in this wide world without me, and I question if he will stoop to any other whistle than mine own; there are times I myself can hardly bring him to my lure.'

It was at Roland's tongue's end to say something concerning the occasion they had for using mutually each other's prudence, but the real anxiety which Adam evinced at parting with him took away his disposition to such ungracious raillery. The falconer did not altogether escape, however, for in turning his face towards the lattice his friend Michael caught a glimpse of it, and exclaimed, 'I prithee, Adam Woodcock, what hast thou been doing with these eyes of thine? They are swelled to the starting from the socket.'

'Nought in the world,' said he, after casting a deprecating glance at Roland Græme, 'but the effect of sleeping in this d——d truckle without a pillow.'

'Why, Adam Woodcock, thou must be grown strangely dainty,' said his old companion; 'I have known thee sleep all night with no better pillow than a bush of ling, and start up with the sun, as gleg as a falcon; and now thine eyes resemble'——

'Tush, man, what signifies how mine eyes look now?' said Adam—'let us but roast a crab-apple, pour a pottle of ale on it, and bathe our throats withal, thou shalt see a change in me.'

'And thou wilt be in heart to sing thy jolly ballad about the Pope?' said his comrade.

'Ay, that I will,' replied the falconer, 'that is, when we have left this quiet town five miles behind us, if you will take your hobby and ride so far on my way.'

'Nay, that I may not,' said Michael—'I can but stop to partake your morning draught, and see you fairly to horse—I will see that they saddle them and toast the crab for thee without loss of time.'

During his absence the falconer took the page by the hand—'May I never hood hawk again,' said the good-natured fellow, 'if I am not as sorry to part with you as if you were a child of mine own, craving pardon for the freedom—I cannot tell what makes me love you so much, unless it be for the reason that I loved the vicious devil of a brown galloway-nag whom my master the knight called Satan, till Master Warden changed his name to Seyton; for he said it was over boldness to call a beast after the King of Darkness'——

'And,' said the page, 'it was over boldness in him, I trow, to call a vicious brute after a noble family.'

'Well,' proceeded Adam, 'Seyton or Satan, I loved that nag over every other horse in the stable—There was no sleeping on his back—he was for ever fidgeting, bolting, rearing, biting, kicking, and giving you work to do, and maybe the measure of your back on the heather to the boot of it all. And I think I love you better than any lad in the castle for the self-same qualities.'

'Thanks, thanks, kind Adam. I regard myself bound to you for the good estimation in which you hold me.'

'Nay, interrupt me not,' said the falconer—'Satan was a good nag—But I say I think I shall call the two eyases after you, the one Roland, and the other Græme; and while Adam Woodcock lives, be sure you have a friend—Here is to thee, my dear son.'

Roland most heartily returned the grasp of the hand, and Woodcock, having taken a deep draught, continued his farewell speech.

'There are three things I warn you against, Roland, now that you are to tread this weary world without my experience to assist you. In the first place, never draw a dagger on slight occasion—every man's doublet is not so well stuffed as a certain abbot's that you wot of. Secondly, fly not at every pretty girl, like a merlin at a thrush—you will not always win a gold chain for your labour—and, by the way, here I return to you your fanfarona—keep it close, it is weighty, and may benefit you at a pinch more ways than one. Thirdly, and to conclude, as our worthy preacher says, beware of the pottle-pot—it has drenched the judgment

of wiser men than you. I could bring some instances of it, but I daresay it needeth not; for if you should forget your own mishaps, you will scarce fail to remember mine—And so farewell, my dear son.'

Roland returned his good wishes, and failed not to send his humble duty to his kind lady, charging the falconer, at the same time, to express his regret that he should have offended her, and his determination so to bear him in the world that she would not be ashamed of the generous protection she had afforded him.

The falconer embraced his young friend, mounted his stout, round-made, trotting nag, which the serving-man, who had attended him, held ready at the door, and took the road to the southward. A sullen and heavy sound echoed from the horse's feet, as if indicating the sorrow of the good-natured rider. Every hoof-tread seemed to tap upon Roland's heart as he heard his comrade withdraw with so little of his usual alert activity, and felt that he was once more alone in the world.

He was roused from his reverie by Michael Wing-the-wind, who reminded him that it was necessary they should instantly return to the palace, as my Lord Regent went to the Sessions early in the morning. They went thither accordingly, and Wing-the-wind, a favourite old domestic, who was admitted nearer to the Regent's person and privacy than many whose posts were more ostensible, soon introduced Græme into a small matted chamber, where he had an audience of the present head of the troubled state of Scotland. The Earl of Murray was clad in a sad-coloured morning-gown, with a cap and slippers of the same cloth, but, even in this easy *déshabille*, held his sheathed rapier in his hand, a precaution which he adopted when receiving strangers, rather in compliance with the earnest remonstrances of his friends and partizans, than from any personal apprehensions of his own. He answered with a silent nod the respectful obeisance of the page, and took one or two turns through the small apartment in silence, fixing his keen eye on Roland, as if he wished to penetrate into his very soul. At length he broke silence.

'Your name is, I think, Julian Græme?'

'Roland Græme, my lord, not Julian,' replied the page.

'Right—I was misled by some trick of my memory—Roland Græme, from the Debateable Land.—Roland, thou knowest the duties which belong to a lady's service?'

'I should know them, my lord,' replied Roland, 'having been bred so near the person of my Lady of Avenel; but I trust never more to practise them, as the knight hath promised'——

'Be silent, young man,' said the Regent; 'I am to speak, and you to hear and obey. It is necessary that, for some space at least, you shall again enter into the service of a lady, who, in rank, hath no equal in Scotland; and this service accomplished, I give thee my word as knight and prince, that it shall open to you a course of ambition, such as may well gratify the aspiring wishes of one whom circumstances entitle to entertain much higher views than thou. I will take thee into my household, and near to my person, or, at your own choice, I will give you the command of a foot-company—either is a preferment which the proudest laird in the land might be glad to insure for a second son.'

'May I presume to ask, my lord,' said Roland, observing the earl paused for a reply, 'to whom my poor services are in the first place destined?'

'You will be told hereafter,' said the Regent; and then, as if overcoming some internal reluctance to speak further himself, he added, 'or why should I not myself tell you that you are about to enter into the service of a most illustrious, most unhappy lady—into the service of Mary of Scotland?'

'Of the Queen, my lord?' said the page, unable to repress his surprise.

'Of her who was the Queen,' said Murray, with a singular mixture of displeasure and embarrassment in his tone of voice. 'You must be aware, young man, that her son reigns in her stead.'

He sighed from an emotion, partly natural, perhaps, and partly assumed.

'And am I to attend upon her Grace in her place of imprisonment, my lord?' again demanded the page, with a straightforward and hardy simplicity, which somewhat disconcerted the sage and powerful statesman.

'She is not imprisoned,' answered Murray angrily; 'God forbid she should—she is only sequestrated from state affairs, and from the business of the public, until the world be so effectually settled, that she may enjoy her natural and uncontrolled freedom, without her royal disposition being exposed to the practices of wicked and designing men. It is for this purpose,' he added, 'that while she is to be furnished, as right is, with such attendance as may befit her present secluded state, it becomes necessary that those placed around her are persons on whose prudence I can have reliance. You see, therefore, you are at once called on to discharge an office most honourable in itself, and so to discharge it that you may make a friend of the Regent of Scotland. Thou art, I have been told, a singularly apprehensive youth; and I perceive by thy look that thou dost already understand what I would say on this matter. In this schedule your particular points of duty are set down at length—but the sum required of you is fidelity—I mean fidelity to myself and to the state. You are, therefore, to watch every attempt which is made, or inclination displayed, to open any communication with any of the lords who have become banders in the west—with Hamilton, Seyton, with Fleming, or the like. It is true that my gracious sister, reflecting upon the ill chances that have happed to the state of this poor kingdom, from evil counsellors who have abused her royal nature in time past, hath determined to sequestrate herself from state affairs in future. But it is our duty, as acting for and in the name of our infant nephew, to guard against the evils which may arise from any mutation or vacillation in her royal resolutions. Wherefore, it will be thy duty to watch, and report to our lady mother, whose guest our sister is for the present, whatever may infer a dis-

position to withdraw her person from the place of security in which she is lodged, or to open communication with those without. If, however, your observation should detect anything of weight, and which may exceed mere suspicion, fail not to send notice by an especial messenger to me directly, and this ring shall be thy warrant to order horse and man on such service.—And now begone. If there be half the wit in thy head that there is apprehension in thy look, thou fully comprehendest all that I would say—Serve me faithfully, and sure as I am belted earl, thy reward shall be great.'

Roland Græme made an obeisance, and was about to depart.

The earl signed to him to remain. 'I have trusted thee deeply,' he said, 'young man, for thou art the only one of her suite who has been sent to her by my own recommendation. Her gentlewomen are of her own nomination—it were too hard to have barred her that privilege, though some there were who reckoned it inconsistent with sure policy. Thou art young and handsome. Mingle in their follies, and see they cover not deeper designs under the appearance of female levity—if they do mine, do thou countermine. For the rest, bear all decorum and respect to the person of thy mistress—she is a princess, though a most unhappy one, and hath been a queen! though now, alas! no longer such. Pay, therefore, to her all honour and respect, consistent with thy fidelity to the king and me—and now, farewell.—Yet stay—you travel with Lord Lindesay, a man of the old world, rough and honest, though untaught; see that thou offend him not, for he is not patient of raillery, and thou, I have heard, art a crack-halter.' This he said with a smile, then added, 'I could have wished the Lord Lindesay's mission had been entrusted to some other and more gentle noble.'

'And wherefore should you wish that, my lord?' said Morton, who even then entered the apartment; 'the council have decided for the best—we have had but too many proofs of this lady's stubbornness of mind, and the oak that resists the sharp steel axe, must be riven with the rugged iron wedge.—And this is to be her page?—My Lord Regent hath doubtless instructed you, young man, how you shall guide yourself in these matters; I will add but a little hint on my part. You are going to the castle of a Douglas, where treachery never thrives—the first moment of suspicion will be the last of your life. My kinsman William Douglas understands no raillery, and if he once have cause to think you false, you will waver in the wind from the castle battlements ere the sun set upon his anger.—And is the lady to have an almoner withal?'

'Occasionally, Douglas,' said the Regent; 'it were hard to deny the spiritual consolation which she thinks essential to her salvation.'

'You are ever too soft-hearted, my lord—What! a false priest to communicate her lamentations, not only to our unfriends in Scotland, but to the Guises, to Rome, to Spain, and I know not where!'

'Fear not,' said the Regent, 'we will take such order that no treachery shall happen.'

'Look to it, then,' said Morton; 'you know my mind respecting the wench you have consented she shall receive as a waiting-woman—one of a family which, of all others, has ever been devoted to her, and inimical to us. Had we not been wary, she would have been purveyed of a page as much to her purpose as her waiting-damsel. I hear a rumour that an old mad Romish pilgrimer, who passes for at least half a saint among them, was employed to find a fit subject.'

'We have escaped that danger, at least,' said Murray, 'and converted it into a point of advantage, by sending this boy of Glendinning's—and for her waiting-damsel, you cannot grudge her one poor maiden instead of her four noble Marys and all their silken train?'

'I care not so much for the waiting-maiden,' said Morton, 'but I cannot brook the almoner—I think priests of all persuasions are much like each other—Here is John Knox, who made such a noble puller-down, is ambitious of becoming a setter-up, and a founder of schools and colleges out of the abbey lands, and bishops' rents, and other spoils of Rome, which the nobility of Scotland have won with their sword and bow, and with which he would endow new hives to sing the old drone.'

'John is a man of God,' said the Regent, 'and his scheme is a devout imagination.'

The sedate smile with which this was spoken left it impossible to conjecture whether the words were meant in approbation, or in derision, of the plan of the Scottish Reformer. Turning then to Roland Græme, as if he thought he had been long enough a witness of this conversation, he bade him get him presently to horse, since my Lord of Lindesay was already mounted. The page made his reverence, and left the apartment.

Guided by Michael Wing-the-wind, he found his horse ready saddled and prepared for the journey in front of the palace porch, where hovered about a score of men-at-arms, whose leader showed no small symptoms of surly impatience.

'Is this the jackanape page for whom we have waited thus long?' said he to Wing-the-wind.—'And my Lord Ruthven will reach the castle long before us.'

Michael assented, and added that the boy had been detained by the Regent to receive some parting instructions. The leader made an inarticulate sound in his throat, expressive of sullen acquiescence, and calling to one of his domestic attendants, 'Edward,' said he, 'take the gallant into your charge, and let him speak with no one else.'

He then addressed, by the title of Sir Robert, an elderly and respectable-looking gentleman, the only one of the party who seemed above the rank of a retainer or domestic, and observed that they must get to horse with all speed.

During this discourse, and while they were riding slowly along the street of the suburb, Roland had time to examine more accurately the looks and figure of the baron who was at their head.

Lord Lindesay of the Byres was rather touched than stricken with years. His upright stature

and strong limbs still showed him fully equal to all the exertions and fatigues of war. His thick eyebrows, now partially grizzled, lowered over large eyes full of dark fire, which seemed yet darker from the uncommon depth at which they were set in his head. His features, naturally strong and harsh, had their sternness exaggerated by one or two scars received in battle. These features, naturally calculated to express the harsher passions, were shaded by an open steel cap, with a projecting front, but having no visor, over the gorget of which fell the black and grizzled beard of the grim old baron, and totally hid the lower part of his face. The rest of his dress was a loose buff-coat, which had once been lined with silk and adorned with embroidery, but which seemed much stained with travel, and damaged with cuts, received probably in battle. It covered a corselet, which had once been of polished steel, fairly gilded, but was now somewhat injured with rust. A sword of antique make and uncommon size, framed to be wielded with both hands, a kind of weapon which was then beginning to go out of use, hung from his neck in a baldrick, and was so disposed as to traverse his whole person, the huge hilt appearing over his left shoulder, and the point reaching well-nigh to the right heel, and jarring against his spur as he walked. This unwieldy weapon could only be unsheathed by pulling the handle over the left shoulder--for no human arm was long enough to draw it in the usual manner. The whole equipment was that of a rude warrior, negligent of his exterior even to misanthropical sullenness; and the short, harsh, haughty tone which he used towards his attendants, belonged to the same unpolished character.

The personage who rode with Lord Lindesay, at the head of the party, was an absolute contrast to him, in manner, form, and features. His thin and silky hair was already white, though he seemed not above forty-five or fifty years old. His tone of voice was soft and insinuating—his form thin, spare, and bent by an habitual stoop—his pale cheek was expressive of shrewdness and intelligence—his eye was quick though placid, and his whole demeanour mild and conciliatory. He rode an ambling nag, such as were used by ladies, clergymen, or others of peaceful professions—wore a riding-habit of black velvet, with a cap and feather of the same hue, fastened up by a golden medal—and for show, and as a mark of rank rather than for use, carried a walking-sword (as the short light rapiers were called), without any other arms, offensive or defensive.

The party had now quitted the town, and proceeded, at a steady trot, towards the west. As they prosecuted their journey, Roland Græme would gladly have learned something of its purpose and tendency, but the countenance of the personage next to whom he had been placed in the train discouraged all approach to familiarity. The baron himself did not look more grim and inaccessible than his feudal retainer, whose grisly beard fell over his mouth like the portcullis before the gate of a castle, as if for the purpose of preventing the escape of any word, of which absolute necessity did not demand the utterance. The rest of the train seemed under the same taciturn influence, and journeyed on without a word being exchanged amongst them—more like a troop of Carthusian friars than a party of military retainers. Roland Græme was surprised at this extremity of discipline; for in the household of the Knight of Avenel, though somewhat distinguished for the accuracy with which decorum was enforced, a journey was a period of licence, during which jest and song, and everything within the limits of becoming mirth and pastime, were freely permitted. This unusual silence was, however, so far acceptable, that it gave him time to bring any shadow of judgment which he possessed to council on his own situation and prospects, which would have appeared to any reasonable person in the highest degree dangerous and perplexing.

It was quite evident that he had, through various circumstances not under his own control, formed contradictory connections with both the contending factions, by whose strife the kingdom was distracted, without being properly an adherent of either. It seemed also clear, that the same situation in the household of the deposed queen, to which he was now promoted by the influence of the Regent, had been destined to him by his enthusiastic grandmother, Magdalen Græme; for on this subject the words which Morton had dropped had been a ray of light; yet it was no less clear that these two persons, the one the declared enemy, the other the enthusiastic votary, of the Catholic religion,—the one at the head of the king's new government, the other, who regarded that government as a criminal usurpation,—must have required and expected very different services from the individual whom they had thus united in recommending. It required very little reflection to foresee that these contradictory claims on his services might speedily place him in a situation where his honour as well as his life might be endangered. But it was not in Roland Græme's nature to anticipate evil before it came, or to prepare to combat difficulties before they arrived. 'I will see this beautiful and unfortunate Mary Stuart,' said he, 'of whom we have heard so much, and then there will be time enough to determine whether I will be Kingsman or Queensman. None of them can say I have given word or promise to either of their factions; for they have led me up and down like a blind Billy, without giving me any light into what I was to do. But it was lucky that grim Douglas came into the Regent's closet this morning, otherwise I had never got free of him without plighting my troth to do all the earl would have me, which seemed, after all, but foul play to the poor imprisoned lady, to place her page as an espial on her.'

Skipping thus lightly over a matter of such consequence, the thoughts of the harebrained boy went a wool-gathering after more agreeable topics. Now he admired the Gothic towers of Barnbougle, rising from the sea-beaten rock, and overlooking one of the most glorious landscapes in Scotland—and now he began to consider what notable sport for the hounds and the hawks must be afforded by the variegated ground

over which they travelled—and now he compared the steady and dull trot at which they were then prosecuting their journey, with the delight of sweeping over hill and dale in pursuit of his favourite sports. As, under the influence of these joyous recollections, he gave his horse the spur, and made him execute a gambade, he instantly incurred the censure of his grave neighbour, who hinted to him to keep the pace, and move quietly and in order, unless he wished such notice to be taken of his eccentric movements as was likely to be very displeasing to him.

The rebuke and the restraint under which the youth now found himself, brought back to his recollection his late good-humoured and accommodating associate and guide, Adam Woodcock; and from that topic his imagination made a short flight to Avenel Castle, to the quiet and unconfined life of its inhabitants, the goodness of his early protectress, not forgetting the denizens of its stables, kennels, and hawk-mews. In a brief space, all these subjects of meditation gave way to the resemblance of that riddle of womankind, Catherine Seyton, who appeared before the eye of his mind—now in her female form, now in her male attire—now in both at once—like some strange dream, which presents to us the same individual under two different characters at the same instant. Her mysterious present also recurred to his recollection—the sword which he now wore at his side, and which he was not to draw save by command of his legitimate sovereign! But the key of this mystery he judged he was likely to find in the issue of his present journey.

With such thoughts passing through his mind, Roland Græme accompanied the party of Lord Lindesay to the Queen's Ferry, which they passed in vessels that lay in readiness for them. They encountered no adventure whatever in their passage, excepting one horse being lamed in getting into the boat, an accident very common on such occasions, until a few years ago, when the ferry was completely regulated. What was more peculiarly characteristic of the olden age, was the discharge of a culverin at the party from the battlements of the old castle at Rosythe, on the north side of the ferry, the lord of which happened to have some public or private quarrel with the Lord Lindesay, and took this mode of expressing his resentment. The insult, however, as it was harmless, remained unnoticed and unavenged; nor did anything else occur worth notice until the band had come where Lochleven spread its magnificent sheet of waters to the beams of a bright summer's sun.

The ancient castle, which occupies an island nearly in the centre of the lake, recalled to the page that of Avenel, in which he had been nurtured. But the lake was much larger, and adorned with several islets besides that on which the fortress was situated; and instead of being embosomed in hills, like that of Avenel, had upon the southern side only a splendid mountainous screen, being the descent of one of the Lomond hills, and on the other was surrounded by the extensive and fertile plain of Kinross. Roland Græme looked with some degree of dismay on the water-girdled fortress, which then, as now, consisted only of one large donjon keep, surrounded with a court-yard, with two round flanking-towers at the angles, which contained within its circuit some other buildings of inferior importance. A few old trees, clustered together near the castle, gave some relief to the air of desolate seclusion; but yet the page, while he gazed upon a building so sequestrated, could not but feel for the situation of a captive princess doomed to dwell there, as well as for his own. 'I must have been born,' he thought, 'under the star that presides over ladies and lakes of water, for I cannot by any means escape from the service of the one, or from dwelling in the other. But if they allow me not the fair freedom of my sport and exercise, they shall find it as hard to confine a wild-drake, as a youth who can swim like one.'

The band had now reached the edge of the water, and one of the party advancing, displayed Lord Lindesay's pennon, waving it repeatedly to and fro, while that baron himself blew a clamorous blast on his bugle. A banner was presently displayed from the roof of the castle in reply to these signals, and one or two figures were seen busied as if unmooring a boat which lay close to the islet.

'It will be some time ere they can reach us with the boat,' said the companion of the Lord Lindesay; 'should we not do well to proceed to the town, and array ourselves in some better order, ere we appear before'——

'You may do as you list, Sir Robert,' replied Lindesay, 'I have neither time nor temper to waste on such vanities. She has cost me many a hard ride, and must not now take offence at the threadbare cloak and soiled doublet that I am arrayed in. It is the livery to which she has brought all Scotland.'

'Do not speak so harshly,' said Sir Robert; 'if she hath done wrong, she hath dearly abied it; and, in losing all real power, one would not deprive her of the little external homage due at once to a lady and a princess.'

'I say to you once more, Sir Robert Melville,' replied Lindesay, 'do as you will—for me, I am now too old to dink myself as a gallant to grace the bower of dames.'

'The bower of dames, my lord!' said Melville, looking at the rude old tower—'is it yon dark and grated castle, the prison of a captive Queen, to which you give so gay a name?'

'Name it as you list,' replied Lindesay; 'had the Regent desired to send an envoy capable to speak to a captive Queen, there are many gallants in his court who would have courted the occasion to make speeches out of Amadis of Gaul, or the Mirror of Knighthood. But when he sent blunt old Lindesay, he knew he would speak to a misguided woman, as her former misdoings and her present state rendered necessary. I sought not this employment—it has been thrust upon me; and I will not cumber myself with more form in the discharge of it, than needs must be tacked to such an occupation.'

So saying, Lord Lindesay threw himself from horseback, and, wrapping his riding-cloak around him, lay down at lazy length upon the sward, to await the arrival of the boat, which was now seen rowing from the castle towards the shore. Sir Robert Melville, who had also dismounted,

walked at short turns to and fro upon the bank, his arms crossed on his breast, often looking to the castle, and displaying in his countenance a mixture of sorrow and of anxiety. The rest of the party sat like statues on horseback, without moving so much as the points of their lances, which they held upright in the air.

As soon as the boat approached a rude quay or landing-place, near to which they had stationed themselves, Lord Lindesay started up from his recumbent posture, and asked the person who steered why he had not brought a larger boat with him to transport his retinue.

'So please you,' replied the boatman, 'because it is the order of our lady that we bring not to the castle more than four persons.'

'Thy lady is a wise woman,' said Lindesay, 'to suspect me of treachery!—Or, had I intended it, what was to hinder us from throwing you and your comrades into the lake, and filling the boat with my own fellows?'

The steersman, on hearing this, made a hasty signal to his men to back their oars, and hold off from the shore which they were approaching.

'Why, thou ass,' said Lindesay, 'thou didst not think that I meant thy fool's head serious harm? Hark thee, friend—with fewer than three servants I will go no whither—Sir Robert Melville will require at least the attendance of one domestic; and it will be at your peril and your lady's to refuse us admission, come hither as we are on matters of great national concern.'

The steersman answered with firmness, but with great civility of expression, that his orders were positive to bring no more than four into the island, but he offered to row back to obtain a revisal of his orders.

'Do so, my friends,' said Sir Robert Melville, after he had in vain endeavoured to persuade his stubborn companion to consent to a temporary abatement of his train; 'row back to the castle, sith it will be no better, and obtain thy lady's orders to transport the Lord Lindesay, myself, and our retinue hither.'

'And hearken,' said Lord Lindesay, 'take with you this page, who comes as an attendant on your lady's guest.—Dismount, sirrah,' said he, addressing Roland, 'and embark with them in that boat.'

'And what is to become of my horse?' said Græme; 'I am answerable for him to my master.'

'I will relieve you of the charge,' said Lindesay; 'thou wilt have little enough to do with horse, saddle, or bridle, for ten years to come—Thou mayest take the halter an thou wilt—it may stand thee in a turn.'

'If I thought so,' said Roland—but he was interrupted by Sir Robert Melville, who said to him good-humouredly, 'Dispute it not, young friend—resistance can do no good, but may well run thee into danger.'

Roland Græme felt the justice of what he said, and, though neither delighted with the matter or manner of Lindesay's address, deemed it best to submit to necessity, and to embark without further remonstrance. The men plied their oars. The quay, with the party of horse stationed near it, receded from the page's eyes—the castle and the islet seemed to draw near in the same proportion, and in a brief space he landed under the shadow of a huge old tree which overhung the landing-place. The steersman and Græme leapt ashore; the boatmen remained lying on their oars ready for further service.

CHAPTER XXI.

Could valour aught avail or people's love,
France had not wept Navarre's brave Henry slain;
If wit or beauty could compassion move,
The Rose of Scotland had not wept in vain.
ELEGY IN A ROYAL MAUSOLEUM—LEWIS.

At the gate of the court-yard of Lochleven appeared the stately form of the Lady of Lochleven, a female whose early charms had captivated James V., by whom she became mother of the celebrated Regent Murray. As she was of noble birth (being a daughter of the house of Mar) and of great beauty, her intimacy with James did not prevent her being afterwards sought in honourable marriage by many gallants of the time, among whom she had preferred Sir Robert Douglas of Lochleven. But well has it been said,

—— Our pleasant vices
Are made the whips to scourge us.

The station which the Lady of Lochleven now held as the wife of a man of high rank and interest, and the mother of a lawful family, did not prevent her nourishing a painful sense of degradation, even while she was proud of the talents, the power, and the station of her son, now prime ruler of the state, but still a pledge of her illicit intercourse. 'Had James done to her,' she said in her secret heart, 'the justice he owed her, she had seen in her son, as a source of unmixed delight and of unchastened pride, the lawful monarch of Scotland, and one of the ablest who ever swayed the sceptre. The house of Mar, not inferior in antiquity or grandeur to that of Drummond, would then have also boasted a queen among its daughters, and escaped the stain attached to female frailty, even when it has a royal lover for its apology.' While such feelings preyed on a bosom naturally proud and severe, they had a corresponding effect on her countenance, where, with the remains of great beauty, were mingled traits indicative of inward discontent and peevish melancholy. It perhaps contributed to increase this habitual temperament, that the Lady Lochleven had adopted uncommonly rigid and severe views of religion, imitating in her ideas of reformed faith the very worst errors of the Catholics, in limiting the benefit of the gospel to those who profess their own speculative tenets.

In every respect, the unfortunate Queen Mary, now the compulsory guest, or rather prisoner, of this sullen lady, was obnoxious to her hostess. Lady Lochleven disliked her as the daughter of Mary of Guise, the legal possessor of those rights over James's heart and hand, of which she conceived herself to have been injuriously deprived; and yet more so as the professor of a religion which she detested worse than paganism.

Such was the dame, who, with stately mien, and sharp yet handsome features, shrouded by

her black velvet coif, interrogated the domestic who steered her barge to the shore, what had become of Lindesay and Sir Robert Melville. The man related what had passed, and she smiled scornfully as she replied, 'Fools must be flattered, not foughten with.—Row back—make thy excuse as thou canst—say Lord Ruthven hath already reached this castle, and that he is impatient for Lord Lindesay's presence. Away with thee, Randal—yet stay—what galopin is that thou hast brought hither?'

'So please you, my lady, he is the page who is to wait upon'——

'Ay, the new male minion,' said the Lady Lochleven; 'the female attendant arrived yesterday. I shall have a well-ordered house with this lady and her retinue; but I trust they will soon find some others to undertake such a charge. Begone, Randal—and you' (to Roland Græme), 'follow me to the garden.'

She led the way with a slow and stately step to the small garden, which, enclosed by a stone wall ornamented with statues, and an artificial fountain in the centre, extended its dull parterres on the side of the court-yard, with which it communicated by a low and arched portal. Within the narrow circuit of its formal and limited walks, Mary Stuart was now learning to perform the weary part of a prisoner, which, with little interval, she was doomed to sustain during the remainder of her life. She was followed in her slow and melancholy exercise by two female attendants; but in the first glance which Roland Græme bestowed upon one so illustrious by birth, so distinguished by her beauty, accomplishments, and misfortunes, he was sensible of the presence of no other than the unhappy Queen of Scotland.

Her face, her form, have been so deeply impressed upon the imagination, that even at the distance of nearly three centuries, it is unnecessary to remind the most ignorant and uninformed reader of the striking traits which characterize that remarkable countenance, which seems at once to combine our ideas of the majestic, the pleasing, and the brilliant, leaving us to doubt whether they express most happily the queen, the beauty, or the accomplished woman. Who is there that, at the very mention of Mary Stuart's name, has not her countenance before him, familiar as that of the mistress of his youth, or the favourite daughter of his advanced age? Even those who feel themselves compelled to believe all, or much, of what her enemies laid to her charge, cannot think without a sigh upon a countenance expressive of anything rather than the foul crimes with which she was charged when living, and which still continue to shade, if not to blacken, her memory. That brow, so truly open and regal—those eyebrows, so regularly graceful, which yet were saved from the charge of regular insipidity by the beautiful effect of the hazel eyes which they overarched, and which seem to utter a thousand histories—the nose, with all its Grecian precision of outline—the mouth so well proportioned, so sweetly formed, as if designed to speak nothing but what was delightful to hear—the dimpled chin—the stately swan-like neck, form a countenance, the like of which we know not to have existed in any other character moving in that class of life, where the actresses as well as the actors command general and undivided attention. It is in vain to say that the portraits which exist of this remarkable woman are not like each other; for, amidst their discrepancy, each possesses general features which the eye at once acknowledges as peculiar to the vision which our imagination has raised while we read her history for the first time, and which has been impressed upon it by the numerous prints and pictures which we have seen. Indeed, we cannot look on the worst of them, however deficient in point of execution, without saying that it is meant for Queen Mary; and no small instance it is of the power of beauty, that her charms should have remained the subject not merely of admiration, but of warm and chivalrous interest, after the lapse of such a length of time. We know that by far the most acute of those who, in latter days, have adopted the unfavourable view of Mary's character, longed, like the executioner before his dreadful task was performed, to kiss the fair hand of her on whom he was about to perform so horrible a duty.

Dressed, then, in a deep mourning robe, and with all those charms of face, shape, and manner with which faithful tradition has made each reader familiar, Mary Stuart advanced to meet the Lady of Lochleven, who, on her part, endeavoured to conceal dislike and apprehension under the appearance of respectful indifference. The truth was, that she had experienced repeatedly the queen's superiority in that species of disguised yet cutting sarcasm, with which women can successfully avenge themselves for real and substantial injuries. It may be well doubted whether this talent was not as fatal to its possessor as the many others enjoyed by that highly gifted but most unhappy female; for, while it often afforded her a momentary triumph over her keepers, it failed not to exasperate their resentment; and the satire and sarcasm in which she had indulged were frequently retaliated by the deep and bitter hardships which they had the power of inflicting. It is well known that her death was at length hastened by a letter which she wrote to Queen Elizabeth, in which she treated her jealous rival, and the Countess of Shrewsbury, with the keenest irony and ridicule.

As the ladies met together, the queen said, bending her head at the same time, in return to the obeisance of the Lady Lochleven, 'We are this day fortunate—we enjoy the company of our amiable hostess at an unusual hour, and during a period which we have hitherto been permitted to give to our private exercise. But our good hostess knows well she has at all times access to our presence, and need not observe the useless ceremony of requiring our permission."

'I am sorry my presence is deemed an intrusion by your Grace,' said the Lady of Lochleven. 'I came but to announce the arrival of an addition to your train,' motioning with her hand towards Roland Græme; 'a circumstance to which ladies are seldom indifferent.'

'O! I crave your ladyship's pardon; and am bent to the earth with obligations for the kindness of my nobles—or my sovereigns, shall I

call them?—who have permitted me such a respectable addition to my personal retinue.'

'They have indeed studied, madam,' said the Lady of Lochleven, 'to show their kindness towards your Grace—something at the risk perhaps of sound policy, and I trust their doings will not be misconstrued.'

'Impossible!' said the queen; 'the bounty which permits the daughter of so many kings, and who yet is queen of the realm, the attendance of two waiting-women and a boy, is a grace which Mary Stuart can never sufficiently acknowledge. Why! my train will be equal to that of any country dame in this your kingdom of Fife, saving but the lack of a gentleman-usher, and a pair or two of blue-coated serving-men. But I must not forget, in my selfish joy, the additional trouble and charges to which this magnificent augmentation of our train will put our kind hostess, and the whole house of Lochleven. It is this prudent anxiety, I am aware, which clouds your brows, my worthy lady. But be of good cheer; the crown of Scotland has many a fair manor, and your affectionate son, and my no less affectionate brother, will endow the good knight your husband with the best of them, ere Mary should be dismissed from this hospitable castle from your ladyship's lack of means to support the charges.'

'The Douglases of Lochleven, madam,' answered the lady, 'have known for ages how to discharge their duty to the state, without looking for reward, even when the task was both irksome and dangerous.'

'Nay, but, my dear Lochleven,' said the queen, 'you are over scrupulous—I pray you accept of a goodly manor; what should support the Queen of Scotland in this her princely court, saving her own crown-lands—and who should minister to the wants of a mother, save an affectionate son like the Earl of Murray, who possesses so wonderfully both the power and inclination?—Or said you it was the danger of the task which clouded your smooth and hospitable brow?—No doubt, a page is a formidable addition to my bodyguard of females; and I bethink me it must have been for that reason that my Lord of Lindesay refused even now to venture within the reach of a force so formidable, without being attended by a competent retinue.'

The Lady Lochleven started, and looked something surprised; and Mary, suddenly changing her manner from the smooth ironical affectation of mildness to an accent of austere command, and drawing up at the same time her fine person, said, with the full majesty of her rank, 'Yes, Lady of Lochleven! I know that Ruthven is already in the castle, and that Lindesay waits on the bank the return of your barge to bring him hither along with Sir Robert Melville. For what purpose do these nobles come—and why am I not in ordinary decency apprised of their arrival?'

'Their purpose, madam,' replied the Lady of Lochleven, 'they must themselves explain—but a formal annunciation were needless, where your Grace hath attendants who can play the espial so well.'

'Alas, poor Fleming!' said the queen, turning to the elder of the female attendants, 'thou wilt be tried, condemned, and gibbeted, for a spy in the garrison, because thou didst chance to cross the great hall while my good Lady of Lochleven was parleying at the full pitch of her voice with her pilot Randal. Put black wool in thy ears, girl, as you value the wearing of them longer. Remember, in the Castle of Lochleven, ears and tongues are matters not of use, but for show merely. Our good hostess can hear, as well as speak, for us all. We excuse your further attendance, my lady hostess,' she said, once more addressing the object of her resentment, 'and retire to prepare for an interview with our rebel lords. We will use the antechamber of our sleeping apartment as our hall of audience. You, young man,' she proceeded, addressing Roland Græme, and at once softening the ironical sharpness of her manner into good-humoured raillery, 'you, who are all our male attendance, from our Lord High Chamberlain down to our least galopin, follow us to prepare our court.'

She turned, and walked slowly towards the castle. The Lady of Lochleven folded her arms, and smiled in bitter resentment as she watched her retiring steps.

'The whole male attendance!' she muttered, repeating the queen's last words; 'and well for thee had it been had thy train never been larger;' then turning to Roland, in whose way she had stood while making this pause, she made room for him to pass, saying at the same time, 'Art thou already eavesdropping? follow thy mistress, minion, and, if thou wilt, tell her what I have now said.'

Roland Græme hastened after his royal mistress and her attendants, who had just entered a postern-gate communicating betwixt the castle and the small garden. They ascended a winding stair as high as the second storey, which was in a great measure occupied by a suite of three rooms, opening into each other, and assigned as the dwelling of the captive princess. The outermost was a small hall or anteroom, within which opened a large parlour, and from that again the queen's bedroom. Another small apartment, which opened into the same parlour, contained the beds of the gentlewomen in waiting.

Roland Græme stopped, as became his station, in the outermost of these apartments, there to await such orders as might be communicated to him. From the grated window of the room he saw Lindesay, Melville, and their followers disembark; and observed that they were met at the castle gate by a third noble, to whom Lindesay exclaimed, in his loud, harsh voice, 'My Lord of Ruthven, you have the start of us!'

At this instant, the page's attention was called to a burst of hysterical sobs from the inner apartment, and to the hurried ejaculations of the terrified females, which led him almost instantly to hasten to their assistance. When he entered, he saw that the queen had thrown herself into the large chair which stood nearest the door, and was sobbing for breath in a strong fit of hysterical affection. The elder female supported her in her arms, while the younger

bathed her face with water and with tears alternately.

'Hasten, young man!' said the elder lady, in alarm, 'fly—call in assistance—she is swooning!'

But the queen ejaculated in a faint and broken voice, 'Stir not, I charge you!—call no one to witness—I am better—I shall recover instantly.' And, indeed, with an effort which seemed like that of one struggling for life, she sat up in her chair, and endeavoured to resume her composure, while her features yet trembled with the violent emotion of body and mind which she had undergone. 'I am ashamed of my weakness, girls,' she said, taking the hands of her attendants; 'but it is over—and I am Mary Stuart once more. The savage tone of that man's voice—my knowledge of his insolence—the name which he named—the purpose for which they come, may excuse a moment's weakness—and it shall be a moment's only.' She snatched from her head the curch or cap, which had been disordered during her hysterical agony, shook down the thick clustered tresses of dark brown which had been before veiled under it—and drawing her slender fingers across the labyrinth which they formed, she arose from the chair, and stood like the inspired image of a Grecian prophetess, in a mood which partook at once of sorrow and pride, of smiles and of tears. 'We are ill appointed,' she said, 'to meet our rebel subjects; but, as far as we may, we will strive to present ourselves as becomes their Queen. Follow me, my maidens,' she said; 'what says thy favourite song, my Fleming?

My maids, come to my dressing-bower,
And deck my nut-brown hair,
Where'er ye laid a plait before,
Look ye lay ten times mair.

Alas!' she added, when she had repeated with a smile these lines of an old ballad, 'violence has already robbed me of the ordinary decorations of my rank; and the few that nature gave me have been destroyed by sorrow and by fear.' Yet while she spoke thus, she again let her slender fingers stray through the wilderness of the beautiful tresses which veiled her kingly neck and swelling bosom, as if, in her agony of mind, she had not altogether lost the consciousness of her unrivalled charms. Roland Græme, on whose youth, inexperience, and ardent sense of what was dignified and lovely, the demeanour of so fair and high-born a lady wrought like the charm of a magician, stood rooted to the spot with surprise and interest, longing to hazard his life in a quarrel so fair as that which Mary Stuart's must needs be. She had been bred in France—she was possessed of the most distinguished beauty—she had reigned a queen, and a Scottish queen, to whom knowledge of character was as essential as the use of vital air. In all these capacities, Mary was, of all women on the earth, most alert at perceiving and using the advantages which her charms gave her over almost all who came within the sphere of their influence. She cast on Roland a glance which might have melted a heart of stone. 'My poor boy,' she said, with a feeling partly real, partly politic, 'thou art a stranger to us—sent to this doleful captivity from the society of some tender mother, or sister, or maiden, with whom you had freedom to tread a gay measure round the maypole. I grieve for you; but you are the only male in my limited household—wilt thou obey my orders?'

'To the death, madam,' said Græme, in a determined tone.

'Then keep the door of mine apartment,' said the queen; 'keep it till they offer actual violence, or till we shall be fitly arrayed to receive these intrusive visitors.'

'I will defend it till they pass over my body,' said Roland Græme; any hesitation which he had felt concerning the line of conduct he ought to pursue being completely swept away by the impulse of the moment.

'Not so, my good youth,' answered Mary; 'not so, I command thee. If I have one faithful subject beside me, much need, God wot, I have to care for his safety. Resist them but till they are put to the shame of using actual violence, and then give way, I charge you. Remember my commands.' And with a smile expressive at once of favour and of authority, she turned from him, and, followed by her attendants, entered the bedroom.

The youngest paused for half a second ere she followed her companion, and made a signal to Roland Græme with her hand. He had been already long aware that this was Catherine Seyton—a circumstance which could not much surprise a youth of quick intellects, who recollected the sort of mysterious discourse which had passed betwixt the two matrons at the deserted nunnery, and on which his meeting with Catherine in this place seemed to cast so much light. Yet such was the engrossing effect of Mary's presence, that it surmounted for the moment even the feelings of a youthful lover; and it was not until Catherine Seyton had disappeared, that Roland began to consider in what relation they were to stand to each other. 'She held up her hand to me in a commanding manner,' he thought; 'perhaps she wanted to confirm my purpose for the execution of the Queen's commands; for I think she could scarce purpose to scare me with the sort of discipline which she administered to the groom in the frieze jacket, and to poor Adam Woodcock. But we will see to that anon; meantime, let us do justice to the trust reposed in us by this unhappy Queen. I think my Lord of Murray will himself own that it is the duty of a faithful page to defend his lady against intrusion on her privacy.'

Accordingly, he stepped to the little vestibule, made fast, with lock and bar, the door which opened from thence to the large staircase, and then sat himself down to attend the result. He had not long to wait—a rude and strong hand first essayed to lift the latch, then pushed and shook the door with violence, and, when it resisted his attempt to open it, exclaimed, 'Undo the door there, you within!'

'Why, and at whose command,' said the page, 'am I to undo the door of the apartments of the Queen of Scotland?'

Another vain attempt, which made hinge and bolt jingle, showed that the impatient applicant without would willingly have entered altogether

regardless of his challenge; but at length an answer was returned.

'Undo the door, on your peril—the Lord Lindesay comes to speak with the Lady Mary of Scotland.'

'The Lord Lindesay, as a Scottish noble,' answered the page, 'must await his sovereign's leisure.'

An earnest altercation ensued amongst those without, in which Roland distinguished the remarkable harsh voice of Lindesay in reply to Sir Robert Melville, who appeared to have been using some soothing language—'*No! no! no!* I tell thee, no! I will place a petard against the door rather than be balked by a profligate woman, and bearded by an insolent footboy.'

'Yet, at least,' said Melville, 'let me try fair means in the first instance. Violence to a lady would stain your scutcheon for ever. Or await till my Lord Ruthven comes.'

'I will await no longer,' said Lindesay; 'it is high time the business were done, and we on our return to the council. But thou mayest try thy fair play, as thou callest it, while I cause my train to prepare the petard. I came hither provided with as good gunpowder as blew up the Kirk of Field.'

'For God's sake, be patient,' said Melville; and, approaching the door, he said, as speaking to those within, 'Let the Queen know that I, her faithful servant Robert Melville, do entreat her, for her own sake, and to prevent worse consequences, that she will undo the door, and admit Lord Lindesay, who brings a mission from the Council of State.'

'I will do your errand to the Queen,' said the page, 'and report to you her answer.'

He went to the door of the bedchamber, and, tapping against it gently, it was opened by the elderly lady, to whom he communicated his errand, and returned with directions from the queen to admit Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindesay. Roland Græme returned to the vestibule, and opened the door accordingly, into which the Lord Lindesay strode, with the air of a soldier who has fought his way into a conquered fortress; while Melville, deeply dejected, followed him more slowly.

'I draw you to witness, and to record,' said the page to this last, 'that, save for the especial commands of the Queen, I would have made good the entrance, with my best strength, and my best blood, against all Scotland.'

'Be silent, young man,' said Melville, in a tone of grave rebuke; 'add not brands to fire—this is no time to make a flourish of thy boyish chivalry.'

'She has not appeared even yet,' said Lindesay, who had now reached the midst of the parlour or audience-room; 'how call you this trifling?'

'Patience, my lord,' replied Sir Robert, 'time presses not—and Lord Ruthven hath not as yet descended.'

At this moment the door of the inner apartment opened, and Queen Mary presented herself, advancing with an air of peculiar grace and majesty, and seeming totally unruffled, either by the visit, or by the rude manner in which it had been enforced. Her dress was a robe of black velvet; a small ruff, open in front, gave a full view of her beautifully formed chin and neck, but veiled her bosom. On her head she wore a small cap of lace, and a transparent white veil hung from her shoulders over the long black robe, in large loose folds, so that it could be drawn at pleasure over the face and person. She wore a cross of gold around her neck, and had her rosary of gold and ebony hanging from her girdle. She was closely followed by her two ladies, who remained standing behind her during the conference. Even Lord Lindesay, though the rudest noble of that rude age, was surprised into something like respect by the unconcerned and majestic mien of her whom he had expected to find frantic with impotent passion, or dissolved in useless and vain sorrow, or overwhelmed with the fears likely in such a situation to assail fallen royalty.

'We fear we have detained you, my Lord of Lindesay,' said the queen, while she curtseyed with dignity in answer to his reluctant obeisance; 'but a female does not willingly receive her visitors without some minutes spent at the toilette. Men, my lord, are less dependent on such ceremonies.'

Lord Lindesay, casting his eye down on his own travel-stained and disordered dress, muttered something of a hasty journey, and the queen paid her greeting to Sir Robert Melville with courtesy, and even, as it seemed, with kindness. There was then a dead pause, during which Lindesay looked towards the door, as if expecting with impatience the colleague of their embassy. The queen alone was entirely unembarrassed, and, as if to break the silence, she addressed Lord Lindesay, with a glance at the large and cumbrous sword which he wore, as already mentioned, hanging from his neck.

'You have there a trusty and a weighty travelling companion, my lord. I trust you expected to meet with no enemy here, against whom such a formidable weapon could be necessary? It is, methinks, somewhat a singular ornament for a court, though I am, as I well need to be, too much of a Stuart to fear a sword.'

'It is not the first time, madam,' replied Lindesay, bringing round the weapon so as to rest its point on the ground, and leaning one hand on the huge cross handle, 'it is not the first time that this weapon has intruded itself into the presence of the house of Stuart.'

'Possibly, my lord,' replied the queen, 'it may have done service to my ancestors—Your ancestors were men of loyalty.'

'Ay, madam,' replied he, 'service it hath done; but such as kings love neither to acknowledge nor to reward. It was the service which the knife renders to the tree when trimming it to the quick, and depriving it of the superfluous growth of rank and unfruitful suckers, which rob it of nourishment.'

'You talk riddles, my lord,' said Mary; 'I will hope the explanation carries nothing insulting with it.'

'You shall judge, madam,' answered Lindesay. 'With this good sword was Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, girded on the memorable day when he acquired the name of Bell-the-Cat, for dragging from the presence of your great-grandfather, the third James of the race, a crew of

minions, flatterers, and favourites, whom he hanged over the bridge of Lauder, as a warning to such reptiles how they approach a Scottish throne. With this same weapon, the same inflexible champion of Scottish honour and nobility slew at one blow Spens of Kilspindie, a courtier of your grandfather, James the Fourth, who had dared to speak lightly of him in the royal presence. They fought near the brook of Fala, and Bell the Cat, with this blade, sheared through the thigh of his opponent, and lopped the limb as easily as a shepherd's boy slices a twig from a sapling.'

'My lord,' replied the queen, reddening, 'my nerves are too good to be alarmed even by this terrible history.—May I ask how a blade so illustrious passed from the house of Douglas to that of Lindesay?—Methinks it should have been preserved as a consecrated relic, by a family who have held all that they could do against their king, to be done in favour of their country.'

'Nay, madam,' said Melville, anxiously interfering, 'ask not that question of Lord Lindesay.—And you, my lord, for shame—for decency—forbear to reply to it.'

'It is time that this lady should hear the truth,' replied Lindesay.

'And be assured,' said the queen, 'that she will be moved to anger by none that you can tell her, my lord. There are cases in which just scorn has always the mastery over just anger.'

'Then know,' said Lindesay, 'that on the field of Carberry Hill, when that false and infamous traitor and murderer, James, sometime Earl of Bothwell, and nicknamed Duke of Orkney, offered to do personal battle with any of the associated nobles who came to drag him to justice, I accepted his challenge, and was by the noble Earl of Morton gifted with his good sword that I might therewith fight it out.—And, so help me Heaven, had his presumption been one grain more, or his cowardice one grain less, I should have done such work with this good steel on his traitorous corpse, that the hounds and carrion crows should have found their morsels daintily carved to their use!'

The queen's courage well nigh gave way at the mention of Bothwell's name—a name connected with such a train of guilt, shame, and disaster. But the prolonged boast of Lindesay gave her time to rally herself, and to answer with an appearance of cold contempt: 'It is easy to slay an enemy who enters not the lists. But had Mary Stuart inherited her father's sword as well as his sceptre, the boldest of her rebels should not upon that day have complained that they had no one to cope withal. Your lordship will forgive me if I abridge this conference. A brief description of a bloody fight is long enough to satisfy a lady's curiosity; and unless my Lord of Lindesay has something more important to tell us than of the deeds which old Bell the Cat achieved, and how he would himself have emulated them, had time and tide permitted, we will retire to our private apartment, and you, Fleming, shall finish reading to us yonder little treatise, *Des Rodomontades Espagnolles*.'

'Tarry, madam,' said Lindesay, his complexion reddening in his turn; 'I know your quick wit too well of old to have sought an interview that you might sharpen its edge at the expense of my honour. Lord Ruthven and myself, with Sir Robert Melville as a concurrent, come to your Grace on the part of the Secret Council, to tender to you what much concerns the safety of your own life and the welfare of the state.'

'The Secret Council?' said the queen; 'by what powers can it subsist or act, while I, from whom it holds its character, am here detained under unjust restraint? But it matters not—what concerns the welfare of Scotland shall be acceptable to Mary Stuart, come from whatever quarter it will—and for what concerns her own life, she has lived long enough to be weary of it, even at the age of twenty five.—Where is your colleague, my lord?—why tarries he?'

'He comes, madam,' said Melville, and Lord Ruthven entered at the instant, holding in his hand a packet. As the queen returned his salutation she became deadly pale, but instantly recovered herself by dint of strong and sudden resolution, just as the noble, whose appearance seemed to excite such emotions in her bosom, entered the apartment in company with George Douglas, the youngest son of the Knight of Lochleven, who, during the absence of his father and brethren, acted as seneschal of the castle, under the direction of the elder Lady Lochleven, his father's mother.

CHAPTER XXII

I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths.
RICHARD II.

LORD RUTHVEN had the look and bearing which became a soldier and a statesman, and the martial cast of his form and features procured him the popular epithet of Greysteil, by which he was distinguished by his intimates, after the hero of a metrical romance then generally known. His dress, which was a buff coat embroidered, had a half-military character, but exhibited nothing of the sordid negligence which distinguished that of Lindesay. But the son of an ill-fated sire, and the father of a yet more unfortunate family, bore in his look that cast of inauspicious melancholy by which the physiognomists of that time pretended to distinguish those who were predestined to a violent and unhappy death.

The terror which the presence of this nobleman impressed on the queen's mind arose from the active share he had borne in the slaughter of David Rizzio, his father having presided at the perpetration of that abominable crime, although so weak from long and wasting illness, that he could not endure the weight of his armour, having arisen from a sick bed to commit a murder in the presence of his sovereign. On that occasion his son also had attended and taken an active part. It was little to be wondered at that the queen, considering her condition when such a deed of horror was acted in her presence, should retain an instinctive terror for the principal

actors in the murder. She returned, however, with grace, the salutation of Lord Ruthven, and extended her hand to George Douglas, who kneeled and kissed it with respect; the first mark of a subject's homage which Roland Græme had seen any of them render to the captive sovereign. She returned his greeting in silence, and there was a brief pause, during which the steward of the castle, a man of a sad brow and a severe eye, placed, under George Douglas's directions, a table and writing materials; and the page, obedient to his mistress's dumb signal, advanced a large chair to the side on which the queen stood, the table thus forming a sort of bar which divided the queen and her personal followers from her unwelcome visitors. The steward then withdrew, after a low reverence. When he had closed the door behind him, the queen broke silence—'With your favour, my lords, I will sit—my walks are not indeed extensive enough at present to fatigue me greatly, yet I find repose something more necessary than usual.'

She sat down accordingly, and, shading her cheek with her beautiful hand, looked keenly and impressively at each of the nobles in turn. Mary Fleming applied her kerchief to her eyes, and Catherine Seyton and Roland Græme exchanged a glance, which showed that both were too deeply engrossed with sentiments of interest and commiseration for their royal mistress, to think of anything which regarded themselves.

'I wait the purpose of your mission, my lords,' said the queen, after she had been seated for about a minute without a word being spoken,—'I wait your message from those you call the Secret Council.—I trust it is a petition of pardon, and a desire that I will resume my rightful throne, without using with due severity my right of punishing those who have dispossessed me of it?'

'Madam,' replied Ruthven, 'it is painful for us to speak harsh truths to a princess who has long ruled us. But we come to offer, not to implore, pardon. In a word, madam, we have to propose to you, on the part of the Secret Council, that you sign these deeds, which will contribute greatly to the pacification of the state, the advancement of God's word, and the welfare of your own future life.'

'Am I expected to take these fair words on trust, my lord? or may I hear the contents of these reconciling papers, ere I am asked to sign them?'

'Unquestionably, madam; it is our purpose and wish, you should read what you are required to sign,' replied Ruthven.

'Required?' replied the queen, with some emphasis; 'but the phrase suits well the matter—read, my lord.'

The Lord Ruthven proceeded to read a formal instrument, running in the queen's name, and setting forth that she had been called, at an early age, to the administration of the crown and realm of Scotland, and had toiled diligently therein, until she was in body and spirit so wearied out and disgusted, that she was unable any longer to endure the travail and pain of state affairs; and that, since God had blessed her with a fair and hopeful son, she was desirous to insure to him, even while she yet lived, his succession to the crown, which was his by right of hereditary descent. 'Wherefore,' the instrument proceeded, 'we, of the motherly affection we bear to our said son, have renounced and demitted, and by these our letters of free good-will renounce and demit, the crown, government, and guiding of the realm of Scotland, in favour of our said son, that he may succeed to us as native prince thereof, as much as if we had been removed by disease, and not by our own proper act. And that this demission of our royal authority may have the more full and solemn effect, and none pretend ignorance, we give, grant, and commit full and free and plain power to our trusty cousins, Lord Lindesay of the Byres, and William Lord Ruthven, to appear in our name before as many of the nobility, clergy, and burgesses as may be assembled at Stirling, and there, in our name and behalf, publicly, and in their presence, to renounce the crown, guidance, and government of this our kingdom of Scotland.'

The queen here broke in with an air of extreme surprise. 'How is this, my lords?' she said. 'Are my ears turned rebels, that they deceive me with sounds so extraordinary?—And yet it is no wonder that, having conversed so long with rebellion, they should now force its language upon my understanding. Say I am mistaken, my lords—say, for the honour of yourselves and the Scottish nobility, that my right trusty cousins of Lindesay and Ruthven, two barons of warlike fame and ancient line, have not sought the prison-house of their kind mistress for such a purpose as these words seem to imply. Say, for the sake of honour and loyalty, that my ears have deceived me.'

'No, madam,' said Ruthven gravely, 'your ears do *not* deceive you—they deceived you when they were closed against the preachers of the evangele, and the honest advice of your faithful subjects; and when they were ever open to flattery of pickthanks and traitors, foreign cubiculars and domestic minions. The land may no longer brook the rule of one who cannot rule herself; wherefore, I pray you to comply with the last remaining wish of your subjects and counsellors, and spare yourself and us the further agitation of matter so painful.'

'And is this *all* my loving subjects require of me, my lord?' said Mary, in a tone of bitter irony. 'Do they really stint themselves to the easy boon that I should yield up the crown, which is mine by birthright, to an infant which is scarcely more than a year old—fling down my sceptre, and take up a distaff?—O no! it is too little for them to ask.—That other roll of parchment contains something harder to be complied with, and which may more highly task my readiness to comply with the petitions of my lieges.'

'This parchment,' answered Ruthven, in the same tone of inflexible gravity, and unfolding the instrument as he spoke, 'is one by which your Grace constitutes your nearest in blood, and the most honourable and trustworthy of your subjects, James, Earl of Murray, Regent of the kingdom during the minority of the young king. He already holds the appointment from the Secret Council.'

The queen gave a sort of shriek, and, clapping her hands together, exclaimed, 'Comes the arrow out of his quiver?—out of my brother's bow?—Alas! I looked for his return from France as my sole, at least my readiest, chance of deliverance.—And yet, when I heard that he had assumed the government, I guessed he would shame to wield it in my name.'

'I must pray your answer, madam,' said Lord Ruthven, 'to the demand of the Council.'

'The demand of the Council!' said the queen; 'say rather the demand of a set of robbers, impatient to divide the spoil they have seized. To such a demand, and sent by the mouth of a traitor, whose scalp, but for my womanish mercy, should long since have stood on the city gates, Mary of Scotland has no answer.'

'I trust, madam,' said Lord Ruthven, 'my being unacceptable to your presence will not add to your obduracy of resolution. It may become you to remember that the death of the minion Rizzio cost the house of Ruthven its head and leader. My father, more worthy than a whole province of such vile sycophants, died in exile, and broken-hearted.'

The queen clasped her hands on her face, and, resting her arms on the table, stooped down her head and wept so bitterly, that the tears were seen to find their way in streams between the white and slender fingers with which she endeavoured to conceal them.

'My lords,' said Sir Robert Melville, 'this is too much rigour. Under your lordships' favour, we came hither, not to revive old griefs, but to find the mode of avoiding new ones.'

'Sir Robert Melville,' said Ruthven, 'we best know for what purpose we were delegated hither, and wherefore you were somewhat unnecessarily sent to attend us.'

'Nay, by my hand,' said Lord Lindesay, 'I know not why we were cumbered with the good knight, unless he comes in place of the lump of sugar which pothicars put into their wholesome but bitter medicaments, to please a froward child—a needless labour, methinks, where men have the means to make them swallow the physic otherwise.'

'Nay, my lords,' said Melville, 'ye best know your own secret instructions. I conceive I shall best obey mine in striving to mediate between her Grace and you.'

'Be silent, Sir Robert Melville,' said the queen, arising, and her face still glowing with agitation as she spoke. 'My kerchief, Fleming—I shame that traitors should have power to move me thus.—Tell me, proud lords,' she added, wiping away the tears as she spoke, 'by what earthly warrant can liege subjects pretend to challenge the rights of an anointed sovereign—to throw off the allegiance they have vowed, and to take away the crown from the head on which divine warrant hath placed it?'

'Madam,' said Ruthven, 'I will deal plainly with you. Your reign, from the dismal field of Pinkie-cleuch, when you were a babe in the cradle, till now, that ye stand a grown dame before us, hath been such a tragedy of losses, disasters, civil dissensions, and foreign wars, that the like is not to be found in our chronicles. The French and English have, with one consent, made Scotland the battlefield on which to fight out their own ancient quarrel.—For ourselves, every man's hand hath been against his brother, nor hath a year passed over without rebellion and slaughter, exile of nobles, and oppressing of the commons. We may endure it no longer, and therefore, as a prince, to whom God hath refused the gift of hearkening to wise counsel, and on whose dealings and projects no blessing hath ever descended, we pray you to give way to other rule and governance of the land, that a remnant may yet be saved to this distracted realm.'

'My lord,' said Mary, 'it seems to me that you fling on my unhappy and devoted head those evils which, with far more justice, I may impute to your own turbulent, wild, and untameable dispositions—the frantic violence with which you, the magnates of Scotland, enter into feuds against each other, sticking at no cruelty to gratify your wrath, taking deep revenge for the slightest offences, and setting at defiance those wise laws which your ancestors made for stanching of such cruelty, rebelling against the lawful authority, and bearing yourselves as if there were no king in the land; or rather as if each were king in his own premises. And now you throw the blame on me—on me, whose life has been embittered—whose sleep has been broken—whose happiness has been wrecked by your dissensions. Have I not myself been obliged to traverse wilds and mountains, at the head of a few faithful followers, to maintain peace and to put down oppression? Have I not worn harness on my person, and carried pistols at my saddle; fain to lay aside the softness of a woman, and the dignity of a queen, that I might show an example to my followers?'

'We grant, madam,' said Lindesay, 'that the affrays occasioned by your misgovernment may sometimes have startled you in the midst of a masque or galliard; or it may be that such may have interrupted the idolatry of the mass, or the jesuitical counsels of some French ambassador. But the longest and severest journey which your Grace has taken in my memory, was from Hawick to Hermitage Castle; and whether it was for the weal of the State, or for your own honour, rests with your Grace's conscience.'

The queen turned to him with inexpressible sweetness of tone and manner, and that engaging look which Heaven had assigned her, as if to show that the choicest arts to win men's affections may be given in vain. 'Lindesay,' she said, 'you spoke not to me in this stern tone, and with such scurril taunt, yon fair summer evening, when you and I shot at the butts against the Earl of Mar and Mary Livingstone, and won of them the evening's collation, in the privy garden of Saint Andrew's. The Master of Lindesay was then my friend, and vowed to be my soldier. How I have offended the Lord of Lindesay I know not, unless honours have changed manners.'

Hard-hearted as he was, Lindesay seemed struck with this unexpected appeal, but almost instantly replied, 'Madam, it is well known that your Grace could in those days make fools of whomever approached you. I pretend not to have been wiser than others. But gayer men

and better courtiers soon jostled aside my rude homage, and I think that your Grace cannot but remember times when my awkward attempts to take the manners that pleased you were the sport of the court popinjays, the Marys and the Frenchwomen.'

'My lord, I grieve if I have offended you through idle gaiety,' said the queen; 'and can but say it was most unwittingly done. You are fully revenged; for through gaiety,' she said, with a sigh, 'will I never offend any one more.'

'Our time is wasting, madam,' said Lord Ruthven; 'I must pray your decision on this weighty matter which I have submitted to you.'

'What, my lord!' said the queen, 'upon the instant, and without a moment's time to deliberate?—Can the Council, as they term themselves, expect this of me?'

'Madam,' replied Ruthven, 'the Council hold the opinion that, since the fatal term which passed betwixt the night of King Henry's murder and the day of Carberry Hill, your Grace should have held you prepared for the measure now proposed, as the easiest escape from your numerous dangers and difficulties.'

'Great God!' exclaimed the queen; 'and is it as a boon that you propose to me, what every Christian king ought to regard as a loss of honour equal to the loss of life?—You take from me my crown, my power, my subjects, my wealth, my state. What, in the name of every saint, can you offer, or do you offer, in requital of my compliance?'

'We give you pardon,' answered Ruthven sternly—'we give you space and means to spend your remaining life in penitence and seclusion—we give you time to make your peace with Heaven, and to receive the pure gospel, which you have ever rejected and persecuted.'

The queen turned pale at the menace which this speech, as well as the rough and inflexible tones of the speaker, seemed distinctly to infer—'And if I do not comply with your request so fiercely urged, my lord, what then follows?'

She said this in a voice in which female and natural fear was contending with the feelings of insulted dignity.—There was a pause, as if no one cared to return to the question a distinct answer. At length Ruthven spoke: 'There is little need to tell to your Grace, who are well read both in the laws and in the chronicles of the realm, that murder and adultery are crimes for which ere now queens themselves have suffered death.'

'And where, my lord, or how, found you an accusation so horrible against her who stands before you?' said Queen Mary. 'The foul and odious calumnies which have poisoned the general mind of Scotland, and have placed me a helpless prisoner in your hands, are surely no proof of guilt?'

'We need look for no further proof,' replied the stern Lord Ruthven, 'than the shameless marriage betwixt the widow of the murdered and the leader of the band of murderers!—They that joined hands in the fated month of May, had already united hearts and counsel in the deed which preceded that marriage but a few brief weeks.'

'My lord, my lord!' said the queen eagerly, 'remember well there were more consents than mine to that fatal union, that most unhappy act of a most unhappy life. The evil steps adopted by sovereigns are often the suggestion of bad counsellors; but these counsellors are worse than fiends who tempt and betray, if they themselves are the first to call their unfortunate princes to answer for the consequences of their own advice.—Heard ye never of a bond by the nobles, my lords, recommending that ill-fated union to the ill-fated Mary? Methinks, were it carefully examined, we should see that the names of Morton and of Lindesay and of Ruthven may be found in that bond, which pressed me to marry that unhappy man.—Ah! stout and loyal Lord Herries, who never knew guile or dishonour, you bent your noble knee to me in vain, to warn me of my danger, and wert yet the first to draw thy good sword in my cause when I suffered for neglecting thy counsel! Faithful knight and true noble, what a difference betwixt thee and those counsellors of evil, who now threaten my life for having fallen into the snares they spread for me!'

'Madam,' said Ruthven, 'we know that you are an orator; and perhaps for that reason the council has sent hither men, whose converse hath been more with the wars than with the language of the schools or the cabals of state. We but desire to know if, on assurance of life and honour, ye will demit the rule of this kingdom of Scotland?'

'And what warrant have I,' said the queen, 'that ye will keep treaty with me, if I should barter my kingly estate for seclusion, and leave to weep in secret?'

'Our honour and our word, madam,' answered Ruthven.

'They are too slight and unsolid pledges, my lord,' said the queen; 'add at least a handful of thistle-down to give them weight in the balance.'

'Away, Ruthven,' said Lindesay; 'she was ever deaf to counsel, save of slaves and sycophants; let her remain by her refusal, and abide by it!'

'Stay, my lord,' said Sir Robert Melville, 'or rather permit me to have but a few minutes' private audience with her Grace. If my presence with you could avail aught, it must be as a mediator—do not, I conjure you, leave the castle, or break off the conference, until I bring you word how her Grace shall finally stand disposed.'

'We will remain in the hall,' said Lindesay, 'for half-an-hour's space; but in despising our words and our pledge of honour, she has touched the honour of my name—let her look herself to the course she has to pursue. If the half-hour should pass away without her determining to comply with the demands of the nation, her career will be brief enough.'

With little ceremony the two nobles left the apartment, traversed the vestibule, and descended the winding stairs, the clash of Lindesay's huge sword being heard as it rang against each step in his descent. George Douglas followed them, after exchanging with Melville a gesture of surprise and sympathy.

As soon as they were gone, the queen, giving way to grief, fear, and agitation, threw herself

into the seat, wrung her hands, and seemed to abandon herself to despair. Her female attendants, weeping themselves, endeavoured yet to pray her to be composed, and Sir Robert Melville, kneeling at her feet, made the same entreaty. After giving way to a passionate burst of sorrow, she at length said to Melville, 'Kneel not to me, Melville—mock me not with the homage of the person, when the heart is far away—Why stay you behind with the deposed, the condemned? her who has but few hours perchance to live? You have been favoured as well as the rest; why do you continue the empty show of gratitude and thankfulness any longer than they?'

'Madam,' said Sir Robert Melville, 'so help me Heaven at my need, my heart is as true to you as when you were in your highest place.'

'True to me! true to me!' repeated the queen, with some scorn; 'tush, Melville, what signifies the truth which walks hand in hand with my enemies' falsehood?—thy hand and thy sword have never been so well acquainted that I can trust thee in aught where manhood is required.—O, Seyton, for thy bold father, who is both wise, true, and valiant!'

Roland Græme could withstand no longer his earnest desire to offer his services to a princess so distressed and so beautiful. 'If one sword,' he said, 'madam, can do anything to back the wisdom of this grave counsellor, or to defend your rightful cause, here is my weapon, and here is my hand ready to draw and use it.' And, raising his sword with one hand, he laid the other upon the hilt.

As he thus held up the weapon, Catherine Seyton exclaimed, 'Methinks I see a token from my father, madam;' and, immediately crossing the apartment, she took Roland Græme by the skirt of the cloak, and asked him earnestly whence he had that sword.

The page answered with surprise, 'Methinks this is no presence in which to jest—Surely, damsel, you yourself best know whence and how I obtained the weapon.'

'Is this a time for folly?' said Catherine Seyton; 'unsheathe the sword instantly!'

'If the Queen commands me,' said the youth, looking towards his royal mistress.

'For shame, maiden!' said the queen; 'wouldst thou instigate the poor boy to enter into useless strife with the two most approved soldiers in Scotland?'

'In your Grace's cause,' replied the page, 'I will venture my life upon them!' And as he spoke he drew his weapon partly from the sheath, and a piece of parchment, rolled around the blade, fell out and dropped on the floor. Catherine Seyton caught it up with eager haste.

'It is my father's handwriting,' she said, 'and doubtless conveys his best duteous advice to your Majesty; I know that it was prepared to be sent in this weapon, but I expected another messenger.'

'By my faith, fair one,' thought Roland, 'and if you knew not that I had such a secret missive about me, I was yet more ignorant.'

The queen cast her eye upon the scroll, and remained a few minutes wrapped in deep thought. 'Sir Robert Melville,' she at length said, 'this scroll advises me to submit myself to necessity, and to subscribe the deeds these hard men have brought with them, as one who gives way to the natural fear inspired by the threats of rebels and murderers. You, Sir Robert, are a wise man, and Seyton is both sagacious and brave. Neither, I think, would mislead me in this matter.'

'Madam,' said Melville, 'if I have not the strength of body of the Lord Herries or Seyton, I will yield to neither in zeal for your Majesty's service. I cannot fight for you like these lords, but neither of them is more willing to die for your service.'

'I believe it, my old and faithful counsellor,' said the queen, 'and believe me, Melville, I did thee but a moment's injustice. Read what my Lord Seyton hath written to us, and give us thy best counsel.'

He glanced over the parchments, and instantly replied—'O, my dear and royal mistress, only treason itself could give you other advice than Lord Seyton has here expressed. He, Herries, Huntly, the English Ambassador Throgmorton, and others, your friends, are all alike of opinion, that whatever deeds or instruments you execute within these walls, must lose all force and effect, as extorted from your Grace by duresse, by sufferance of present evil, and fear of men, and harm to ensue on your refusal. Yield, therefore, to the tide, and be assured that, in subscribing what parchments they present to you, you bind yourself to nothing, since your act of signature wants that which alone can make it valid, the free will of the granter.'

'Ay, so says my Lord Seyton,' replied Mary; 'yet methinks, for the daughter of so long a line of sovereigns to resign her birthright, because rebels press upon her with threats, argues little of royalty, and will read ill for the fame of Mary in future chronicles. Tush, Sir Robert Melville! the traitors may use black threats and bold words, but they will not dare to put their hands forth on our person.'

'Alas, madam! they have already dared so far and incurred such peril by the lengths which they have gone, that they are but one step from the worst and uttermost.'

'Surely,' said the queen, her fears again predominating, 'Scottish nobles would not lend themselves to assassinate a helpless woman?'

'Bethink you, madam,' he replied, 'what horrid spectacles have been seen in our day; and what act is so dark, that some Scottish hand has not been found to dare it? Lord Lindesay, besides his natural sullenness and hardness of temper, is the near kinsman of Henry Darnley, and Ruthven has his own deep and dangerous plans. The council, besides, speak of proofs by writ and word, of a casket with letters—of I know not what."

'Ah, good Melville!' answered the queen, 'were I as sure of the evenhanded integrity of my judges, as of my own innocence—and yet'—

'O, pause, madam!' said Melville; 'even innocence must sometimes for a season stoop to injurious blame. Besides, you are here'—

He looked round and paused.

'Speak out, Melville,' said the queen; 'never one approached my person who wished to work me evil; and even this poor page, whom I have

to-day seen for the first time in my life, I can trust safely with your communication.'

'Nay, madam,' answered Melville, 'in such emergence, and he being the bearer of Lord Seyton's message, I will venture to say, before him and these fair ladies, whose truth and fidelity I dispute not—I say I will venture to say that there are other modes, besides that of open trial, by which deposed sovereigns often die; and that, as Machiavel saith, there is but one step betwixt a king's prison and his grave.'

'O, were it but swift and easy for the body,' said the unfortunate princess, 'were it but a safe and happy change for the soul, the woman lives not that would take the step so soon as I.—But, alas, Melville! when we think of death, a thousand sins, which we have trod as worms beneath our feet, rise up against us as flaming serpents. Most injuriously do they accuse me of aiding Darnley's death; yet, blessed Lady! I afforded too open occasion for the suspicion—I espoused Bothwell.'

'Think not of that now, madam,' said Melville, 'think rather of the immediate mode of saving yourself and son. Comply with the present unreasonable demands, and trust that better times will shortly arrive.'

'Madam,' said Roland Græme, 'if it pleases you that I should do so, I will presently swim through the lake, if they refuse me other conveyance to the shore; I will go to the courts successively of England, France, and Spain, and will show you have subscribed these vile instruments from no stronger impulse than the fear of death, and I will do battle against them that say otherwise.'

The queen turned her round, and, with one of those sweet smiles which, during the era of life's romance, overpay every risk, held her hand towards Roland, but without speaking a word. He kneeled reverently and kissed it, and Melville again resumed his plea.

'Madam,' he said, 'time presses, and you must not let those boats, which I see they are even now preparing, put forth on the lake. Here are enough of witnesses—your ladies—this bold youth—myself, when it can serve your cause effectually, for I would not hastily stand committed in this matter—but even without me here is evidence enough to show that you have yielded to the demands of the council through force and fear, but from no sincere and unconstrained assent. Their boats are already manned for their return — O, permit your old servant to recall them!'

'Melville,' said the queen, 'thou art an ancient courtier—when didst thou ever know a sovereign prince recall to his presence subjects who had parted from him on such terms as those on which these envoys of the council left us, and who yet were recalled without submission or apology?—Let it cost me both life and crown, I will not again command them to my presence.'

'Alas, madam, that empty form should make a barrier! If I rightly understand, you are not unwilling to listen to real and advantageous counsel—but your scruple is saved—I hear them returning to ask your final resolution. O, take the advice of the noble Seyton, and you may once more command those who now usurp a triumph over you. But hush! I hear them in the vestibule.'

As he concluded speaking, George Douglas opened the door of the apartment, and marshalled in the two noble envoys.

'We come, madam,' said the Lord Ruthven, 'to request your answer to the proposal of the council.'

'Your final answer,' said Lord Lindesay; 'for with a refusal you must couple the certainty that you have precipitated your fate and renounced the last opportunity of making peace with God, and insuring your longer abode in the world.'

'My lords,' said Mary, with inexpressible grace and dignity, 'the evils we cannot resist we must submit to—I will subscribe these parchments with such liberty of choice as my condition permits me. Were I on yonder shore, with a fleet jennet and ten good and loyal knights around me, I would subscribe my sentence of eternal condemnation as soon as the resignation of my throne. But here, in the Castle of Lochleven, with deep water around me—and you, my lords, beside me,—I have no freedom of choice.—Give me the pen, Melville, and bear witness to what I do, and why I do it.'

'It is our hope your Grace will not suppose yourself compelled by any apprehensions from us,' said the Lord Ruthven, 'to execute what must be your own voluntary deed.'

The queen had already stooped towards the table, and placed the parchment before her, with the pen between her fingers, ready for the important act of signature. But when Lord Ruthven had done speaking, she looked up, stopped short, and threw down the pen. 'If,' she said, 'I am expected to declare I give away my crown of free will, or otherwise than because I am compelled to renounce it by the threat of worse evils to myself and my subjects, I will not put my name to such an untruth—not to gain full possession of England, France, and Scotland!—all once my own, in possession, or by right.'

'Beware, madam,' said Lindesay, and, snatching hold of the queen's arm with his own gauntleted hand, he pressed it, in the rudeness of his passion, more closely, perhaps, than he was himself aware of,—'beware how you contend with those who are the stronger, and have the mastery of your fate!'

He held his grasp on her arm, bending his eyes on her with a stern and intimidating look, till both Ruthven and Melville cried shame; and Douglas, who had hitherto remained in a state of apparent apathy, had made a stride from the door, as if to interfere. The rude baron then quitted his hold, disguising the confusion which he really felt at having indulged his passion to such extent, under a sullen and contemptuous smile.

The queen immediately began, with an expression of pain, to bare the arm which he had grasped, by drawing up the sleeve of her gown, and it appeared that his gripe had left the purple marks of his iron fingers upon her flesh.—'My lord,' she said, 'as a knight and gentleman, you might have spared my frail arm so severe a proof that you have the greater strength on your side, and are resolved to use it—But I thank you for it—it is the most decisive token of the terms on

which this day's business is to rest.—I draw you to witness, both lords and ladies,' she said, showing the marks of the grasp on her arm, 'that I subscribe these instruments in obedience to the sign-manual of my Lord of Lindesay, which you may see imprinted on mine arm.'*

Lindesay would have spoken, but was restrained by his colleague Ruthven, who said to him, 'Peace, my lord. Let the Lady Mary of Scotland ascribe her signature to what she will, it is our business to procure it, and carry it to the council. Should there be debate hereafter on the manner in which it was adhibited, there will be time enough for it.'

Lindesay was silent accordingly, only muttering within his beard, 'I meant not to hurt her; but I think women's flesh be as tender as new-fallen snow.'

The queen meanwhile subscribed the rolls of parchment with a hasty indifference, as if they had been matters of slight consequence, or of mere formality. When she had performed this painful task, she arose, and, having curtseyed to the lords, was about to withdraw to her chamber. Ruthven and Sir Robert Melville made, the first a formal reverence, the second an obeisance, in which his desire to acknowledge his sympathy was obviously checked by the fear of appearing in the eyes of his colleagues too partial to his former mistress. But Lindesay stood motionless, even when they were preparing to withdraw. At length, as if moved by a sudden impulse, he walked round the table which had hitherto been betwixt them and the queen, kneeled on one knee, took her hand, kissed it, let it fall, and arose.—'Lady,' he said, 'thou art a noble creature, even though thou hast abused God's choicest gifts. I pay that devotion to thy manliness of spirit, which I would not have paid to the power thou hast long undeservedly wielded—I kneel to Mary Stuart, not to the Queen.'

'The Queen and Mary Stuart pity thee alike, Lindesay,' said Mary—'alike they pity, and they forgive thee. An honoured soldier hadst thou been by a king's side—leagued with rebels, what art thou but a good blade in the hands of a ruffian?—Farewell, my Lord Ruthven, the smoother but the deeper traitor.—Farewell, Melville—Mayest thou find masters that can understand state policy better, and have the means to reward it more richly than, Mary Stuart.—Farewell, George of Douglas—make your respected granddame comprehend that we would be alone for the remainder of the day—God wot, we have need to collect our thoughts.'

All bowed and withdrew; but scarce had they entered the vestibule, ere Ruthven and Lindesay were at variance. 'Chide not with me, Ruthven,' Lindesay was heard to say, in answer to something more indistinctly urged by his colleague—'Chide not with me, for I will not brook it! You put the hangman's office on me in this matter, and even the very hangman hath leave to ask some pardon of those on whom he does his office. I would I had as deep cause to be this lady's friend as I have to be her enemy—thou shouldst see if I spared limb and life in her quarrel.'

* Note J. Resignation of Queen Mary.

'Thou art a sweet minion,' said Ruthven, 'to fight a lady's quarrel, and all for a brent brow and a tear in the eye! Such toys have been out of thy thoughts this many a year.'

'Do me right, Ruthven,' said Lindesay. 'You are like a polished corselet of steel; it shines more gaudily, but it is not a whit softer—nay, it is five times harder than a Glasgow breastplate of hammered iron. Enough. We know each other.'

They descended the stairs, were heard to summon their boats, and the queen signed to Roland Græme to retire to the vestibule, and leave her with her female attendants.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Give me a morsel on the greensward rather,
Coarse as you will the cooking—Let the fresh spring
Bubble beside my napkin—and the free birds,
Twittering and chirping, hop from bough to bough,
To claim the crumbs I leave for perquisites—
Your prison feasts I like not.
THE WOODSMAN, A DRAMA.

A RECESS in the vestibule was enlightened by a small window, at which Roland Græme stationed himself to mark the departure of the lords. He could see their followers mustering on horseback under their respective banners—the western sun glancing on their corselets and steel caps as they moved to and fro, mounted or dismounted, at intervals. On the narrow space betwixt the castle and the water, the Lords Ruthven and Lindesay were already moving slowly to their boats, accompanied by the Lady of Lochleven, her grandson, and their principal attendants. They took a ceremonious leave of each other, as Roland could discern by their gestures, and the boats put off from their landing-place; the boatmen stretched to their oars, and they speedily diminished upon the eye of the idle gazer, who had no better employment than to watch their motions. Such seemed also the occupation of the Lady Lochleven and George Douglas, who, returning from the landing-place, looked frequently back to the boats, and at length stopped as if to observe their progress, under the window at which Roland Græme was stationed.—As they gazed on the lake, he could hear the lady distinctly say, 'And she has bent her mind to save her life at the expense of her kingdom?'

'Her life, madam!' replied her son; 'I know not who would dare to attempt it in the castle of my father. Had I dreamt that it was with such purpose that Lindesay insisted on bringing his followers hither, neither he nor they should have passed the iron gate of Lochleven Castle.'

'I speak not of private slaughter, my son, but of open trial, condemnation, and execution; for with such she has been threatened, and to such threats she has given way. Had she not more of the false Guisian blood than of the royal race of Scotland in her veins, she had bidden them defiance to their teeth—But it is all of the same complexion, and meanness is the natural companion of profligacy.—I am discharged, forsooth, from intruding on her gracious presence this

evening. Go thou, my son, and render the usual service of the meal to this unqueened Queen.'

'So please you, lady mother,' said Douglas, 'I care not greatly to approach her presence.'

'Thou art right, my son; and therefore I trust thy prudence, even because I have noted thy caution. She is like an isle on the ocean, surrounded with shelves and quicksands; its verdure fair and inviting to the eye, but the wreck of many a goodly vessel which hath approached it too rashly. But for thee, my son, I fear nought; and we may not, with our honour, suffer her to eat without the attendance of one of us. She may die by the judgment of Heaven, or the fiend may have power over her in her despair; and then we would be touched in honour to show, that in our house, and at our table, she had all fair play and fitting usage.'

Here Roland was interrupted by a smart tap on the shoulders reminding him sharply of Adam Woodcock's adventure of the preceding evening. He turned round, almost expecting to see the page of Saint Michael's hostelrie. He saw, indeed, Catherine Seyton; but she was in female attire, differing, no doubt, a great deal in shape and materials from that which she had worn when they first met, and becoming her birth as the daughter of a great baron, and her rank as the attendant on a princess. 'So, fair page,' said she, 'eavesdropping is one of your page-like qualities, I presume?'

'Fair sister,' answered Roland, in the same tone, 'if some friends of mine be as well acquainted with the rest of our mystery as they are with the arts of swearing, swaggering, and switching, they need ask no page in Christendom for further insight into his vocation.'

'Unless that pretty speech infer that you have yourself had the discipline of the switch since we last met, the probability whereof I nothing doubt, I profess, fair page, I am at a loss to conjecture your meaning. But there is no time to debate it now—they come with the evening meal. Be pleased, sir page, to do your duty.'

Four servants entered bearing dishes, preceded by the same stern old steward whom Roland had already seen, and followed by George Douglas, already mentioned as the grandson of the Lady of Lochleven, and who, acting as seneschal, represented, upon this occasion, his father, the lord of the castle. He entered with his arms folded on his bosom, and his looks bent on the ground. With the assistance of Roland Græme, a table was suitably covered in the next or middle apartment, on which the domestics placed their burdens with great reverence, the steward and Douglas bending low when they had seen the table properly adorned, as if their royal prisoner had sat at the board in question. The door opened, and Douglas, raising his eyes hastily, cast them again on the earth, when he perceived it was only the Lady Mary Fleming who entered.

'Her Grace,' she said, 'will not eat to-night.'

'Let us hope she may be otherwise persuaded,' said Douglas; 'meanwhile, madam, please to see our duty performed.'

A servant presented bread and salt on a silver plate, and the old steward carved for Douglas a small morsel in succession from each of the dishes presented, which he tasted, as was then the custom at the tables of princes, to which death was often suspected to find its way in the disguise of food.

'The Queen will not then come forth to-night?' said Douglas.

'She has so determined,' replied the lady.

'Our further attendance then is unnecessary—we leave you to your supper, fair ladies, and wish you good even.'

He retired slowly as he came, and with the same air of deep dejection, and was followed by the attendants belonging to the castle. The two ladies sat down to their meal, and Roland Græme, with ready alacrity, prepared to wait upon them. Catherine Seyton whispered to her companion, who replied with the question—spoken in a low tone, but looking at the page—'Is he of gentle blood and well nurtured?'

The answer which she received seemed satisfactory, for she said to Roland, 'Sit down, young gentleman, and eat with your sisters in captivity.'

'Permit me rather to perform my duty in attending them,' said Roland, anxious to show he was possessed of the high tone of deference prescribed by the rules of chivalry towards the fair sex, and especially to dames and maidens of quality.

'You will find, Sir Page,' said Catherine, 'you will have little time allowed you for your meal; waste it not in ceremony, or you may rue your politeness ere to-morrow morning.'

'Your speech is too free, maiden,' said the elder lady; 'the modesty of the youth may teach you more fitting fashions towards one whom to-day you have seen for the first time.'

Catherine Seyton cast down her eyes, but not till she had given a single glance of inexpressible archness towards Roland, whom her more grave companion now addressed in a tone of protection.

'Regard her not, young gentleman—she knows little of the world, save the forms of a country nunnery—take thy place at the board-end, and refresh thyself after thy journey.'

Roland Græme obeyed willingly, as it was the first food he had that day tasted; for Lindesay and his followers seemed regardless of human wants. Yet, notwithstanding the sharpness of his appetite, a natural gallantry of disposition, the desire of showing himself a well-nurtured gentleman, in all courtesies towards the fair sex, and, for aught I know, the pleasure of assisting Catherine Seyton, kept his attention awake, during the meal, to all those nameless acts of duty and service which gallants of that age were accustomed to render. He carved with neatness and decorum, and selected duly whatever was most delicate to place before the ladies. Ere they could form a wish, he sprung from the table, ready to comply with it—poured wine—tempered it with water—removed and exchanged trenchers, and performed the whole honours of the table, with an air at once of cheerful diligence, profound respect, and graceful promptitude.

When he observed that they had finished eating, he hastened to offer to the elder lady the silver ewer, basin, and napkin, with the ceremony

and gravity which he would have used towards Mary herself. He next, with the same decorum, having supplied the basin with fair water, presented it to Catherine Seyton. Apparently, she was determined to disturb his self-possession if possible; for, while in the act of bathing her hands, she contrived, as it were by accident, to flirt some drops of water upon the face of the assiduous assistant. But if such was her mischievous purpose, she was completely disappointed; for Roland Græme, internally piquing himself on his self-command, neither laughed nor was discomposed: and all that the maiden gained by her frolic was a severe rebuke from her companion, taxing her with mal-address and indecorum. Catherine replied not, but sat pouting, something in the humour of a spoilt child, who watches the opportunity of wreaking upon some one or other its resentment for a deserved reprimand.

The Lady Mary Fleming, in the meanwhile, was naturally well pleased with the exact and reverent observance of the page, and said to Catherine, after a favourable glance at Roland Græme,—'You might well say, Catherine, our companion in captivity was well born and gently nurtured. I would not make him vain by my praise, but his services enable us to dispense with those which George Douglas condescends not to afford us, save when the Queen is herself in presence.'

'Umph! I think hardly,' answered Catherine. 'George Douglas is one of the most handsome gallants in Scotland, and 'tis pleasure to see him even still, when the gloom of Lochleven Castle has shed the same melancholy over him that it has done over everything else. When he was at Holyrood, who would have said the young, sprightly George Douglas would have been contented to play the locksman here in Lochleven, with no gayer amusement than that of turning the key on two or three helpless women? —a strange office for a knight of the Bleeding Heart—why does he not leave it to his father or his brothers?'

'Perhaps, like us, he has no choice,' answered the Lady Fleming. 'But, Catherine, thou hast used thy brief space at court well, to remember what George Douglas was then.'

'I used mine eyes, which I suppose was what I was designed to do, and they were worth using there. When I was at the nunnery, they were very useless appurtenances; and now I am at Lochleven, they are good for nothing, save to look over that eternal work of embroidery.'

'You speak thus, when you have been but a few brief hours amongst us—was this the maiden who would live and die in a dungeon, might she but have permission to wait on her gracious Queen?'

'Nay, if you chide in earnest, my jest is ended,' said Catherine Seyton. 'I would not yield in attachment to my poor god-mother, to the gravest dame that ever had wise saws upon her tongue, and a double-starched ruff around her throat—you know I would not, Dame Mary Fleming, and it is putting shame on me to say otherwise.'

'She will challenge the other court lady,' thought Roland Græme; 'she will to a certainty fling down her glove, and if Dame Mary Fleming hath but the soul to lift it, we may have a combat in the lists!'—But the answer of Lady Mary Fleming was such as turns away wrath.

'Thou art a good child,' she said, 'my Catherine, and a faithful; but Heaven pity him who shall have one day a creature so beautiful to delight him, and a thing so mischievous to torment him --thou art fit to drive twenty husbands stark mad.'

'Nay,' said Catherine, resuming the full career of her careless good-humour, 'he must be half-witted beforehand, that gives me such an opportunity. But I am glad you are not angry with me in sincerity,' casting herself as she spoke into the arms of her friend, and continuing with a tone of apologetic fondness, while she kissed her on either side of the face; 'you know, my dear Fleming, that I have to contend both with my father's lofty pride and with my mother's high spirit—God bless them! they have left me these good qualities, having small portion to give besides, as times go—and so I am wilful and saucy; but let me remain only a week in this castle, and O, my dear Fleming, my spirit will be as chastised and as humble as thine own.'

Dame Mary Fleming's sense of dignity and love of form could not resist this affectionate appeal. She kissed Catherine Seyton in her turn affectionately; while, answering the last part of her speech, she said, 'Now Our Lady forbid, dear Catherine, that you should lose aught that is beseeming of what becomes so well your light heart and lively humour. Keep but your sharp wit on this side of madness, and it cannot but be a blessing to us. But let me go, mad wench—I hear her Grace touch her silver call.' And, extricating herself from Catherine's grasp, she went towards the door of Queen Mary's apartment, from which was heard the low tone of a silver whistle, which, now only used by the boatswains in the navy, was then, for want of bells, the ordinary mode by which ladies, even of the very highest rank, summoned their domestics. When she had made two or three steps towards the door, however, she turned back, and, advancing to the young couple whom she left together, she said, in a very serious though a low tone, 'I trust it is impossible that we can, any of us, or in any circumstances, forget that, few as we are, we form the household of the Queen of Scotland; and that, in her calamity, all boyish mirth and childish jesting can only serve to give a great triumph to her enemies, who have already found their account in objecting to her the lightness of every idle folly that the young and the gay practised in her court.' So saying, she left the apartment.

Catherine Seyton seemed much struck with this remonstrance—She suffered herself to drop into the seat which she had quitted when she went to embrace Dame Mary Fleming, and for some time rested her brow upon her hands; while Roland Græme looked at her earnestly, with a mixture of emotions which perhaps he himself could neither have analyzed nor explained. As she raised her face slowly from the posture to which a momentary feeling of self-rebuke had depressed it, her eyes encountered those of Roland,

and became gradually animated with their usual spirit of malicious drollery, which not unnaturally excited a similar expression in those of the equally volatile page. They sat for the space of two minutes, each looking at the other with great seriousness on their features, and much mirth in their eyes, until at length Catherine was the first to break silence.

'May I pray you, fair sir,' she began, very demurely, 'to tell me what you see in my face to arouse looks so extremely sagacious and knowing as those with which it is your worship's pleasure to honour me? It would seem as there were some wonderful confidence and intimacy betwixt us, fair sir, if one is to judge from your extremely cunning looks; and so help me Our Lady, as I never saw you but twice in my life before.'

'And where were those happy occasions,' said Roland, 'if I may be bold enough to ask the question?'

'At the nunnery of Saint Catherine's,' said the damsel, 'in the first instance; and, in the second, during five minutes of a certain raid or foray which it was your pleasure to make into the lodging of my lord and father, Lord Seyton, from which, to my surprise, as probably to your own, you returned with a token of friendship and favour, instead of broken bones, which were the more probable reward of your intrusion, considering the prompt ire of the house of Seyton. I am deeply mortified,' she added ironically, 'that your recollection should require refreshment on a subject so important; and that my memory should be stronger than yours on such an occasion is truly humiliating.'

'Your own memory is not so exactly correct, fair mistress,' answered the page, 'seeing you have forgotten meeting the third, in the hostelry of Saint Michael's, when it pleased you to lay your switch across the face of my comrade, in order, I warrant, to show that, in the house of Seyton, neither the prompt ire of its descendants, nor the use of the doublet and hose, are subject to Salique law, or confined to the use of the males.'

'Fair sir,' answered Catherine, looking at him with great steadiness and some surprise, 'unless your fair wits have forsaken you, I am at a loss what to conjecture of your meaning.'

'By my troth, fair mistress,' answered Roland, 'and were I as wise a warlock as Michael Scott, I could scarce riddle the dream you read me. Did I not see you last night in the hostelry of Saint Michael's?—Did you not bring me this sword, with command not to draw it save at the command of my native and rightful sovereign? And have I not done as you required me? Or is the sword a piece of lath—my word a bulrush—my memory a dream—and my eyes good for nought—espials which corbies might pick out of my head?'

'And if your eyes serve you not more truly on other occasions than in your vision of Saint Michael,' said Catherine, 'I know not, the pain apart, that the corbies would do you any great injury in the deprivation.—But hark, the bell—hush, for God's sake, we are interrupted'——

The damsel was right; for no sooner had the dull toll of the castle bell begun to resound through the vaulted apartment, than the door of the vestibule flew open, and the steward, with his severe countenance, his gold chain, and his white rod, entered the apartment, followed by the same train of domestics who had placed the dinner on the table, and who now, with the same ceremonious formality, began to remove it.

The steward remained motionless as some old picture, while the domestics did their office; and when it was accomplished, everything removed from the table, and the board itself taken from its tressels and disposed against the wall, he said aloud, without addressing any one in particular, and somewhat in the tone of a herald reading a proclamation, 'My noble lady, Dame Margaret Erskine, by marriage Douglas, lets the Lady Mary of Scotland and her attendants to wit, that a servant of the true evangele, her reverend chaplain, will to-night, as usual, expound, lecture, and catechize, according to the forms of the congregation of gospellers.'

'Hark you, my friend Mr. Dryfesdale,' said Catherine, 'I understand this announcement is a nightly form of yours. Now, I pray you to remark that the Lady Fleming and I—for I trust your insolent invitation concerns us only—have chosen Saint Peter's pathway to heaven, so I see no one whom your godly exhortation, catechize, or lecture can benefit, excepting this poor page, who, being in Satan's hand as well as yourself, had better worship with you than remain to cumber our better-advised devotions.'

The page was well-nigh giving a round denial to the assertions which this speech implied, when, remembering what had passed betwixt him and the Regent, and seeing Catherine's finger raised in a monitory fashion, he felt himself, as on former occasions at the Castle of Avenel, obliged to submit to the task of dissimulation, and followed Dryfesdale down to the castle chapel, where he assisted in the devotions of the evening.

The chaplain was named Elias Henderson. He was a man in the prime of life, and possessed of good natural parts, carefully improved by the best education which those times afforded. To these qualities were added a faculty of close and terse reasoning; and, at intervals, a flow of happy illustration and natural eloquence. The religious faith of Roland Græme, as we have already had opportunity to observe, rested on no secure basis, but was entertained rather in obedience to his grandmother's behests, and his secret desire to contradict the chaplain of Avenel Castle, than from any fixed or steady reliance which he placed on the Romish creed. His ideas had been of late considerably enlarged by the scenes he had passed through; and feeling that there was shame in not understanding something of those political disputes betwixt the professors of the ancient and of the reformed faith, he listened with more attention than it had hitherto been in his nature to yield on such occasions, to an animated discussion of some of the principal points of difference betwixt the Churches. So passed away the first day in the Castle of Lochleven; and those which followed it were, for some time, of a very monotonous and uniform tenor.

CHAPTER XXIV.

'Tis a weary life this——
Vaults overhead, and grates and bars around me,
And my sad hours spent with as sad companions,
Whose thoughts are brooding o'er their own mischances,
Far, far too deeply to take part in mine.
THE WOODSMAN.

THE course of life to which Mary and her little retinue were doomed, was in the last degree secluded and lonely, varied only as the weather permitted or rendered impossible the queen's usual walk in the garden or on the battlements. The greater part of the morning she wrought with her ladies at those pieces of needlework, many of which still remain proofs of her indefatigable application. At such hours the page was permitted the freedom of the castle and islet; nay, he was sometimes invited to attend George Douglas when he went a-sporting upon the lake, or on its margin; opportunities of diversion which were only clouded by the remarkable melancholy which always seemed to brood on that gentleman's brow, and to mark his whole demeanour, —a sadness so profound, that Roland never observed him to smile, or to speak any word unconnected with the immediate object of their exercise.

The most pleasant part of Roland's day was the occasional space which he was permitted to pass in personal attendance on the queen and her ladies, together with the regular dinner-time, which he always spent with Dame Mary Fleming and Catherine Seyton. At these periods, he had frequent occasion to admire the lively spirit and inventive imagination of the latter damsel, who was unwearied in her contrivances to amuse her mistress, and to banish, for a time at least, the melancholy which preyed on her bosom. She danced, she sung, she recited tales of ancient and modern times, with that heartfelt exertion of talent, of which the pleasure lies not in the vanity of displaying it to others, but in the enthusiastic consciousness that we possess it ourselves. And yet these high accomplishments were mixed with an air of rusticity and harebrained vivacity, which seemed rather to belong to some village maid, the coquette of the ring around the Maypole, than to the high-bred descendant of an ancient baron. A touch of audacity, altogether short of effrontery, and far less approaching to vulgarity, gave as it were a wildness to all that she did; and Mary, while defending her from some of the occasional censures of her grave companion, compared her to a trained singing-bird escaped from a cage, which practises in all the luxuriance of freedom, and in full possession of the greenwood bough, the airs which it had learned during its earlier captivity.

The moments which the page was permitted to pass in the presence of this fascinating creature, danced so rapidly away, that, brief as they were, they compensated the weary dulness of all the rest of the day. The space of indulgence, however, was always brief, nor were any private interviews betwixt him and Catherine permitted, or even possible. Whether it were some special precaution respecting the queen's household, or whether it were her general ideas of propriety, Dame Fleming seemed particularly attentive to prevent the young people from holding any separate correspondence together, and bestowed, for Catherine's sole benefit in this matter, the full stock of prudence and experience which she had acquired when mother of the queen's maidens of honour, and by which she had gained their hearty hatred. Casual meetings, however, could not be prevented, unless Catherine had been more desirous of shunning, or Roland Græme less anxious in watching for them. A smile, a gibe, a sarcasm, disarmed of its severity by the arch look with which it was accompanied, was all that time permitted to pass between them on such occasions. But such passing interviews neither afforded means nor opportunity to renew the discussion of the circumstances attending their earlier acquaintance, nor to permit Roland to investigate more accurately the mysterious apparition of the page in the purple velvet cloak at the hostelry of Saint Michael's.

The winter months slipped heavily away, and spring was already advanced, when Roland Græme observed a gradual change in the manners of his fellow-prisoners. Having no business of his own to attend to, and being, like those of his age, education, and degree, sufficiently curious concerning what passed around, he began by degrees to suspect, and finally to be convinced, that there was something in the agitation among his companions in captivity, to which they did not desire that he should be privy. Nay, he became almost certain that, by some means unintelligible to him, Queen Mary held correspondence beyond the walls and waters which surrounded her prison-house, and that she nourished some secret hope of deliverance or escape. In the conversations betwixt her and her attendants, at which he was necessarily present, the queen could not always avoid showing that she was acquainted with the events which were passing abroad in the world, and which he only heard through her report. He observed that she wrote more and worked less than had been her former custom, and that, as if desirous to lull suspicion asleep, she changed her manner towards the Lady Lochleven into one more gracious, and which seemed to express a resigned submission to her lot. 'They think I am blind,' he said to himself, 'and that I am unfit to be trusted because I am so young, or it may be because I was sent hither by the Regent. Well!—be it so—they may be glad to confide in me in the long run; and Catherine Seyton, for as saucy as she is, may find me as safe a confidant as that sullen Douglas, whom she is always running after. It may be they are angry with me for listening to Master Elias Henderson; but it was their own fault for sending me there; and if the man speaks truth and good sense, and preaches only the word of God, he is as likely to be right as either Pope or councils.'

It is probable that, in this last conjecture, Roland Græme had hit upon the real cause why the ladies had not entrusted him with their counsels. He had of late had several conferences with Henderson on the subject of religion, and had given him to understand that he stood in need of his instructions, although he had not thought there was either prudence or necessity

for confessing that hitherto he had held the tenets of the Church of Rome.

Elias Henderson, a keen propagator of the reformed faith, had sought the seclusion of Lochleven Castle, with the express purpose and expectation of making converts from Rome amongst the domestics of the dethroned queen, and confirming the faith of those who already held the Protestant doctrines. Perhaps his hopes soared a little higher, and he might nourish some expectation of a proselyte more distinguished, in the person of the deposed queen. But the pertinacity with which she and her female attendants refused to see or listen to him, rendered such hope, if he nourished it, altogether abortive.

The opportunity, therefore, of enlarging the religious information of Roland Græme, and bringing him to a more due sense of his duties to Heaven, was hailed by the good man as a door opened by Providence for the salvation of a sinner. He dreamed not, indeed, that he was converting a papist, but such was the ignorance which Roland displayed upon some material points of the reformed doctrine, that Master Henderson, while praising his docility to the Lady Lochleven and her grandson, seldom failed to add that his venerable brother Henry Warden must be now decayed in strength and in mind, since he found a catechumen of his flock so ill-grounded in the principles of his belief. For this, indeed, Roland Græme thought it was unnecessary to assign the true reason, which was his having made it a point of honour to forget all that Henry Warden taught him, as soon as he was no longer compelled to read it over as a lesson acquired by rote. The lessons of his new instructor, if not more impressively delivered, were received by a more willing ear and a more awakened understanding, and the solitude of Lochleven Castle was favourable to graver thoughts than the page had hitherto entertained. He wavered yet, indeed, as one who was almost persuaded; but his attention to the chaplain's instructions procured him favour even with the stern old dame herself; and he was once or twice, but under great precaution, permitted to go to the neighbouring village of Kinross, situated on the mainland, to execute some ordinary commission of his unfortunate mistress.

For some time Roland Græme might be considered as standing neuter betwixt the two parties who inhabited the water-girdled tower of Lochleven; but, as he rose in the opinion of the lady of the castle and her chaplain, he perceived, with great grief, that he lost ground in that of Mary and her female allies.

He came gradually to be sensible that he was regarded as a spy upon their discourse, and that, instead of the ease with which they had formerly conversed in his presence, without suppressing any of the natural feelings of anger, of sorrow, or mirth, which the chance topic of the moment happened to call forth, their talk was now guardedly restricted to the most indifferent subjects, and a studied reserve observed even in their mode of treating these. This obvious want of confidence was accompanied with a correspondent change in their personal demeanour towards the unfortunate page. The queen, who had at first treated him with marked courtesy, now scarce spoke to him, save to convey some necessary command for her service. The Lady Fleming restricted her notice to the most dry and distant expressions of civility, and Catherine Seyton became bitter in her pleasantries, and shy, cross, and pettish in any intercourse they had together. What was yet more provoking, he saw, or thought he saw, marks of intelligence betwixt George Douglas and the beautiful Catherine Seyton; and, sharpened by jealousy, he wrought himself almost into a certainty that the looks which they exchanged conveyed matters of deep and serious import. 'No wonder,' he thought, 'if, courted by the son of a proud and powerful baron, she can no longer spare a word or look to the poor fortuneless page.'

In a word, Roland Græme's situation became truly disagreeable, and his heart naturally enough rebelled against the injustice of this treatment, which deprived him of the only comfort which he had received for submitting to a confinement in other respects irksome. He accused Queen Mary and Catherine Seyton (for concerning the opinion of Dame Fleming he was indifferent) of inconsistency in being displeased with him on account of the natural consequences of an order of their own. Why did they send him to hear this overpowering preacher? The Abbot Ambrosius, he recollected, understood the weakness of their popish cause better, when he enjoined him to repeat within his own mind *aves* and *credos* and *paters*, all the while old Henry Warden preached or lectured, that so he might secure himself against lending even a momentary ear to his heretical doctrine. 'But I will endure this life no longer,' said he to himself manfully; 'do they suppose I would betray my mistress, because I see cause to doubt of her religion?—that would be a serving, as they say, the devil for God's sake. I will forth into the world—he that serves fair ladies may at least expect kind looks and kind words; and I bear not the mind of a gentleman, to submit to cold treatment and suspicion, and a lifelong captivity besides. I will speak to George Douglas to-morrow when we go out a-fishing.'

A sleepless night was spent in agitating this magnanimous resolution, and he arose in the morning not perfectly decided in his own mind whether he should abide by it or not. It happened that he was summoned by the queen at an unusual hour, and just as he was about to go out with George Douglas. He went to attend her commands in the garden; but, as he had his angling-rod in his hand, the circumstance announced his previous intention, and the queen, turning to the Lady Fleming, said, 'Catherine must devise some other amusement for us, *ma bonne amie*; our discreet page has already made his party for the day's pleasure.'

'I said from the beginning,' answered the Lady Fleming, 'that your Grace ought not to rely on being favoured with the company of a youth who has so many Huguenot acquaintances, and has the means of amusing himself far more agreeably than with us.'

'I wish,' said Catherine, her animated features reddening with mortification, 'that his friends would sail away with him for good, and bring

us in return a page (if such a thing can be found) faithful to his queen and to his religion.'

'One part of your wishes may be granted, madam,' said Roland Græme, unable any longer to restrain his sense of the treatment which he received on all sides; and he was about to add, 'I heartily wish you a companion in my room, if such can be found, who is capable of enduring women's caprices without going distracted.' Luckily, he recollected the remorse which he had felt at having given way to the vivacity of his temper upon a similar occasion; and, closing his lips, imprisoned, until it died on his tongue, a reproach so misbecoming the presence of majesty.

'Why do you remain there,' said the queen, 'as if you were rooted to the parterre?'

'I but attend your Grace's commands,' said the page.

'I have none to give you—Begone, sir!'

As he left the garden to go to the boat, he distinctly heard Mary upbraid one of her attendants in these words:—'You see to what you have exposed us!'

This brief scene at once determined Roland Græme's resolution to quit the castle, if it were possible, and to impart his resolution to George Douglas without loss of time. That gentleman, in his usual mood of silence, sat in the stern of the little skiff which they used on such occasions, trimming his fishing-tackle, and, from time to time, indicating by signs to Græme, who pulled the oars, which way he should row. When they were a furlong or two from the castle, Roland rested on the oars, and addressed his companion somewhat abruptly,—'I have something of importance to say to you, under your pleasure, fair sir.'

The pensive melancholy of Douglas's countenance at once gave way to the eager, keen, and startled look of one who expects to hear something of deep and alarming import.

'I am wearied to the very death of this Castle of Lochleven,' continued Roland.

'Is that all?' said Douglas; 'I know none of its inhabitants who are much better pleased with it.'

'Ay, but I am neither a native of the house, nor a prisoner in it, and so I may reasonably desire to leave it.'

'You might desire to quit it with equal reason,' answered Douglas, 'if you were both the one and the other.'

'But,' said Roland Græme, 'I am not only tired of living in Lochleven Castle, but I am determined to quit it.'

'That is a resolution more easily taken than executed,' replied Douglas.

'Not if yourself, sir, and your lady mother, choose to consent,' answered the page.

'You mistake the matter, Roland,' said Douglas; 'you will find that the consent of two other persons is equally essential—that of the Lady Mary your mistress, and that of my uncle the Regent, who placed you about her person, and who will not think it proper that she should change her attendants so soon.'

'And must I then remain whether I will or no?' demanded the page, somewhat appalled at a view of the subject which would have occurred sooner to a person of more experience.

'At least,' said George Douglas, 'you must will to remain till my uncle consents to dismiss you.'

'Frankly,' said the page, 'and speaking to you as a gentleman who is incapable of betraying me, I will confess that, if I thought myself a prisoner here, neither walls nor water should confine me long.'

'Frankly,' said Douglas, 'I could not much blame you for the attempt; yet, for all that, my father, or uncle, or the earl, or any of my brothers, or, in short, any of the king's lords into whose hands you fell, would in such a case hang you like a dog, or like a sentinel who deserts his post; and I promise you that you will hardly escape them. But row towards Saint Serf's island—there is a breeze from the west, and we shall have sport, keeping to windward of the isle, where the ripple is strongest. We will speak more of what you have mentioned when we have had an hour's sport.'

Their fishing was successful, though never did two anglers pursue even that silent and unsocial pleasure with less of verbal intercourse.

When their time was expired, Douglas took the oars in his turn, and by his order Roland Græme steered the boat, directing her course upon the landing-place at the castle. But he also stopped in the midst of his course, and, looking around him, said to Græme, 'There is a thing which I could mention to thee; but it is so deep a secret, that even here, surrounded as we are by sea and sky, without the possibility of a listener, I cannot prevail on myself to speak it out.'

'Better leave it unspoken, sir,' answered Roland Græme, 'if you doubt the honour of him who alone can hear it.'

'I doubt not your honour,' replied George Douglas; 'but you are young, imprudent, and changeful.'

'Young,' said Roland, 'I am, and it may be imprudent—but who hath informed you that I am changeful?'

'One that knows you, perhaps, better than you know yourself,' replied Douglas.

'I suppose you mean Catherine Seyton,' said the page, his heart rising as he spoke; 'but she is herself fifty times more variable in her humour than the very water which we are floating upon.'

'My young acquaintance,' said Douglas, 'I pray you to remember that Catherine Seyton is a lady of blood and birth, and must not be lightly spoken of.'

'Master George of Douglas,' said Græme, 'as that speech seemed to be made under the warrant of something like a threat, I pray you to observe that I value not the threat at the estimation of a fin of one of these dead trouts; and, moreover, I would have you to know that the champion who undertakes the defence of every lady of blood and birth, whom men accuse of change of faith and of fashion, is like to have enough of work on his hands.'

'Go to,' said the seneschal, but in a tone of good-humour, 'thou art a foolish boy, unfit to deal with any matter more serious than the casting of a net, or the flying of a hawk.'

'If your secret concern Catherine Seyton,' said the page, 'I care not for it, and so you may tell her if you will. I wot she can shape you

opportunity to speak with her, as she has ere now.'

The flush which passed over Douglas's face made the page aware that he had alighted on a truth, when he was, in fact, speaking at random; and the feeling that he had done so was like striking a dagger into his own heart. His companion, without further answer, resumed the oars, and pulled lustily till they arrived at the island and the castle. The servants received the produce of their spoil, and the two fishers, turning from each other in silence, went each to his several apartment.

Roland Græme had spent about an hour in grumbling against Catherine Seyton, the queen, the Regent, and the whole house of Lochleven, with George Douglas at the head of it, when the time approached that his duty called him to attend the meal of Queen Mary. As he arranged his dress for this purpose, he grudged the trouble which, on similar occasions, he used, with boyish foppery, to consider as one of the most important duties of his day; and when he went to take his place behind the chair of the queen, it was with an air of offended dignity, which could not escape her observation, and probably appeared to her ridiculous enough, for she whispered something in French to her ladies, at which the Lady Fleming laughed, and Catherine appeared half diverted and half disconcerted. This pleasantry, of which the subject was concealed from him, the unfortunate page received, of course, as a new offence, and called an additional degree of sullen dignity into his mien, which might have exposed him to further raillery, but that Mary appeared disposed to make allowance for and compassionate his feelings.

With the peculiar tact and delicacy which no woman possessed in greater perfection, she began to soothe by degrees the vexed spirit of her magnanimous attendant. The excellence of the fish which he had taken in his expedition, the high flavour and beautiful red colour of the trouts which have long given distinction to the lake, led her first to express her thanks to her attendant for so agreeable an addition to her table, especially upon a *jour de jeûne;* and then brought on inquiries into the place where the fish had been taken, their size, their peculiarities, the times when they were in season, and a comparison between the Lochleven trouts and those which are found in the lakes and rivers of the south of Scotland. The ill humour of Roland Græme was never of an obstinate character. It rolled away like mist before the sun, and he was easily engaged in a keen and animated dissertation about Lochleven trout, and sea trout, and river trout, and bull trout, and char, which never rise to a fly, and parr, which some suppose infant salmon, and *herlings*, which frequent the Nith, and *vendisses*, which are only found in the Castle-Loch of Lochmaben; and he was hurrying on with the eager impetuosity and enthusiasm of a young sportsman, when he observed that the smile with which the queen at first listened to him died languidly away, and that, in spite of her efforts to suppress them, tears rose to her eyes. He stopped suddenly short, and, distressed in his turn, asked, 'If he had had the misfortune unwittingly to give displeasure to her Grace?'

'No, my poor boy,' replied the queen; 'but as you numbered up the lakes and rivers of my kingdom, imagination cheated me, as it will do, and snatched me from these dreary walls, away to the romantic streams of Nithsdale, and the royal towers of Lochmaben.—O land, which my fathers have so long ruled! of the pleasures which you extend so freely, your Queen is now deprived, and the poorest beggar, who may wander free from one landward town to another, would scorn to change fates with Mary of Scotland!'

'Your Highness,' said the Lady Fleming, 'will do well to withdraw.'

'Come with me, then, Fleming,' said the queen, 'I would not burden hearts so young as these are with the sight of my sorrows.'

She accompanied these words with a look of melancholy compassion towards Roland and Catherine, who were now left alone together in the apartment.

The page found his situation not a little embarrassing; for, as every reader has experienced who may have chanced to be in such a situation, it is extremely difficult to maintain the full dignity of an offended person in the presence of a beautiful girl, whatever reason we may have for being angry with her. Catherine Seyton, on her part, sat still like a lingering ghost, which, conscious of the awe which its presence imposes, is charitably disposed to give the poor confused mortal whom it visits time to recover his senses, and comply with the grand rule of demonology by speaking first. But as Roland seemed in no hurry to avail himself of her condescension, she carried it a step farther, and herself opened the conversation.

'I pray you, fair sir, if it may be permitted me to disturb your august reverie by a question so simple,—what may have become of your rosary?'

'It is lost, madam—lost some time since,' said Roland, partly embarrassed and partly indignant.

'And may I ask further, sir,' said Catherine, 'why you have not replaced it with another?—I have half a mind,' she said, taking from her pocket a string of ebony beads adorned with gold, 'to bestow one upon you, to keep for my sake, just to remind you of former acquaintance.'

There was a little tremulous accent in the tone with which these words were delivered, which at once put to flight Roland Græme's resentment, and brought him to Catherine's side; but she instantly resumed the bold and firm accent which was more familiar to her. 'I did not bid you,' she said, 'come and sit so close by me; for the acquaintance that I spoke of has been stiff and cold, dead and buried, for this many a day.'

'Now Heaven forbid!' said the page, 'it has only slept; and now that you desire it should awake, fair Catherine, believe me that a pledge of your returning favour'——

'Nay, nay,' said Catherine, withholding the rosary, towards which, as he spoke, he extended his hand, 'I have changed my mind on better reflection. What should a heretic do with these holy beads, that have been blessed by the Father of the Church himself?'

Roland winced grievously, for he saw plainly

which way the discourse was now likely to tend, and felt that it must at all events be embarrassing. 'Nay, but,' he said, 'it was as a token of your own regard that you offered them.'

'Ay, fair sir, but that regard attended the faithful subject, the loyal and pious Catholic, the individual who was so solemnly devoted at the same time with myself to the same grand duty; which, you must now understand, was to serve the Church and Queen. To such a person, if you ever heard of him, was my regard due, and not to him who associates with heretics, and is about to become a renegado.'

'I should scarce believe, fair mistress,' said Roland indignantly, 'that the vane of your favour turned only to a Catholic wind, considering that it points so plainly to George Douglas, who, I think, is both kingsman and Protestant.'

'Think better of George Douglas,' said Catherine, 'than to believe'——and then, checking herself, as if she had spoken too much, she went on, 'I assure you, fair Master Roland, that all who wish you well are sorry for you.'

'Their number is very few, I believe,' answered Roland; 'and their sorrow, if they feel any, not deeper than ten minutes' time will cure.'

'They are more numerous, and think more deeply concerning you, than you seem to be aware,' answered Catherine. 'But perhaps they think wrong—You are the best judge in your own affairs; and if you prefer gold and Church-lands to honour and loyalty, and the faith of your fathers, why should you be hampered in conscience more than others?'

'May Heaven bear witness for me,' said Roland, 'that if I entertain any difference of opinion—that is, if I nourish any doubts in point of religion, they have been adopted on the conviction of my own mind, and the suggestion of my own conscience!'

'Ay, ay, your conscience—your conscience!' repeated she with satiric emphasis; 'your conscience is the scapegoat; I warrant it an able one—it will bear the burden of one of the best manors of the Abbey of Saint Mary of Kennaquhair, lately forfeited to our noble Lord the King, by the Abbot and community thereof, for the high crime of fidelity to their religious vows, and now to be granted by the High and Mighty Traitor, and so forth, James Earl of Murray, to the good squire of dames Roland Græme, for his loyal and faithful service as under-espial, and deputy-turnkey, for securing the person of his lawful sovereign, Queen Mary.'

'You misconstrue me cruelly,' said the page; 'yes, Catherine, most cruelly—God knows I would protect this poor lady at the risk of my life, or with my life; but what can I do—what can any one do for her?'

'Much may be done—enough may be done—all may be done—if men will be but true and honourable, as Scottish men were in the days of Bruce and Wallace. O, Roland, from what an enterprise you are now withdrawing your heart and hand, through mere fickleness and coldness of spirit!'

'How can I withdraw,' said Roland, 'from an enterprise which has never been communicated to me?—Has the Queen, or have you, or has any one, communicated with me upon anything for her service which I have refused? Or have you not, all of you, held me at such distance from your counsels, as if I were the most faithless spy since the days of Ganelon?'*

'And who,' said Catherine Seyton, 'would trust the sworn friend, and pupil, and companion of the heretic preacher Henderson? ay, a proper tutor you have chosen, instead of the excellent Ambrosius, who is now turned out of house and homestead, if indeed he is not languishing in a dungeon, for withstanding the tyranny of Morton, to whose brother the temporalities of that noble house of God have been gifted away by the Regent.'

'Is it possible,' said the page; 'and is the excellent Father Ambrose in such distress?'

'He would account the news of your falling away from the faith of your fathers,' answered Catherine, 'a worse mishap than aught that tyranny can inflict on himself.'

'But why,' said Roland, very much moved, 'why should you suppose that—that—that it is with me as you say?'

'Do you yourself deny it?' replied Catherine; 'do you not admit that you have drunk the poison which you should have dashed from your lips?—Do you deny that it now ferments in your veins, if it has not altogether corrupted the springs of life?—Do you deny that you have your doubts, as you proudly term them, respecting what popes and councils have declared it unlawful to doubt of?—Is not your faith wavering, if not overthrown?—Does not the heretic preacher boast his conquest?—Does not the heretic woman of this prison-house hold up thy example to others?—Do not the Queen and the Lady Fleming believe in thy falling away?—And is there any except one—yes, I will speak it out, and think as lightly as you please of my good-will—is there one except myself that holds even a lingering hope that you may yet prove what we once all believed of you?'

'I know not,' said our poor page, much embarrassed by the view which was thus presented to him of the conduct he was expected to pursue, and by a person in whom he was not the less interested, that so long a residence in Lochleven Castle, with no object so likely to attract his undivided attention, had taken place since they had first met—'I know not what you expect of of me, or fear from me. I was sent hither to attend Queen Mary, and to her I acknowledge the duty of a servant through life and death. If any one had expected service of another kind, I was not the party to render it. I neither avow nor disclaim the doctrines of the Reformed Church.—Will you have the truth?—It seems to me that the profligacy of the Catholic clergy has brought this judgment on their own heads, and, for aught I know, it may be for their reformation. But, for betraying this unhappy Queen, God knows I am guiltless of the thought. Did I even believe worse of her than as her servant wish—as her subject I dare to do—I would not betray her—far from it—I would aid her in aught which could tend to a fair trial of her cause.'

* Gan, Gano, or Ganelon, of Mayence, is in the romances on the subject of Charlemagne and his Paladins, always represented as the traitor by whom the Christian champions are betrayed.

'Enough! enough!' answered Catherine, clasping her hands together; 'then thou wilt not desert us if any means are presented, by which, placing our royal mistress at freedom, this case may be honestly tried betwixt her and her rebellious subjects?'

'Nay—but, fair Catherine,' replied the page, 'hear but what the Lord of Murray said when he sent me hither'——

'Hear but what the devil said,' replied the maiden, 'rather than what a false subject, a false brother, a false counsellor, a false friend, said! A man raised from a petty pensioner on the crown's bounty, to be the counsellor of majesty, and the prime distributor of the bounties of the State;—one with whom rank, fortune, title, consequence, and power, all grew up like a mushroom, by the mere warm good-will of the sister, whom, in requital, he hath mewed up in this place of melancholy seclusion—whom, in further requital, he has deposed, and whom, if he dared, he would murder!'

'I think not so ill of the Earl of Murray,' said Roland Græme; 'and sooth to speak,' he added, with a smile, 'it would require some bribe to make me embrace, with firm and desperate resolution, either one side or the other.'

'Nay, if that is all,' replied Catherine Seyton, in a tone of enthusiasm, 'you shall be guerdoned with prayers from oppressed subjects—from dispossessed clergy—from insulted nobles—with immortal praise by future ages—with eager gratitude by the present—with fame on earth, and with felicity in heaven! Your country will thank you—your Queen will be debtor to you—you will achieve at once the highest from the lowest degree in chivalry—all men will honour, all women will love you—and I, sworn with you so early to the accomplishment of Queen Mary's freedom, will—yes, I will—love you better than—ever sister loved brother!'

'Say on—say on!' whispered Roland, kneeling on one knee, and taking her hand, which, in the warmth of exhortation, Catherine held towards him.

'Nay,' said she, pausing, 'I have already said too much—far too much, if I prevail not with you—far too little if I do. But I prevail,' she continued, seeing that the countenance of the youth she addressed returned the enthusiasm of her own—'I prevail; or rather the good cause prevails through its own strength—thus I devote thee to it.' And as she spoke, she approached her finger to the brow of the astonished youth, and, without touching it, signed the cross over his forehead—stooped her face towards him, and seemed to kiss the empty space in which she had traced the symbol; then starting up, and extricating herself from his grasp, darted into the queen's apartment.

Roland Græme remained as the enthusiastic maiden had left him, kneeling on one knee, with breath withheld, and with eyes fixed upon the space which the fairy form of Catherine Seyton had so lately occupied. If his thoughts were not of unmixed delight, they at least partook of that thrilling and intoxicating, though mingled sense of pain and pleasure, the most overpowering which life offers in its blended cup. He rose and retired slowly; and although the chaplain, Mr. Henderson, preached on that evening his best sermon against the errors of Popery, I would not engage that he was followed accurately through the train of his reasoning by the young proselyte, with a view to whose especial benefit he had handled the subject.

CHAPTER XXV.

> And when Love's torch hath set the heart in flame,
> Comes Seignor Reason with his saws and cautions,
> Giving such aid as the old grey-beard sexton,
> Who from the church-vault drags his crazy engine,
> To ply its dribbling ineffectual streamlet
> Against a conflagration.
>
> OLD PLAY.

IN a musing mood, Roland Græme upon the ensuing morning betook himself to the battlements of the castle, as a spot where he might indulge the course of his thick-coming fancies with least chance of interruption. But his place of retirement was in the present case ill chosen, for he was presently joined by Mr. Elias Henderson.

'I sought you, young man,' said the preacher, 'having to speak of something which concerns you nearly.'

The page had no pretence for avoiding the conference which the chaplain thus offered, though he felt that it might prove an embarrassing one.

'In teaching thee, as far as my feeble knowledge hath permitted, thy duty towards God,' said the chaplain, 'there are particulars of your duty towards man, upon which I was unwilling long or much to insist. You are here in the service of a lady, honourable as touching her birth, deserving of all compassion as respects her misfortunes, and garnished with even but too many of those outward qualities which win men's regard and affection. Have you ever considered your regard to this Lady Mary of Scotland, in its true light and bearing?'

'I trust, reverend sir,' replied Roland Græme, 'that I am well aware of the duties a servant in my condition owes to his royal mistress, especially in her lowly and distressed condition.'

'True,' answered the preacher; 'but it is even that honest feeling which may, in the Lady Mary's case, carry thee into great crime and treachery.'

'How so, reverend sir?' replied the page; 'I profess I understand you not.'

'I speak to you not of the crimes of this ill-advised lady,' said the preacher; 'they are not subjects for the ears of her sworn servant. But it is enough to say, that this unhappy person hath rejected more offers of grace, more hopes of glory, than ever were held out to earthly princes; and that she is now, her day of favour being passed, sequestered in this lonely castle, for the common weal of the people of Scotland, and it may be for the benefit of her own soul.'

'Reverend sir,' said Roland, somewhat impatiently, 'I am but too well aware that my unfortunate mistress is imprisoned, since I have the misfortune to share in her restraint myself—of which, to speak sooth, I am heartily weary.'

'It is even of that which I am about to speak,' said the chaplain mildly; 'but first, my good Roland, look forth on the pleasant prospect of

yonder cultivated plain. You see, where the smoke arises, yonder village standing half hidden by the trees, and you know it to be the dwelling-place of peace and industry. From space to space, each by the side of its own stream, you see the grey towers of barons, with cottages interspersed; and you know that they also, with their household, are now living in unity; the lance hung upon the wall, and the sword resting in its sheath. You see, too, more than one fair church, where the pure waters of life are offered to the thirsty, and where the hungry are refreshed with spiritual food.—What would he deserve, who should bring fire and slaughter into so fair and happy a scene—who should bare the swords of the gentry and turn them against each other—who should give tower and cottage to the flames, and slake the embers with the blood of the indwellers?—What would he deserve, who should lift up again that ancient Dagon of superstition, whom the worthies of the time have beaten down, and who should once more make the churches of God the high places of Baal?'

'You have limned a frightful picture, reverend sir,' said Roland Græme; 'yet I guess not whom you would charge with the purpose of effecting a change so horrible.'

'God forbid,' replied the preacher, 'that I should say to thee, Thou art the man.—Yet beware, Roland Græme, that thou, in serving thy mistress, hold fast the still higher service which thou owest to the peace of thy country and the prosperity of her inhabitants; else, Roland Græme, thou mayest be the very man upon whose head will fall the curses and assured punishment due to such work. If thou art won by the song of these sirens to aid that unhappy lady's escape from this place of penitence and security, it is over with the peace of Scotland's cottages, and with the prosperity of her palaces—and the babe unborn shall curse the name of the man who gave inlet to the disorder which will follow the war betwixt the mother and the son.'

'I know of no such plan, reverend sir,' answered the page, 'and therefore can aid none such.—My duty towards the Queen has been simply that of an attendant; it is a task of which, at times, I would willingly have been freed; nevertheless'——

'It is to prepare thee for the enjoyment of something more of liberty,' said the preacher, 'that I have endeavoured to impress upon you the deep responsibility under which your office must be discharged. George Douglas hath told the Lady Lochleven that you are weary of this service, and my intercession hath partly determined her good ladyship, that, as your discharge cannot be granted, you shall, instead, be employed in certain commissions on the mainland, which have hitherto been discharged by other persons of confidence. Wherefore, come with me to the lady, for even to-day such duty will be imposed on you.'

'I trust you will hold me excused, reverend sir,' said the page, who felt that an increase of confidence on the part of the lady of the castle and her family would render his situation in a moral view doubly embarrassing; 'one cannot serve two masters—and I much fear that my mistress will not hold me excused for taking employment under another.'

'Fear not that,' said the preacher; 'her consent shall be asked and obtained. I fear she will yield it but too easily, as hoping to avail herself of your agency to maintain correspondence with her friends, as those falsely call themselves, who would make her name the watchword for civil war.'

'And thus,' said the page, 'I shall be exposed to suspicion on all sides; for my mistress will consider me as a spy placed on her by her enemies, seeing me so far trusted by them; and the Lady Lochleven will never cease to suspect the possibility of my betraying her, because circumstances put it into my power to do so—I would rather remain as I am.'

There followed a pause of one or two minutes, during which Henderson looked steadily in Roland's countenance, as if desirous to ascertain whether there was not more in the answer than the precise words seemed to imply. He failed in this point, however; for Roland, bred a page from childhood, knew how to assume a sullen, pettish cast of countenance, well enough calculated to hide all internal emotions.

'I understand thee not, Roland,' said the preacher, 'or rather thou thinkest on this matter more deeply than I apprehended to be in thy nature. Methought, the delight of going on shore with thy bow, or thy gun, or thy angling-rod, would have borne away all other feelings.'

'And so it would,' replied Roland, who perceived the danger of suffering Henderson's half-raised suspicions to become fully awake,—'I would have thought of nothing but the gun and the oar, and the wild water-fowl that tempt me by sailing among the sedges yonder so far out of flight-shot, had you not spoken of my going on shore as what was to occasion burning of town and tower, the downfall of the evangele, and the upsetting of the mass.'

'Follow me, then,' said Henderson, 'and we will seek the Lady Lochleven.'

They found her at breakfast with her grandson, George Douglas.—'Peace be with your ladyship!' said the preacher, bowing to his patroness; 'Roland Græme awaits your order.'

'Young man,' said the lady, 'our chaplain hath warranted for thy fidelity, and we are determined to give you certain errands to do for us in our town of Kinross.'

'Not by my advice,' said Douglas coldly.

'I said not that it was,' answered the lady, something sharply. 'The mother of thy father may, I should think, be old enough to judge for herself in a matter so simple.—Thou wilt take the skiff, Roland, and two of my people, whom Dryfesdale or Randal will order out, and fetch off certain stuff of plate and hangings, which should last night be lodged at Kinross by the wains from Edinburgh.'

'And give this packet,' said George Douglas, to a servant of ours, whom you will find in waiting there.—It is the report to my father,' he added, looking towards his grandmother, who acquiesced by bending her head.

'I have already mentioned to Master Henderson,' said Roland Græme, 'that as my duty requires my attendance on the Queen, her Grace's

permission for my journey ought to be obtained before I can undertake your commission.'

'Look to it, my son,' said the old lady, 'the scruple of the youth is honourable.'

'Craving your pardon, madam, I have no wish to force myself on her presence thus early,' said Douglas, in an indifferent tone; 'it might displease her, and were no way agreeable to me.'

'And I,' said the Lady Lochleven, 'although her temper hath been more gentle of late, have no will to undergo, without necessity, the rancour of her wit.'

'Under your permission, madam,' said the chaplain, 'I will myself render your request to the Queen. During my long residence in this house she hath not deigned to see me in private, or to hear my doctrine; yet so may Heaven prosper my labours, as love for her soul, and desire to bring her into the right path, was my chief desire for coming hither.'

'Take care, Master Henderson,' said Douglas, in a tone which seemed almost sarcastic, 'lest you rush hastily on an adventure to which you have no vocation—you are learned, and know the adage, *Ne accesseris in consilium nisi vocatus.* —Who hath required this at your hand?'

'The Master to whose service I am called,' answered the preacher, looking upward,—'He who hath commanded me to be earnest in season and out of season.'

'Your acquaintance hath not been much, I think, with courts or princes?' continued the young esquire.

'No, sir,' replied Henderson, 'but, like my master Knox, I see nothing frightful in the fair face of a pretty lady.'

'My son,' said the Lady of Lochleven, 'quench not the good man's zeal—let him do the errand to this unhappy princess.'

'With more willingness than I would do it myself,' said George Douglas. Yet something in his manner appeared to contradict his words.

The minister went accordingly, followed by Roland Græme, and, demanding an audience of the imprisoned princess, was admitted. He found her with her ladies engaged in the daily task of embroidery. The queen received him with that courtesy which, in ordinary cases, she used towards all who approached her, and the clergyman, in opening his commission, was obviously somewhat more embarrassed than he had expected to be.—'The good Lady of Lochleven—may it please your Grace'——

He made a short pause, during which Mary said, with a smile, 'My Grace would, in truth, be well pleased, were the Lady Lochleven our *good* lady—But go on—what is the will of the good Lady of Lochleven?'

'She desires, madam,' said the chaplain, 'that your Grace will permit this young gentleman, your page, Roland Græme, to pass to Kinross, to look after some household stuff and hangings, sent hither for the better furnishing your Grace's apartments.'

'The Lady of Lochleven,' said the queen, 'uses needless ceremony, in requesting our permission for that which stands within her own pleasure. We well know that this young gentleman's attendance on us had not been so long permitted, were he not thought to be more at the command of that good lady than at ours.—But we cheerfully yield consent that he shall go on her errand—with our will we would doom no living creature to the captivity which we ourselves must suffer.'

'Ay, madam,' answered the preacher, 'and it is doubtless natural for humanity to quarrel with its prison-house. Yet there have been those who have found that time spent in the house of temporal captivity may be so employed as to redeem us from spiritual slavery.'

'I apprehend your meaning, sir,' replied the queen, 'but I have heard your apostle—I have heard Master John Knox; and were I to be perverted, I would willingly resign to the ablest and most powerful of heresiarchs the poor honour he might acquire by overcoming my faith and my hope.'

'Madam,' said the preacher, 'it is not to the talents or skill of the husbandman that God gives the increase—the words which were offered in vain by him whom you justly call our apostle, during the bustle and gaiety of a court, may yet find better acceptance during the leisure for reflection which this place affords. God knows, lady, that I speak in singleness of heart, as one who would as soon compare himself to the immortal angels, as to the holy man whom you have named. Yet would you but condescend to apply to their noblest use those talents and that learning which all allow you to be possessed of—would you afford us but the slightest hope that you would hear and regard what can be urged against the blinded superstition and idolatry in which you were brought up, sure am I that the most powerfully-gifted of my brethren, that even John Knox himself, would hasten hither, and account the rescue of your single soul from the nets of Romish error'——

'I am obliged to you and to them for their charity,' said Mary; 'but as I have at present but one presence-chamber, I would reluctantly see it converted into a Huguenot synod.'

'At least, madam, be not thus obstinately blinded in your errors! Hear one who has hungered and thirsted, watched and prayed, to undertake the good work of your conversion, and who would be content to die the instant that a work so advantageous for yourself and so beneficial to Scotland were accomplished—Yes, lady, could I but shake the remaining pillar of the heathen temple in this land—and that permit me to term your faith in the delusions of Rome—I could be content to die overwhelmed in the ruins!'

'I will not insult your zeal, sir,' replied Mary, 'by saying you are more likely to make sport for the Philistines than to overwhelm them—your charity claims my thanks, for it is warmly expressed and may be truly purposed—But believe as well of me as I am willing to do of you, and think that I may be as anxious to recall you to the ancient and only road, as you are to teach me your new by-ways to paradise.'

'Then, madam, if such be your generous purpose,' said Henderson eagerly, 'what hinders that we should dedicate some part of that time, unhappily now too much at your Grace's disposal, to discuss a question so weighty? You, by report of all men, are both learned and witty; and I,

though without such advantages, am strong in my cause as in a tower of defence. Why should we not spend some space in endeavouring to discover which of us hath the wrong side in this important matter?'

'Nay,' said Queen Mary, 'I never alleged my force was strong enough to accept of a combat *en champ clos*, with a scholar and a polemic. Besides, the match is not equal. You, sir, might retire when you felt the battle go against you, while I am tied to the stake, and have no permission to say the debate wearies me.—I would be alone.'

She curtseyed low to him as she uttered these words; and Henderson, whose zeal was indeed ardent, but did not extend to the neglect of delicacy, bowed in return, and prepared to withdraw.

'I would,' he said, 'that my earnest wish, my most zealous prayer, could procure to your Grace any blessing or comfort, but especially that in which alone blessing or comfort is, as easily as the slightest intimation of your wish will remove me from your presence.'

He was in the act of departing, when Mary said to him with much courtesy, 'Do me no injury in your thoughts, good sir; it may be that if my time here be protracted longer as surely I hope it will not, trusting that either my rebel subjects will repent of their disloyalty, or that my faithful lieges will obtain the upper hand —but if my time be here protracted, it may be I shall have no displeasure in hearing one who seems so reasonable and compassionate as yourself, and I may hazard your contempt by endeavouring to recollect and repeat the reasons which schoolmen and councils give for the faith that is in me,—although I fear that, God help me! my Latin has deserted me with my other possessions. This must, however, be for another day. Meanwhile, sir, let the Lady of Lochleven employ my page as she lists—I will not afford suspicion by speaking a word to him before he goes.—Roland Græme, my friend, lose not an opportunity of amusing thyself—dance, sing, run, and leap—all may be done merrily on the mainland; but he must have more than quicksilver in his veins who would frolic here.'

'Alas, madam!' said the preacher, 'to what is it you exhort the youth, while time passes, and eternity summons? Can our salvation be insured by idle mirth, or our good work wrought out without fear and trembling?'

'I cannot fear or tremble,' replied the queen; 'to Mary Stuart such emotions are unknown. But if weeping and sorrow on my part will atone for the boy's enjoying an hour of boyish pleasure, be assured the penance shall be duly paid.'

'Nay, but, gracious lady,' said the preacher, 'in this you greatly err;—our tears and our sorrows are all too little for our own faults and follies, nor can we transfer them, as your Church falsely teaches, to the benefit of others.'

'May I pray you, sir,' answered the queen, 'with as little offence as such a prayer may import, to transfer yourself elsewhere? We are sick at heart, and may not now be disturbed with further controversy—and thou, Roland, take this little purse;' then, turning to the divine, she said, showing its contents, 'Look, reverend sir,—it contains only these two or three gold testoons, a coin which, though bearing my own poor features, I have ever found more active against me than on my side, just as my subjects take arms against me, with my own name for their summons and signal.—Take this purse, that thou mayest want no means of amusement. Fail not—fail not to bring me back news from Kinross; only let it be such as, without suspicion or offence, may be told in the presence of this reverend gentleman, or of the good Lady Lochleven herself.'

The last hint was too irresistible to be withstood; and Henderson withdrew, half mortified, half pleased, with his reception; for Mary, from long habit, and the address which was natural to her, had learned, in an extraordinary degree, the art of evading discourse which was disagreeable to her feelings or prejudices, without affronting those by whom it was proffered.

Roland Græme retired with the chaplain, at a signal from his lady; but it did not escape him that, as he left the room, stepping backwards, and making the deep obeisance due to royalty, Catherine Seyton held up her slender forefinger, with a gesture which he alone could witness, and which seemed to say, 'Remember what has passed betwixt us.'

The young page had now his last charge from the Lady of Lochleven. 'There are revels,' she said, 'this day at the village—my son's authority is, as yet, unable to prevent these continued workings of the ancient leaven of folly which the Romish priests have kneaded into the very souls of the Scottish peasantry. I do not command thee to abstain from them—that would be only to lay a snare for thy folly, or to teach thee falsehood; but enjoy these vanities with moderation, and mark them as something thou must soon learn to renounce and contemn. Our chamberlain at Kinross, Luke Lundin,—doctor, as he foolishly calleth himself,—will acquaint thee what is to be done in the matter about which thou goest. Remember thou art trusted—show thyself, therefore, worthy of trust.'

When we recollect that Roland Græme was not yet nineteen, and that he had spent his whole life in the solitary Castle of Avenel, excepting the few hours he had passed in Edinburgh, and his late residence at Lochleven (the latter period having very little served to enlarge his acquaintance with the gay world), we cannot wonder that his heart beat high with hope and curiosity, at the prospect of partaking the sport even of a country wake. He hastened to his little cabin, and turned over the wardrobe with which (in every respect becoming his station) he had been supplied from Edinburgh, probably by order of the Earl of Murray. By the queen's command he had hitherto waited upon her in mourning, or at least in sad-coloured raiment. Her condition, she said, admitted of nothing more gay. But now he selected the gayest dress his wardrobe afforded; composed of scarlet slashed with black satin, the royal colours of Scotland—combed his long curled hair—disposed his chain and medal round a beaver hat of the newest block; and with the gay falchion which had reached him in so mysterious a manner, hung by his side in an embroidered belt, his apparel, added to his natural frank mien and handsome figure, formed a most commendable and pleasing specimen of the young

gallant of the period. He sought to make his parting reverence to the queen and her ladies, but old Dryfesdale hurried him to the boat.

'We will have no private audiences,' he said, 'my master; since you are to be trusted with somewhat, we will try at least to save thee from the temptation of opportunity. God help thee, child,' he added, with a glance of contempt at his gay clothes, 'an the bear-ward be yonder from Saint Andrews, have a care thou go not near him.'

'And wherefore, I pray you?' said Roland.

'Lest he take thee for one of his runaway jackanapes,' answered the steward, smiling sourly.

'I wear not my clothes at thy cost,' said Roland indignantly.

'Nor at thine own either, my son,' replied the steward, 'else would thy garb more nearly resemble thy merit and thy station.'

Roland Græme suppressed with difficulty the repartee which arose to his lips, and, wrapping his scarlet mantle around him, threw himself into the boat, which two rowers, themselves urged by curiosity to see the revels, pulled stoutly towards the west end of the lake. As they put off, Roland thought he could discover the face of Catherine Seyton, though carefully withdrawn from observation, peeping from a loophole to view his departure. He pulled off his hat, and held it up as a token that he saw and wished her adieu. A white kerchief waved for a second across the window, and for the rest of the little voyage, the thoughts of Catherine Seyton disputed ground in his breast with the expectations excited by the approaching revel. As they drew nearer and nearer the shore, the sounds of mirth and music, the laugh, the halloo, and the shout, came thicker upon the ear, and in a trice the boat was moored, and Roland Græme hastened in quest of the chamberlain, that, being informed what time he had at his own disposal, he might lay it out to the best advantage.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Room for the master of the ring, ye swains,
Divide your crowded ranks—before him march
The rural minstrelsy, the rattling drum,
The clamorous war-pipe, and far-echoing horn.
RURAL GAMES—SOMERVILLE.

No long space intervened ere Roland Græme was able to discover among the crowd of revellers, who gambolled upon the open space which extends betwixt the village and the lake, a person of so great importance as Dr. Luke Lundin, upon whom devolved officially the charge of representing the lord of the land, and who was attended for support of his authority by a piper, a drummer, and four sturdy clowns armed with rusty halberds, garnished with party-coloured ribbons, myrmidons who, early as the day was, had already broken more than one head in the awful names of the Laird of Lochleven and his chamberlain.*

As soon as this dignitary was informed that the castle skiff had arrived, with a gallant, dressed like a lord's son at the least, who desired presently to speak to him, he adjusted his ruff and his black coat, turned round his girdle till the garnished hilt of his long rapier became visible, and walked with due solemnity towards the beach. Solemn indeed he was entitled to be, even on less important occasions, for he had been bred to the venerable study of medicine, as those acquainted with the science very soon discovered from the aphorisms which ornamented his discourse. His success had not been equal to his pretensions; but as he was a native of the neighbouring kingdom of Fife, and bore distant relation to, or dependence upon, the ancient family of Lundin of that Ilk, who were bound in close friendship with the house of Lochleven, he had, through their interest, got planted comfortably enough in his present station upon the banks of that beautiful lake. The profits of his chamberlainship being moderate, especially in those unsettled times, he had eked it out with some practice in his original profession; and it was said that the inhabitants of the village and barony of Kinross were not more effectually thirled (which may be translated enthralled) to the baron's mill, than they were to the medical monopoly of the chamberlain. Woe betide the family of the rich boor who presumed to depart this life without a passport from Dr. Luke Lundin! for if his representatives had aught to settle with the baron, as it seldom happened otherwise, they were sure to find a cold friend in the chamberlain. He was considerate enough, however, gratuitously to help the poor out of their ailments, and sometimes out of all their other distresses at the same time.

Formal, in a double proportion, both as a physician and as a person in office, and proud of the scraps of learning which rendered his language almost universally unintelligible, Dr. Luke Lundin approached the beach, and hailed the page as he advanced towards him.—'The freshness of the morning upon you, fair sir—You are sent, I warrant me, to see if we observe here the regimen which her good ladyship hath prescribed, for eschewing all superstitious ceremonies and idle anilities in these our revels. I am aware that her good ladyship would willingly have altogether abolished and abrogated them—But as I had the honour to quote to her from the works of the learned Hercules of Saxony, *omnis curatio est vel canonica vel coacta*,—that is, fair sir (for silk and velvet have seldom their Latin *ad unguem*), every cure must be wrought either by art and induction of rule, or by constraint; and the wise physician chooseth the former. Which argument her ladyship being pleased to allow well of, I have made it my business so to blend instruction and caution with delight—*fiat mixtio*, as we say—that I can answer that the vulgar mind will be defecated and purged of

* At Scottish fairs, the bailie, or magistrate, deputed by the lord in whose name the meeting is held, attends the fair with his guard, decides trifling disputes, and punishes on the spot any petty delinquencies. His attendants are usually armed with halberds, and, sometimes at least, escorted by music. Thus, in the 'Life and Death of Habbie Simpson,' we are told of that famous minstrel,—

At fairs he played before the spear-men,
And gaily graithed in their gear men;—
Steel bonnets, jacks, and swords shone clear then,
Like ony bead;
Now wha shall play before sic weir men,
Since Habbie's dead!

anile and popish fooleries by the medicament adhibited, so that the *primæ viæ* being cleansed, Master Henderson, or any other able pastor, may at will throw in tonics, and effectuate a perfect moral cure, *tuto, cito, jucunde.*'

'I have no charge, Dr. Lundin,' replied the page——

'Call me not doctor,' said the chamberlain, 'since I have laid aside my furred gown and bonnet, and retired me into this temporality of chamberlainship.'

'Oh, sir,' said the page, who was no stranger by report to the character of this original, 'the cowl makes not the monk, neither the cord the friar—we have all heard of the cures wrought by Dr. Lundin.'

'Toys, young sir—trifles,' answered the leech, with grave disclamation of superior skill; 'the hit-or-miss practice of a poor retired gentleman, in a short cloak and doublet—Marry, Heaven sent its blessing—and this I must say, better fashioned mediciners have brought fewer patients through—*lunga roba corta scienzia,* saith the Italian—ha, fair sir, you have the language?'

Roland Græme did not think it necessary to expound to this learned Theban whether he understood him or no; but, leaving that matter uncertain, he told him he came in quest of certain packages which should have arrived at Kinross, and been placed under the chamberlain's charge the evening before.

'Body o' me!' said Dr. Lundin, 'I fear our common carrier, John Auchtermuchty, hath met with some mischance, that he came not up last night with his wains—bad land this to journey in, my master; and the fool will travel by night, too, although (besides all maladies from your *tussis* to your *pestis,* which walk abroad in the night-air), he may well fall in with half-a-dozen swashbucklers, who will ease him at once of his baggage and his earthly complaints. I must send forth to inquire after him, since he hath stuff of the honourable household on hand —and, by Our Lady, he hath stuff of mine too—certain drugs sent me from the city for composition of my alexipharmics—this gear must be looked to.—Hodge,' said he, addressing one of his redoubted bodyguard, 'do thou and Toby Telfer take the mickle brown aver and the black cut-tailed mare, and make out towards the Kiery-craigs, and see what tidings you can have of Auchtermuchty and his wains—I trust it is only the medicine of the pottle-pot (being the only *medicamentum* which the beast useth), which hath caused him to tarry on the road. Take the ribbons from your halberds, ye knaves, and get on your jacks, plate-sleeves, and knapskulls, that your presence may work some terror if you meet with opposers.'—He then added, turning to Roland Græme, 'I warrant me we shall have news of the wains in brief season. Meantime it will please you to look upon the sports; but first to enter my poor lodging and take your morning's cup. For what saith the school of Salerno?

> Poculum, mane haustum,
> Restaurat naturam exhaustam.'

'Your learning is too profound for me,' replied the page; 'and so would your draught be likewise, I fear.'

'Not a whit, fair sir—a cordial cup of sack, impregnated with wormwood, is the best antipestilential draught; and, to speak truth, the pestilential miasmata are now very rife in the atmosphere. We live in a happy time, young man,' continued he, in a tone of grave irony, 'and have many blessings unknown to our fathers—Here are two sovereigns in the land, a regnant and a claimant—that is enough of one good thing—but if any one wants more, he may find a king in every peel-house in the country; so if we lack government, it is not for want of governors. Then have we a civil war to phlebotomize us every year, and to prevent our population from starving for want of food—and for the same purpose we have the plague proposing us a visit, the best of all recipes for thinning a land, and converting younger brothers into elder ones. Well, each man in his vocation. You young fellows of the sword desire to wrestle, fence, or so forth, with some expert adversary; and for my part, I love to match myself for life or death against that same plague.'

As they proceeded up the street of the little village towards the doctor's lodgings, his attention was successively occupied by the various personages whom he met, and pointed out to the notice of his companion.

'Do you see that fellow with the red bonnet, the blue jerkin, and the great rough baton in his hand?—I believe that clown hath the strength of a tower—He has lived fifty years in the world, and never encouraged the liberal sciences by buying one pennyworth of medicaments.—But see you that man with the *facies hippocratica?*' said he, pointing out a thin peasant, with swelled legs, and a most cadaverous countenance; 'that I call one of the worthiest men in the barony—he breakfasts, luncheons, dines, and sups by my advice, and not without my medicine; and for his own single part, will go further to clear out a moderate stock of pharmaceutics, than half the country besides.—How do you, my honest friend?' said he to the party in question, with a tone of condolence.

'Very weakly, sir, since I took the electuary,' answered the patient; 'it neighboured ill with the two spoonfuls of pease-porridge and the kirnmilk.'

'Pease-porridge and kirnmilk! Have you been under medicine these ten years, and keep your diet so ill?—the next morning take the electuary by itself, and touch nothing for six hours.'—The poor object bowed and limped off.

The next whom the doctor deigned to take notice of, was a lame fellow, by whom the honour was altogether undeserved, for at sight of the mediciner he began to shuffle away in the crowd as fast as his infirmities would permit.

'There is an ungrateful hound for you,' said Dr. Lundin; 'I cured him of the gout in his feet, and now he talks of the chargeableness of medicine, and makes the first use of his restored legs to fly from his physician. His *podagra* has become a *chiragra,* as honest Martial hath it—the gout hath got into his fingers, and he cannot draw his purse. Old saying and true,

> Præmia cum poscit medicus, Sathan est.

We are angels when we come to cure—devils

when we ask payment—But I will administer a purgation to his purse, I warrant him. There is his brother, too, a sordid chuff.—So ho, there! Saunders Darlet! you have been ill, I hear?'

'Just got the turn, as I was thinking to send to your honour, and I am brawly now again—it was nae great thing that ailed me.'

'Hark you, sirrah,' said the doctor, 'I trust you remember you are owing to the laird four stones of barleymeal, and a bow of oats; and I would have you send no more such kain-fowls as you sent last season, that looked as wretchedly as patients just dismissed from a plague-hospital; and there is hard money owing besides.'

'I was thinking, sir,' said the man, *more Scotico*, that is, returning no direct answer on the subject on which he was addressed, 'my best way would be to come down to your honour, and take your advice yet, in case my trouble should come back.'

'Do so, then, knave,' replied Lundin, 'and remember what Ecclesiasticus saith—"Give place to the physician—let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him."'

His exhortation was interrupted by an apparition, which seemed to strike the doctor with as much horror and surprise as his own visage inflicted upon sundry of those persons whom he had addressed.

The figure which produced this effect on the Esculapius of the village, was that of a tall old woman, who wore a high-crowned hat and muffler. The first of these habiliments added apparently to her stature, and the other served to conceal the lower part of her face, and as the hat itself was slouched, little could be seen besides two brown cheek-bones, and the eyes of swarthy fire, that gleamed from under two shaggy grey eyebrows. She was dressed in a long dark-coloured robe of unusual fashion, bordered at the skirts and on the stomacher with a sort of white trimming resembling the Jewish phylacteries, on which were wrought the characters of some unknown language. She held in her hand a walking-staff of black ebony.

'By the soul of Celsus,' said Dr. Luke Lundin, 'it is old Mother Nicneven herself—she hath come to beard me within mine own bounds, and in the very execution of mine office! Have at thy coat, Old Woman, as the song says—Hob Anster, let her presently be seized and committed to the tolbooth; and if there are any zealous brethren here who would give the hag her deserts, and duck her as a witch in the loch, I pray let them in no way be hindered.'

But the myrmidons of Dr. Lundin showed in this case no alacrity to do his bidding. Hob Anster even ventured to remonstrate in the name of himself and his brethren. 'To be sure he was to do his honour's bidding; and for a' that folks said about the skill and witcheries of Mother Nicneven, he would put his trust in God, and his hand on her collar, without dreadour. But she was no common spaewife, this Mother Nicneven, like Jean Jopp that lived in the Brierie-baulk. She had lords and lairds that would ruffle for her. There was Moncrieff of Tippermalloch, that was popish, and the Laird of Carslogie, a ken'd queensman, were in the fair, with wha ken'd how mony swords and bucklers at their back; and they would be sure to make a break-out if the officers meddled with the auld popish witch-wife, who was sae weel friended; mair especially as the laird's best men, such as were not in the castle, were in Edinburgh with him, and he doubted his honour the doctor would find ower few to make a good backing, if blades were bare.'

The doctor listened unwillingly to this prudential counsel, and was only comforted by the faithful promise of his satellite, that 'the old woman should,' as he expressed it, 'be ta'en canny the next time she trespassed on the bounds.'

'And in that event,' said the doctor to his companion, 'fire and faggot shall be the best of her welcome.'

This he spoke in hearing of the dame herself, who even then, and in passing the doctor, shot towards him from under her grey eyebrows a look of the most insulting and contemptuous superiority.

'This way,' continued the physician, 'this way,' marshalling his guest into his lodging,—'take care you stumble not over a retort, for it is hazardous for the ignorant to walk in the ways of art.'

The page found all reason for the caution; for besides stuffed birds, and lizards, and snakes bottled up, and bundles of simples made up, and other parcels spread out to dry, and all the confusion, not to mention the mingled and sickening smells, incidental to a druggist's stock-in-trade, he had also to avoid heaps of charcoal crucibles, bolt-heads, stoves, and the other furniture of a chemical laboratory.

Amongst his other philosophical qualities, Dr. Lundin failed not to be a confused sloven, and his old dame housekeeper, whose life, as she said, was spent in 'redding him up,' had trotted off to the mart of gaiety with other and younger folks. Much clattering and jangling therefore there was among jars, and bottles, and phials, ere the doctor produced the salutiferous potion which he recommended so strongly, and a search equally long and noisy followed, among broken cans and cracked pipkins, ere he could bring forth a cup out of which to drink it. Both matters being at length achieved, the doctor set the example to his guest, by quaffing off a cup of the cordial, and smacking his lips with approbation as it descended his gullet.—Roland, in turn, submitted to swallow the potion which his host so earnestly recommended, but which he found so insufferably bitter, that he became eager to escape from the laboratory in search of a draught of fair water to expel the taste. In spite of his efforts, he was nevertheless detained by the garrulity of his host, till he gave him some account of Mother Nicneven.

'I care not to speak of her,' said the doctor, 'in the open air, and among the throng of people; not for fright, like yon cowardly dog Anster, but because I would give no occasion for a fray, having no leisure to look to stabs, slashes, and broken bones. Men call the old hag a prophetess—I do scarce believe she could foretell when a brood of chickens will chip the shell—Men say she reads the heavens—my black bitch knows as much of them when she sits baying

the moon—Men pretend the ancient wretch is a sorceress, a witch, and what not—*Inter nos*, I will never contradict a rumour which may bring her to the stake which she so justly deserves; but neither will I believe that the tales of witches which they din into our ears are aught but knavery, cozenage, and old women's fables.'

'In the name of Heaven, what is she, then,' said the page, 'that you make such a stir about her?'

'She is one of those cursed old women,' replied the doctor, 'who take currently and impudently upon themselves to act as advisers and curers of the sick, on the strength of some trash of herbs, some rhyme of spells, some julep or diet, drink or cordial.'

'Nay, go no further,' said the page; 'if they brew cordials, evil be their lot and all their partakers!'

'You say well, young man,' said Dr. Lundin; 'for mine own part, I know no such pests to the commonwealth as these old incarnate devils, who haunt the chambers of the brain-sick patients, that are mad enough to suffer them to interfere with, disturb, and let the regular process of a learned and artificial cure, with their syrups, and their juleps, and diascordium, and mithridate, and my Lady What-shall-call'um's powder, and worthy Dame Trashem's pill; and thus make widows and orphans, and cheat the regular and well-studied physician, in order to get the name of wise women and skeely neighbours, and so forth. But no more on't—Mother Nicneven * and I will meet one day, and she shall know there is danger in dealing with the doctor.'

'It is a true word, and many have found it,' said the page; 'but, under your favour, I would fain walk abroad for a little, and see these sports.'

'It is well moved,' said the doctor, 'and I too should be showing myself abroad. Moreover, the play waits us, young man—to-day, *totus mundus agit histrionem*.'—And they sallied forth accordingly into the mirthful scene.

CHAPTER XXVII.

> See on yon verdant lawn, the gathering crowd
> Thickens amain; the buxom nymphs advance,
> Usher'd by jolly clowns; distinctions cease,
> Lost in the common joy, and the bold slave
> Leans on his wealthy master unreproved.
>
> RURAL GAMES—SOMERVILLE.

THE reappearance of the dignified chamberlain on the street of the village was eagerly hailed by the revellers, as a pledge that the play, or dramatic representation, which had been postponed owing to his absence, was now full surely to commence. Anything like an approach to this most interesting of all amusements, was of recent origin in Scotland, and engaged public attention in proportion. All other sports were discontinued. The dance around the Maypole was arrested—the ring broken up and dispersed, while the dancers, each leading his partner by the hand, tripped off to the sylvan theatre. A truce was in like manner achieved betwixt a huge brown bear and certain mastiffs, who were tugging and pulling at his shaggy coat, under the mediation of the bear-ward and half-a-dozen butchers and yeomen, who, by dint of *staving and tailing*, as it was technically termed, separated the unfortunate animals, whose fury had for an hour past been their chief amusement. The itinerant minstrel found himself deserted by the audience he had collected, even in the most interesting passage of the romance which he recited, and just as he was sending about his boy, with bonnet in hand, to collect their oblations. He indignantly stopped short in the midst of *Roswal and Lilian*, and, replacing his three-stringed fiddle, or rebeck, in its leathern case, followed the crowd, with no good-will, to the exhibition which had superseded his own. The juggler had ceased his exertions of emitting flame and smoke, and was content to respire in the manner of ordinary mortals, rather than to play gratuitously the part of a fiery dragon. In short, all other sports were suspended, so eagerly did the revellers throng towards the place of representation.

They would err greatly, who should regulate their ideas of this dramatic exhibition upon those derived from a modern theatre; for the rude shows of Thespis were far less different from those exhibited by Euripides on the stage of Athens, with all its magnificent decoration and pomp of dresses and of scenery. In the present case, there were no scenes, no stage, no machinery, no pit, box, and gallery, no box-lobby; and, what might in poor Scotland be some consolation for other negations, there was no taking of money at the door. As in the devices of the magnanimous Bottom, the actors had a greensward plot for a stage, and a hawthorn bush for a green-room and tiring-house; the spectators being accommodated with seats on the artificial bank which had been raised around three-fourths of the playground, the remainder being left open for the entrance and exit of the performers. Here sat the uncritical audience, the chamberlain in the centre, as the person highest in office, all alive to enjoyment and admiration, and all therefore dead to criticism.

The characters which appeared and disappeared before the amused and interested audience were those which fill the earlier stage in all nations—old men, cheated by their wives and daughters, pillaged by their sons, and imposed on by their domestics, a braggadocio captain, a knavish pardoner or quæstionary, a country bumpkin, and a wanton city dame. Amid all these, and more acceptable than almost the whole put together, was the all-licensed fool, the Gracioso of the Spanish drama, who, with his cap fashioned into the resemblance of a coxcomb, and his bauble, a truncheon terminated by a carved figure wearing a fool's cap, in his hand, went, came, and returned, mingling in every scene of the piece, and interrupting the business, without having any share himself in the action, and ever and anon transferring his gibes from the actors

* This was the name given to the grand Mother Witch, the very Hecate of Scottish popular superstition. Her name was bestowed, in one or two instances, upon sorceresses, who were held to resemble her by their superior skill in 'Hell's black grammar.'

on the stage to the audience who sat around, prompt to applaud the whole.

The wit of the piece, which was not of the most polished kind, was chiefly directed against the superstitious practices of the Catholic religion; and the stage artillery had on this occasion been levelled by no less a person than Dr. Lundin, who had not only commanded the manager of the entertainment to select one of the numerous satires which had been written against the Papists (several of which were cast in a dramatic form), but had even, like the Prince of Denmark, caused them to insert, or, according to his own phrase, to infuse here and there a few pleasantries of his own penning, on the same inexhaustible subject, hoping thereby to mollify the rigour of the Lady of Lochleven towards pastimes of this description. He failed not to jog Roland's elbow, who was sitting in state behind him, and recommend to his particular attention those favourite passages. As for the page, to whom the very idea of such an exhibition, simple as it was, was entirely new, he beheld it with the undiminished and ecstatic delight with which men of all ranks look for the first time on dramatic representation, and laughed, shouted, and clapped his hands as the performance proceeded. An incident at length took place which effectually broke off his interest in the business of the scene.

One of the principal personages in the comic part of the drama was, as we have already said, a quæstionary, or pardoner, one of those itinerants who hawked about from place to place relics, real or pretended, with which he excited the devotion at once and the charity of the populace, and generally deceived both the one and the other. The hypocrisy, impudence, and profligacy of these clerical wanderers had made them the subject of satire from the time of Chaucer down to that of Heywood. Their present representative failed not to follow the same line of humour, exhibiting pigs' bones for relics, and boasting the virtues of small tin crosses, which had been shaken in the holy porringer at Loretto, and of cockle-shells which had been brought from the shrine of Saint James of Compostella, all which he disposed of to the devout Catholics at nearly as high a price as antiquaries are now willing to pay for baubles of similar intrinsic value. At length the pardoner pulled from his scrip a small phial of clear water, of which he vaunted the quality in the following verses:—

Listneth, gode people, everiche one,
For in the londe of Babylone,
Far eastward I wot it lyeth,
And is the first londe the sonne espieth,
Ther, as he cometh fro out the sé;
In this ilk londe, as thinketh me,
Right as holie legendes tell,
Snottreth from a roke a well,
And falleth into ane bath of ston,
Where chaste Susanne, in times long gon,
Was wont to wash her bodie and lim—
Mickle vertue hath that streme,
As ye shall se er that ye pas,
Ersample by this little glas—
Through nightés cold and dayés hote,
Hiderward I have it brought;
Hath a wife made slip or slide,
Or a maiden stepp'd aside,
Putteth this water under her nese,
Wold she nold she, she shall snese.

The jest, as the reader skilful in the antique language of the drama must at once perceive, turned on the same pivot as in the old minstrel tales of the Drinking Horn of King Arthur, and the Mantle made Amiss. But the audience were neither learned nor critical enough to challenge its want of originality. The potent relic was, after such grimace and buffoonery as befitted the subject, presented successively to each of the female personages of the drama, not one of whom sustained the supposed test of discretion; but, to the infinite delight of the audience, sneezed much louder and longer than perhaps they themselves had counted on. The jest seemed at last worn threadbare, and the pardoner was passing on to some new pleasantry, when the jester or clown of the drama, possessing himself secretly of the phial which contained the wondrous liquor, applied it suddenly to the nose of a young woman, who, with her black silk muffler or screen drawn over her face, was sitting in the foremost rank of the spectators, intent apparently upon the business of the stage. The contents of the phial, well calculated to sustain the credit of the pardoner's legend, set the damsel a-sneezing violently, an admission of frailty which was received with shouts of rapture by the audience. These were soon, however, renewed at the expense of the jester himself, when the insulted maiden extricated, ere the paroxysm was well over, one hand from the folds of her mantle, and bestowed on the wag a buffet, which made him reel fully his own length from the pardoner, and then acknowledge the favour by instant prostration.

No one pities a jester overcome in his vocation, and the clown met with little sympathy, when, rising from the ground, and whimpering forth his complaints of harsh treatment, he invoked the assistance and sympathy of the audience. But the chamberlain, feeling his own dignity insulted, ordered two of his halberdiers to bring the culprit before him. When these official persons first approached the virago, she threw herself into an attitude of firm defiance, as if determined to resist their authority; and from the sample of strength and spirit which she had already displayed, they showed no alacrity at executing their commission. But, on half a minute's reflection, the damsel changed totally her attitude and manner, folded her cloak around her arms in modest and maiden-like fashion, and walked of her own accord to the presence of the great man, followed and guarded by the two manful satellites. As she moved across the vacant space, and more especially as she stood at the footstool of the doctor's judgment-seat, the maiden discovered that lightness and elasticity of step, and natural grace of manner, which connoisseurs in female beauty know to be seldom divided from it. Moreover, her neat russet-coloured jacket, and short petticoat of the same colour, displayed a handsome form and a pretty leg. Her features were concealed by the screen; but the doctor, whose gravity did not prevent his pretensions to be a connoisseur of the school we have hinted at, saw enough to judge favourably of the piece by the sample.

He began, however, with considerable austerity of manner,—'And how now, saucy quean!' said

the medical man of office; 'what have you to say why I should not order you to be ducked in the loch, for lifting your hand to the man in my presence?'

'Marry,' replied the culprit, 'because I judge that your honour will not think the cold bath necessary for my complaints.'

'A pestilent jade,' said the doctor, whispering to Roland Græme; 'and I'll warrant her a good one—her voice is as sweet as syrup.—But, my pretty maiden,' said he, 'you show us wonderful little of that countenance of yours--be pleased to throw aside your muffler.'

'I trust your honour will excuse me till we are more private,' answered the maiden; 'for I have acquaintance, and I should like ill to be known in the country as the poor girl whom that scurvy knave put his jest upon.'

'Fear nothing for thy good name, my sweet little modicum of candied manna,' replied the doctor, 'for I protest to you, as I am Chamberlain of Lochleven, Kinross, and so forth, that the chaste Susanna herself could not have snuffed that elixir without sternutation, being in truth a curious distillation of rectified *acetum*, or vinegar of the sun, prepared by mine own hands—Wherefore, as thou sayest thou wilt come to me in private, and express thy contrition for the offence whereof thou hast been guilty, I command that all for the present go forward as if no such interruption of the prescribed course had taken place.'

The damsel curtseyed and tripped back to her place. The play proceeded, but it no longer attracted the attention of Roland Græme.

The voice, the figure, and what the veil permitted to be seen of the neck and tresses of the village damsel, bore so strong a resemblance to those of Catherine Seyton, that he felt like one bewildered in the mazes of a changeful and stupefying dream. The memorable scene of the hostelry rushed on his recollection, with all its doubtful and marvellous circumstances. Were the tales of enchantment which he had read in romances realized in this extraordinary girl? Could she transport herself from the walled and guarded Castle of Lochleven, moated with its broad lake (towards which he cast back a look as if to ascertain it was still in existence), and watched with such scrupulous care as the safety of a nation demanded—Could she surmount all these obstacles, and make such careless and dangerous use of her liberty as to engage herself publicly in a quarrel in a village fair? Roland was unable to determine whether the exertions which it must have cost her to gain her freedom, or the use to which she had put it, rendered her the most unaccountable creature.

Lost in these meditations, he kept his gaze fixed on the subject of them; and in every casual motion, discovered, or thought he discovered, something which reminded him still more strongly of Catherine Seyton. It occurred to him more than once, indeed, that he might be deceiving himself by exaggerating some casual likeness into absolute identity. But then the meeting at the hostelry of Saint Michael's returned to his mind, and it seemed in the highest degree improbable that, under such various circumstances, mere imagination should twice have found opportunity to play him the selfsame trick. This time, however, he determined to have his doubts resolved, and for this purpose he sat during the rest of the play like a greyhound in the slip, ready to spring upon the hare the instant that she was started. The damsel, whom he watched attentively lest she should escape in the crowd when the spectacle was closed, sat as if perfectly unconscious that she was observed. But the worthy doctor marked the direction of his eyes, and magnanimously suppressed his own inclination to become the Theseus to this Hippolyta, in deference to the rights of hospitality, which enjoined him to forbear interference with the pleasurable pursuits of his young friend. He passed one or two formal gibes upon the fixed attention which the page paid to the unknown, and upon his own jealousy; adding, however, that if both were to be presented to the patient at once, he had little doubt she would think the younger man the sounder prescription. 'I fear me,' he added, 'we shall have no news of the knave Auchtermuchty for some time, since the vermin whom I sent after him seem to have proved corbie-messengers. So you have an hour or two on your hands, Master Page; and as the minstrels are beginning to strike up, now that the play is ended, why, an you incline for a dance, yonder is the green, and there sits your partner —I trust you will hold me perfect in my diagnostics, since I see with half an eye what disease you are sick of, and have administered a pleasing remedy.

Discernit sapiens res (as Chambers hath it) *quas confundit asellus*.'

The page hardly heard the end of the learned adage, or the charge which the chamberlain gave him to be within reach, in case of the wains arriving suddenly, and sooner than expected—so eager he was at once to shake himself free of his learned associate, and to satisfy his curiosity regarding the unknown damsel. Yet in the haste with which he made towards her, he found time to reflect that, in order to secure an opportunity of conversing with her in private, he must not alarm her at first accosting her. He therefore composed his manner and gait, and, advancing with becoming self-confidence before three or four country fellows who were intent on the same design, but knew not so well how to put their request into shape, he acquainted her that he, as the deputy of the venerable chamberlain, requested the honour of her hand as a partner.

'The venerable chamberlain,' said the damsel frankly, reaching the page her hand, 'does very well to exercise this part of his privilege by deputy; and I suppose the laws of the revels leave me no choice but to accept of his faithful delegate.'

'Provided, fair damsel,' said the page, 'his choice of a delegate is not altogether distasteful to you.'

'Of that, fair sir,' replied the maiden, 'I will tell you more when we have danced the first measure.'

Catherine Seyton had admirable skill in gestic lore, and was sometimes called on to dance for

the amusement of her royal mistress. Roland Græme had often been a spectator of her skill, and sometimes, at the queen's command, Catherine's partner on such occasions. He was, therefore, perfectly acquainted with Catherine's mode of dancing; and observed that his present partner, in grace, in agility, in quickness of ear, and precision of execution, exactly resembled her, save that the Scottish jig, which he now danced with her, required a more violent and rapid motion, and more rustic agility, than the stately pavens, lavoltas, and courantoes, which he had seen her execute in the chamber of Queen Mary. The active duties of the dance left him little time for reflection, and none for conversation; but when their *pas de deux* was finished, amidst the acclamations of the villagers, who had seldom witnessed such an exhibition, he took an opportunity, when they yielded up the green to another couple, to use the privilege of a partner, and enter into conversation with the mysterious maiden, whom he still held by the hand.

'Fair partner, may I not crave the name of her who has graced me thus far?'

'You may,' said the maiden; 'but it is a question whether I shall answer you.'

'And why?' asked Roland.

'Because nobody gives anything for nothing—and you can tell me nothing in return which I care to hear.'

'Could I not tell you my name and lineage, in exchange for yours?' returned Roland.

'No!' answered the maiden, 'for you know little of either.'

'How?' said the page, somewhat angrily.

'Wrath you not for the matter,' said the damsel; 'I will show you in an instant that I know more of you than you do of yourself.'

'Indeed,' answered Græme; 'for whom then do you take me?'

'For the wild falcon,' answered she, 'whom a dog brought in his mouth to a certain castle, when he was but an unfledged eyas—for the hawk whom men dare not let fly, lest he should check at game, and pounce on carrion—whom folk must keep hooded till he has the proper light of his eyes, and can discover good from evil.'

'Well—be it so,' replied Roland Græme; 'I guess at a part of your parable, fair mistress mine—and perhaps I know as much of you as you do of me, and can well dispense with the information which you are so niggard in giving.'

'Prove that,' said the maiden, 'and I will give you credit for more penetration than I judged you to be gifted withal.'

'It shall be proved instantly,' said Roland Græme. 'The first letter of your name is S, and the last N.'

'Admirable,' said his partner; 'guess on.'

'It pleases you to-day,' continued Roland, 'to wear the snood and kirtle, and perhaps you may be seen to-morrow in hat and feather, hose and doublet.'

'In the clout! in the clout! you have hit the very white,' said the damsel, suppressing a great inclination to laugh.

'You can switch men's eyes out of their heads, as well as the heart out of their bosoms.'

These last words were uttered in a low and tender tone, which, to Roland's great mortification, and somewhat to his displeasure, was so far from allaying, that it greatly increased his partner's disposition to laughter. She could scarce compose herself while she replied, 'If you had thought my hand so formidable,' extricating it from his hold, 'you would not have grasped it so hard; but I perceive you know me so fully, that there is no occasion to show you my face.'

'Fair Catherine,' said the page, 'he were unworthy ever to have seen you, far less to have dwelt so long in the same service, and under the same roof with you, who could mistake your air, your gesture, your step in walking or in dancing, the turn of your neck, the symmetry of your form—none could be so dull as not to recognise you by so many proofs; but for me, I could swear even to that tress of hair that escapes from under your muffler.'

'And to the face, of course, which that muffler covers,' said the maiden, removing her veil, and in an instant endeavouring to replace it. She showed the features of Catherine; but an unusual degree of petulant impatience inflamed them, when, from some awkwardness in her management of the muffler, she was unable again to adjust it with that dexterity which was a principal accomplishment of the coquettes of the time.

'The fiend rive the rag to tatters!' said the damsel, as the veil fluttered about her shoulders, with an accent so earnest and decided, that it made the page start. He looked again at the damsel's face, but the information which his eyes received was to the same purport as before. He assisted her to adjust her muffler, and both were for an instant silent. The damsel spoke first, for Roland Græme was overwhelmed with surprise at the contrarieties which Catherine Seyton seemed to include in her person and character.

'You are surprised,' said the damsel to him, 'at what you see and hear—But the times which make females men, are least of all fitted for men to become women; yet you yourself are in danger of such a change.'

'I in danger of becoming effeminate!' said the page.

'Yes, you, for all the boldness of your reply,' said the damsel. 'When you should hold fast your religion, because it is assailed on all sides by rebels, traitors, and heretics, you let it glide out of your breast like water grasped in the hand. If you are driven from the faith of your fathers from fear of a traitor, is not that womanish?—If you are cajoled by the cunning arguments of a trumpeter of heresy, or the praises of a puritanic old woman, is not that womanish?—If you are bribed by the hope of spoil and preferment, is not that womanish?—And when you wonder at my venting a threat or an execration, should you not wonder at yourself, who, pretending to a gentle name, and aspiring to knighthood, can be at the same time cowardly, silly, and self-interested!'

'I would that a man would bring such a charge,' said the page; 'he should see, ere his life was a minute older, whether he had cause to term me coward or no.'

'Beware of such big words,' answered the

maiden; 'you said but anon that I sometimes wear hose and doublet.'

'But remain still Catherine Seyton, wear what you list,' said the page, endeavouring again to possess himself of her hand.

'You indeed are pleased to call me so,' replied the maiden, evading his intention, 'but I have many other names besides.'

'And will you not reply to that,' said the page, 'by which you are distinguished beyond every other maiden in Scotland?'

The damsel, unallured by his praises, still kept aloof, and sung with gaiety a verse from an old ballad:

> 'Oh, some do call me Jack, sweet love,
> And some do call me Gill;
> But when I ride to Holyrood,
> My name is Wilful Will.'

'Wilful Will!' exclaimed the page impatiently; 'say rather Will o' the Wisp—Jack with the Lantern—for never was such a deceitful or wandering meteor!'

'If I be such,' replied the maiden, 'I ask no fools to follow me—If they do so, it is at their own pleasure, and must be on their own proper peril.'

'Nay, but, dearest Catherine,' said Roland Græme, 'be for one instant serious.'

'If you will call me your dearest Catherine, when I have given you so many names to choose upon,' replied the damsel, 'I would ask you how, supposing me for two or three hours of my life escaped from yonder tower, you have the cruelty to ask me to be serious during the only merry moments I have seen perhaps for months?'

'Ay, but, fair Catherine, there are moments of deep and true feeling, which are worth ten thousand years of the liveliest mirth; and such was that of yesterday, when you so nearly'——

'So nearly what?' demanded the damsel hastily.

'When you approached your lips so near to the sign you had traced on my forehead.'

'Mother of Heaven!' exclaimed she, in a yet fiercer tone, and with a more masculine manner than she had yet exhibited,—'Catherine Seyton approach her lips to a man's brow, and thou that man?—vassal, thou liest!'

The page stood astonished; but, conceiving he had alarmed the damsel's delicacy by alluding to the enthusiasm of a moment, and the manner in which she had expressed it, he endeavoured to falter forth an apology. His excuses, though he was unable to give them any regular shape, were accepted by his companion, who had indeed suppressed her indignation after its first explosion—'Speak no more on't,' she said. 'And now let us part; our conversation may attract more notice than is convenient for either of us.'

'Nay, but allow me at least to follow you to some sequestered place.'

'You dare not,' replied the maiden.

'How,' said the youth, 'dare not? where is it you dare go, where I dare not follow?'

'You fear a Will o' the Wisp,' said the damsel; 'how would you face a fiery dragon, with an enchantress mounted on its back?'

'Like Sir Eger, Sir Grime, or Sir Greysteil,' said the page; 'but be there such toys to be seen here?'

'I go to Mother Nicneven's,' answered the maid; 'and she is witch enough to rein the horned devil, with a red silk thread for a bridle, and a rowan-tree switch for a whip.'

'I will follow you,' said the page.

'Let it be at some distance,' said the maiden.

And, wrapping her mantle round her with more success than on her former attempt, she mingled with the throng, and walked towards the village, heedfully followed by Roland Græme at some distance, and under every precaution which he could use to prevent his purpose from being observed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

> Yes, it is she whose eyes look'd on thy childhood,
> And watch'd with trembling hope thy dawn of youth,
> That now, with these same eyeballs dimm'd with age,
> And dimmer yet with tears, sees thy dishonour.
>
> OLD PLAY.

At the entrance of the principal, or, indeed, so to speak, the only street in Kinross, the damsel, whose steps were pursued by Roland Græme, cast a glance behind her, as if to be certain he had not lost trace of her, and then plunged down a very narrow lane which ran betwixt two rows of poor and ruinous cottages. She paused for a second at the door of one of those miserable tenements, again cast her eye up the lane towards Roland, then lifted the latch, opened the door, and disappeared from his view.

With whatever haste the page followed her example, the difficulty which he found in discovering the trick of the latch, which did not work quite in the usual manner, and in pushing open the door, which did not yield to his first effort, delayed for a minute or two his entrance into the cottage. A dark and smoky passage led, as usual, betwixt the exterior wall of the house and the *hallan*, or clay wall, which served as a partition betwixt it and the interior. At the end of this passage, and through the partition, was a door leading into the *ben*, or inner chamber of the cottage, and when Roland Græme's hand was upon the latch of this door, a female voice pronounced, '*Benedictus qui veniat in nomine Domini, damnandus qui in nomine inimici.*' On entering the apartment, he perceived the figure which the chamberlain had pointed out to him as Mother Nicneven, seated beside the lowly hearth. But there was no other person in the room. Roland Græme gazed around in surprise at the disappearance of Catherine Seyton, without paying much regard to the supposed sorceress, until she attracted and riveted his regard by the tone in which she asked him,—'What seekest thou here?'

'I seek,' said the page, with much embarrassment; 'I seek'——

But his answer was cut short, when the old woman, drawing her huge grey eyebrows sternly together, with a frown which knitted her brow into a thousand wrinkles, arose, and, erecting herself up to her full natural size, tore the kerchief from her head, and, seizing Roland by the arm, made two strides across the floor of the apartment to a small window through which the light

fell full on her face, and showed the astonished youth the countenance of Magdalen Græme.—'Yes, Roland,' she said, 'thine eyes deceive thee not; they show thee truly the features of her whom thou hast thyself deceived, whose wine thou hast turned into gall, her bread of joyfulness into bitter poison, her hope into the blackest despair—it is she who now demands of thee, what seekest thou here?—She whose heaviest sin towards Heaven hath been, that she loved thee even better than the weal of the whole Church, and could not without reluctance surrender thee even in the cause of God—she now asks you, what seekest thou here?'

While she spoke, she kept her broad black eye riveted on the youth's face, with the expression with which the eagle regards his prey ere he tears it to pieces. Roland felt himself at the moment incapable either of reply or evasion. This extraordinary enthusiast had preserved over him in some measure the ascendency which she had acquired during his childhood; and, besides, he knew the violence of her passions and her impatience of contradiction, and was sensible that almost any reply which he could make was likely to throw her into an ecstasy of rage. He was therefore silent; and Magdalen Græme proceeded with increasing enthusiasm in her apostrophe—'Once more, what seekest thou, false boy?—seekest thou the honour thou hast renounced, the faith thou hast abandoned, the hopes thou hast destroyed?—Or didst thou seek me, the sole protectress of thy youth, the only parent whom thou hast known, that thou mayest trample on my grey hairs, even as thou hast already trampled on the best wishes of my heart?'

'Pardon me, mother,' said Roland Græme; 'but, in truth and reason, I deserve not your blame. I have been treated amongst you—even by yourself, my reverend parent, as well as by others—as one who lacked the common attributes of free-will and human reason, or was at least deemed unfit to exercise them. A land of enchantment have I been led into, and spells have been cast around me—every one has met me in disguise—every one has spoken to me in parables—I have been like one who walks in a weary and bewildering dream; and now you blame me that I have not the sense, and judgment, and steadiness of a waking, and a disenchanted, and a reasonable man, who knows what he is doing, and wherefore he does it. If one must walk with masks and spectres, who waft themselves from place to place as it were in vision rather than reality, it might shake the soundest faith and turn the wisest head. I sought, since I must needs avow my folly, the same Catherine Seyton with whom you made me first acquainted, and whom I most strangely find in this village of Kinross, gayest among the revellers, when I had but just left her in the well-guarded Castle of Lochleven, the sad attendant of the imprisoned Queen—I sought her, and in her place I find you, my mother, more strangely disguised than even she is.'

'And what hadst thou to do with Catherine Seyton?' said the matron sternly; 'is this a time or a world to follow maidens, or to dance around a Maypole? When the trumpet summons every true-hearted Scotsman around the standard of the true sovereign, shalt thou be found loitering in a lady's bower?'

'No, by Heaven, nor imprisoned in the rugged walls of an island castle!' answered Roland Græme: 'I would the blast were to sound even now, for I fear that nothing less loud will dispel the chimerical visions by which I am surrounded.'

'Doubt not that it will be winded,' said the matron, 'and that so fearfully loud, that Scotland will never hear the like until the last and loudest blast of all shall announce to mountain and to valley that time is no more. Meanwhile, be thou but brave and constant—Serve God and honour thy sovereign—Abide by thy religion—I cannot—I will not—I dare not ask thee the truth of the terrible surmises I have heard touching thy falling away—perfect not that accursed sacrifice—and yet, even at this late hour, thou mayest be what I have hoped for, the son of my dearest hope—what say I? the son of *my* hope! —thou shalt be the hope of Scotland, her boast and her honour!—Even thy wildest and most foolish wishes may perchance be fulfilled—I might blush to mingle meaner motives with the noble guerdon I hold out to thee—It shames me, being such as I am, to mention the idle passions of youth, save with contempt and the purpose of censure. But we must bribe children to wholesome medicine by the offer of cates, and youth to honourable achievement with the promise of pleasure. Mark me, therefore, Roland. The love of Catherine Seyton will follow him only who shall achieve the freedom of her mistress; and believe, it may be one day in thine own power to be that happy lover. Cast, therefore, away doubt and fear, and prepare to do what religion calls for, what thy country demands of thee, what thy duty as a subject and as a servant alike require at your hand; and be assured, even the idlest or wildest wishes of thy heart will be most readily attained by following the call of thy duty.'

As she ceased speaking, a double knock was heard against the inner door. The matron, hastily adjusting her muffler, and resuming her chair by the hearth, demanded who was there.

'*Salve in nomine sancto*,' was answered from without.

'*Salvete et vos*,' answered Magdalen Græme.

And a man entered, in the ordinary dress of a nobleman's retainer, wearing at his girdle a sword and buckler.—'I sought you,' said he, 'my mother, and him whom I see with you.' Then addressing himself to Roland Græme, he said to him, 'Hast thou not a packet from George Douglas?'

'I have,' said the page, suddenly recollecting that which had been committed to his charge in the morning, 'but I may not deliver it to any one without some token that they have a right to ask it.'

'You say well,' replied the serving-man, and whispered into his ear, 'The packet which I ask is the report to his father—will this token suffice?'

'It will,' replied the page, and, taking the packet from his bosom, gave it to the man.

'I will return presently,' said the serving-man, and left the cottage.

Roland had now sufficiently recovered his

surprise to accost his relative in turn, and request to know the reason why he found her in so precarious a disguise, and a place so dangerous.—'You cannot be ignorant,' he said, 'of the hatred that the Lady of Lochleven bears to those of your—that is of our religion—your present disguise lays you open to suspicions of a different kind, but inferring no less hazard; and whether as a Catholic, or as a sorceress, or as a friend to the unfortunate Queen, you are in equal danger, if apprehended within the bounds of the Douglas; and in the chamberlain who administers their authority, you have, for his own reasons, an enemy, and a bitter one.'

'I know it,' said the matron, her eyes kindling with triumph; 'I know that, vain of his schoolcraft and carnal wisdom, Luke Lundin views with jealousy and hatred the blessings which the saints have conferred on my prayers, and on the holy relics, before the touch, nay, before the bare presence of which, disease and death have so often been known to retreat—I know he would rend and tear me; but there is a chain and a muzzle on the ban-dog that shall restrain his fury, and the Master's servant shall not be offended by him until the Master's work is wrought. When that hour comes, let the shadows of the evening descend on me in thunder and in tempest; the time shall be welcome that relieves my eyes from seeing guilt, and my ears from listening to blasphemy. Do thou but be constant—play thy part as I have played and will play mine—and my release shall be like that of a blessed martyr whose ascent to heaven angels hail with psalm and song, while earth pursues him with hiss and with execration.'

As she concluded, the serving-man again entered the cottage, and said, 'All is well! the time holds for to-morrow night.'

'What time? what holds?' exclaimed Roland Græme; 'I trust I have given the Douglas's packet to no wrong'——

'Content yourself, young man,' answered the serving-man; 'thou hast my word and token.'

'I know not if the token be right,' said the page; 'and I care not much for the word of a stranger.'

'What,' said the matron, 'although thou mayest have given a packet delivered to thy charge by one of the Queen's rebels into the hand of a loyal subject—there were no great mistake in that, thou hot-brained boy!'

'By Saint Andrew, there were foul mistake, though,' answered the page: 'it is the very spirit of my duty, in this first stage of chivalry, to be faithful to my trust; and had the devil given me a message to discharge, I would not (so I had plighted my faith to the contrary) betray his counsel to an angel of light.'

'Now, by the love I once bore thee,' said the matron, 'I could slay thee with mine own hand, when I hear thee talk of a dearer faith being due to rebels and heretics, than thou owest to thy Church and thy prince!'

'Be patient, my good sister,' said the serving-man; 'I will give him such reasons as shall counterbalance the scruples which beset him—the spirit is honourable, though now it may be mistimed and misplaced.—Follow me, young man.'

'Ere I go to call this stranger to a reckoning,' said the page to the matron, 'is there nothing I can do for your comfort and safety?'

'Nothing,' she replied, 'nothing, save what will lead more to thine own honour;—the saints who have protected me thus far, will lend me succour as I need it. Tread the path of glory that is before thee, and only think of me as the creature on earth who will be most delighted to hear of thy fame.—Follow the stranger—he hath tidings for you that you little expect.'

The stranger remained on the threshold as if waiting for Roland, and as soon as he saw him put himself in motion, he moved on before at a quick pace. Diving still deeper down the lane, Roland perceived that it was now bordered by buildings upon the one side only, and that the other was fenced by a high old wall, over which some trees extended their branches. Descending a good way farther, they came to a small door in the wall. Roland's guide paused, looked around for an instant to see if any one were within sight, then, taking a key from his pocket, opened the door and entered, making a sign to Roland Græme to follow him. He did so, and the stranger locked the door carefully on the inside. During this operation, the page had a moment to look around, and perceived that he was in a small orchard very trimly kept.

The stranger led him through an alley or two, shaded by trees loaded with summer fruit, into a pleached arbour, where, taking the turf-seat which was on the one side, he motioned to Roland to occupy that which was opposite to him, and, after a momentary silence, opened the conversation as follows: 'You have asked a better warrant than the word of a mere stranger, to satisfy you that I have the authority of George of Douglas for possessing myself of the packet entrusted to your charge?'

'It is precisely the point on which I demand reckoning of you,' said Roland. 'I fear I have acted hastily; if so, I must redeem my error as I best may.'

'You hold me then as a perfect stranger?' said the man. 'Look at my face more attentively, and see if the features do not resemble those of a man much known to you formerly.'

Roland gazed attentively; but the ideas recalled to his mind were so inconsistent with the mean and servile dress of the person before him, that he did not venture to express the opinion which he was irresistibly induced to form.

'Yes, my son,' said the stranger, observing his embarrassment, 'you do indeed see before you the unfortunate Father Ambrosius, who once accounted his ministry crowned in your preservation from the snares of heresy, but who is now condemned to lament thee as a castaway!'

Roland Græme's kindness of heart was at least equal to his vivacity of temper—he could not bear to see his ancient and honoured master and spiritual guide in a situation which inferred a change of fortune so melancholy, but, throwing himself at his feet, grasped his knees and wept aloud.

'What mean these tears, my son?' said the Abbot; 'if they are shed for your own sins and follies, surely they are gracious showers, and may avail thee much—but weep not, if they

fall on my account. You indeed see the Superior of the community of Saint Mary's in the dress of a poor sworder, who gives his master the use of his blade and buckler, and, if needful, of his life, for a coarse livery coat, and four marks by the year. But such a garb suits the time, and, in the period of the Church militant, as well becomes her prelates, as staff, mitre, and crosier, in the days of the Church's triumph.'

'By what fate,' said the page—'and yet why,' added he, checking himself, 'need I ask? Catherine Seyton in some sort prepared me for this. But that the change should be so absolute—the destruction so complete!'——

'Yes, my son,' said the Abbot Ambrosius, 'thine own eyes beheld, in my unworthy elevation to the Abbot's stall, the last especial act of holy solemnity which shall be seen in the Church of Saint Mary's until it shall please Heaven to turn back the captivity of the Church. For the present, the shepherd is smitten—ay, well-nigh to the earth—the flock are scattered, and the shrines of saints and martyrs, and pious benefactors to the Church, are given to the owls of night, and the satyrs of the desert.'

'And your brother, the Knight of Avenel—could he do nothing for your protection?'

'He himself hath fallen under the suspicion of the ruling powers,' said the Abbot, 'who are as unjust to their friends as they are cruel to their enemies. I could not grieve at it, did I hope it might estrange him from his cause; but I know the soul of Halbert, and I rather fear it will drive him to prove his fidelity to their unhappy cause, by some deed which may be yet more destructive to the Church, and more offensive to Heaven. Enough of this; and now to the business of our meeting—I trust you will hold it sufficient if I pass my word to you that the packet of which you were lately the bearer, was designed for my hands by George of Douglas?'

'Then,' said the page, 'is George of Douglas'——

'A true friend to his Queen, Roland; and will soon, I trust, have his eyes opened to the errors of his (miscalled) Church.'

'But what is he to his father, and what to the Lady of Lochleven, who has been as a mother to him?' said the page impatiently.

'The best friend to both, in time and through eternity,' said the Abbot, 'if he shall prove the happy instrument for redeeming the evil they have wrought, and are still working.'

'Still,' said the page, 'I like not that good service which begins in breach of trust.'

'I blame not thy scruples, my son,' said the Abbot; 'but the time which has wrenched asunder the allegiance of Christians to the Church, and of subjects to their king, has dissolved all the lesser bonds of society; and in such days, mere human ties must no more restrain our progress, than the brambles and briars which catch hold of his garments should delay the path of a pilgrim who travels to pay his vows.'

'But, my father'—said the youth, and then stopped short in a hesitating manner.

'Speak on, my son,' said the Abbot; 'speak without fear.'

'Let me not offend you, then,' said Roland, 'when I say, that it is even this which our adversaries charge against us; when they say that, shaping the means according to the end, we are willing to commit great moral evil in order that we may work out eventual good.'

'The heretics have played their usual arts on you, my son,' said the Abbot; 'they would willingly deprive us of the power of acting wisely and secretly, though their possession of superior force forbids our contending with them on the terms of equality. They have reduced us to a state of exhausted weakness, and now would fain proscribe the means by which weakness, through all the range of nature, supplies the lack of strength, and defends itself against its potent enemies. As well might the hound say to the hare, use not these wily turns to escape me, but contend with me in pitched battle, as the armed and powerful heretic demand of the down-trodden and oppressed Catholic to lay aside the wisdom of the serpent, by which alone they may again hope to raise up the Jerusalem over which they weep, and which it is their duty to rebuild—But more of this hereafter. And now, my son, I command thee on thy faith to tell me truly and particularly what has chanced to thee since we parted, and what is the present state of thy conscience. Thy relation, our sister Magdalen, is a woman of excellent gifts, blessed with a zeal which neither doubt nor danger can quench; but yet it is not a zeal altogether according to knowledge; wherefore, my son, I would willingly be myself thy interrogator and thy counsellor, in these days of darkness and stratagem.'

With the respect which he owed to his first instructor, Roland Græme went rapidly through the events which the reader is acquainted with; and while he disguised not from the prelate the impression which had been made on his mind by the arguments of the preacher Henderson, he accidentally and almost involuntarily gave his father confessor to understand the influence which Catherine Seyton had acquired over his mind.

'It is with joy I discover, my dearest son,' replied the Abbot, 'that I have arrived in time to arrest thee on the verge of the precipice to which thou wert approaching. These doubts of which you complain are the weeds which naturally grow up in a strong soil, and require the careful hand of the husbandman to eradicate them. Thou must study a little volume which I will impart to thee in fitting time, in which, by Our Lady's grace, I have placed in somewhat a clearer light than heretofore, the points debated betwixt us and these heretics, who sow among the wheat the same tares which were formerly privily mingled with the good seed by the Albigenses and the Lollards. But it is not by reason alone that you must hope to conquer these insinuations of the enemy: it is sometimes by timely resistance, but oftener by timely flight. You must shut your ears against the arguments of the heresiarch, when circumstances permit you not to withdraw the foot from his company. Anchor your thoughts upon the service of Our Lady, while he is expending in vain his heretical sophistry. Are you unable to maintain your attention on heavenly objects—think rather on thine own earthly pleasures, than tempt Providence and

the saints by giving an attentive ear to the erring doctrine—think of thy hawk, thy hound, thine angling-rod, thy sword and buckler—think even of Catherine Seyton, rather than give thy soul to the lessons of the tempter. Alas! my son, believe not that, worn out with woes, and bent more by affliction than by years, I have forgotten the effect of beauty over the heart of youth. Even in the watches of the night, broken by thoughts of an imprisoned Queen, a distracted kingdom, a Church laid waste and ruinous, come other thoughts than these suggest, and feelings which belonged to an earlier and happier course of life. Be it so—we must bear our load as we may; and not in vain are these passions implanted in our breast, since, as now in thy case, they may come in aid of resolutions founded upon higher grounds. Yet beware, my son—this Catherine Seyton is the daughter of one of Scotland's proudest as well as most worthy barons; and thy state may not suffer thee, as yet, to aspire so high. But thus it is—Heaven works its purposes through human folly; and Douglas's ambitious affection, as well as thine, shall contribute alike to the desired end.'

'How, my father,' said the page, 'my suspicions are then true!—Douglas loves'——

'He does, and with a love as much misplaced as thine own; but beware of him—cross him not—thwart him not.'

'Let him not cross or thwart me,' said the page; 'for I will not yield him an inch of way, had he in his body the soul of every Douglas that has lived since the time of the Dark Grey Man.'*

'Nay, have patience, idle boy, and reflect that your suit can never interfere with his.—But a truce with these vanities, and let us better employ the little space which still remains to us to spend together. To thy knees, my son, and resume the long-interrupted duty of confession, that, happen what may, the hour may find in thee a faithful Catholic, relieved from the guilt of his sins by authority of the Holy Church. Could I but tell thee, Roland, the joy with which I see thee once more put thy knee to its best and fittest use! *Quid dicis, mi fili?*'

'*Culpas meas*,' answered the youth; and, according to the ritual of the Catholic Church, he confessed and received absolution, to which was annexed the condition of performing certain enjoined penances.

When this religious ceremony was ended, an old man, in the dress of a peasant of the better order, approached the arbour, and greeted the Abbot.—'I have waited the conclusion of your devotions, he said, 'to tell you the youth is sought after by the chamberlain, and it were well he should appear without delay. Holy Saint Francis, if the halberdiers were to seek him here, they might sorely wrong my garden-plot—they are in office, and reck not where they tread, were each step on jessamine and clove-gillyflowers.'

'We will speed him forth, my brother,' said the Abbot; 'but, alas! is it possible that such trifles should live in your mind at a crisis so awful as that which is now impending?'

'Reverend father,' answered the proprietor of the garden, for such he was, 'how oft shall I pray you to keep your high counsel for high minds like your own? What have you required of me that I have not granted unresistingly, though with an aching heart?'

'I would require of you to be yourself, my brother,' said the Abbot Ambrosius; 'to remember what you were, and to what your early vows have bound you.'

'I tell thee, Father Ambrosius,' replied the gardener, 'the patience of the best saint that ever said paternoster would be exhausted by the trials to which you have put mine—What I have been, it skills not to speak at present—no one knows better than yourself, father, what I renounced, in hopes to find ease and quiet during the remainder of my days—and no one better knows how my retreat has been invaded, my fruit-trees broken, my flower-beds trodden down, my quiet frightened away, and my very sleep driven from my bed, since ever this poor Queen, God bless her, hath been sent to Lochleven.—I blame her not; being a prisoner, it is natural she should wish to get out from so vile a hold, where there is scarcely any place even for a tolerable garden, and where the water-mists, as I am told, blight all the early blossoms—I say, I cannot blame her for endeavouring for her freedom; but why I should be drawn into the scheme—why my harmless arbours, that I planted with my own hands, should become places of privy conspiracy—why my little quay, which I built for my own fishing-boat, should have become a haven for secret embarkations—in short, why I should be dragged into matters where both heading and hanging are like to be the issue, I profess to you, reverend father, I am totally ignorant.'

'My brother,' answered the Abbot, 'you are wise, and ought to know'——

'I am not—I am not—I am not wise,' replied the horticulturist pettishly, and stopping his ears with his fingers—'I was never called wise but when men wanted to engage me in some action of notorious folly.'

'But, my good brother,' said the Abbot——

'I am not good, neither,' said the peevish gardener; 'I am neither good nor wise—Had I been wise, you would not have been admitted here; and were I good, methinks I should send you elsewhere to hatch plots for destroying the quiet of the country. What signifies disputing about queen or king, when men may sit at peace—*sub umbra vitis sui?* and so would I do, after the precept of Holy Writ, were I, as you term me, wise or good. But such as I am, my neck is in the yoke, and you make me draw what weight you list.—Follow me, youngster. This reverend father, who makes in his jack-man's dress nearly as reverend a figure as I myself, will agree with me in one thing at least, and that is, that you have been long enough here.'

'Follow the good father, Roland,' said the Abbot, 'and remember my words—a day is approaching that will try the temper of all true Scotsmen—may thy heart prove faithful as the steel of thy blade!'

* By an ancient, though improbable tradition, the Douglases are said to have derived their name from a champion who had greatly distinguished himself in an action. When the king demanded by whom the battle had been won, the attendants are said to have answered, 'Sholto Douglas, sir;' which is said to mean, 'Yonder dark grey man.' But the name is undoubtedly territorial, and taken from Douglas river and vale.

The page bowed in silence, and they parted; the gardener, notwithstanding his advanced age, walking on before him very briskly, and muttering as he went, partly to himself, partly to his companion, after the manner of old men of weakened intellects—'When I was great,' thus ran his maundering, 'and had my mule and my ambling palfrey at command, I warrant you I could have as well flown through the air as have walked at this pace. I had my gout and my rheumatics, and an hundred things besides, that hung fetters on my heels; and now, thanks to Our Lady, and honest labour, I can walk with any good man of my age in the kingdom of Fife—Fie upon it, that experience should be so long in coming!'

As he was thus muttering, his eye fell upon the branch of a pear-tree which drooped down for want of support, and, at once forgetting his haste, the old man stopped and set seriously about binding it up. Roland Græme had both readiness, neatness of hand, and good-nature in abundance; he immediately lent his aid, and in a minute or two the bough was supported, and tied up in a way perfectly satisfactory to the old man, who looked at it with great complaisance. 'They are bergamots,' he said, 'and if you will come ashore in autumn, you shall taste of them—the like are not in Lochleven Castle—the garden there is a poor pin-fold, and the gardener, Hugh Houkham, hath little skill of his craft—so come ashore, Master Page, in autumn, when you would eat pears. But what am I thinking of?—ere that time come, they may have given thee sour pears for plums. Take an old man's advice, youth, one who hath seen many days, and sat in higher places than thou canst hope for—bend thy sword into a pruning-hook, and make a dibble of thy dagger—thy days shall be the longer, and thy health the better for it,—and come to aid me in my garden, and I will teach thee the real French fashion of *imping*, which the Southron call graffing. Do this, and do it without loss of time, for there is a whirlwind coming over the land, and only those shall escape who lie too much beneath the storm to have their boughs broken by it.'

So saying, he dismissed Roland Græme through a different door from that by which he had entered, signed a cross, and pronounced a benedicite as they parted, and then, still muttering to himself, retired into the garden, and locked the door on the inside.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Pray God she prove not masculine ere long!
KING HENRY VI.

DISMISSED from the old man's garden, Roland Græme, found that a grassy paddock, in which sauntered two cows, the property of the gardener, still separated him from the village. He paced through it, lost in meditation upon the words of the Abbot. Father Ambrosius had, with success enough, exerted over him that powerful influence which the guardians and instructors of our childhood possess over our more mature youth. And yet, when Roland looked back upon what the father had said, he could not but suspect that he had rather sought to evade entering into the controversy betwixt the Churches, than to repel the objections and satisfy the doubts which the lectures of Henderson had excited. 'For this he had no time,' said the page to himself, 'neither have I now calmness and learning sufficient to judge upon points of such magnitude. Besides, it were base to quit my faith while the wind of fortune sets against it, unless I were so placed that my conversion, should it take place, were free as light from the imputation of self-interest. I was bred a Catholic—bred in the faith of Bruce and Wallace—I will hold that faith till time and reason shall convince me that it errs. I will serve this poor Queen as a subject should serve an imprisoned and wronged sovereign—they who placed me in her service have to blame themselves—who sent me hither, a gentleman trained in the paths of loyalty and honour, when they should have sought out some truckling, cogging, double-dealing knave, who would have been at once the observant page of the Queen, and the obsequious spy of her enemies. Since I must choose betwixt aiding and betraying her, I will decide as becomes her servant and her subject; but Catherine Seyton—Catherine Seyton, beloved by Douglas, and holding me on or off as the intervals of her leisure or caprice will permit—how shall I deal with the coquette?—By Heaven, when I next have an opportunity, she shall render me some reason for her conduct, or I will break with her for ever!'

As he formed this doughty resolution, he crossed the stile which led out of the little enclosure, and was almost immediately greeted by Dr. Luke Lundin.

'Ha, my most excellent young friend!' said the doctor; 'from whence come you?—but I note the place.—Yes, neighbour Blinkhoolie's garden is a pleasant rendezvous, and you are of the age when lads look after a bonnie lass with one eye, and a dainty plum with another. But hey! you look subtriste and melancholic—I fear the maiden has proved cruel, or the plums unripe; and surely, I think neighbour Blinkhoolie's damsons can scarcely have been well preserved throughout the winter—he spares the saccharine juice on his confects. But courage, man, there are more Kates in Kinross; and for the immature fruit, a glass of my double-distilled *aqua mirabilis—probatum est.*'

The page darted an ireful glance at the facetious physician; but presently recollecting that the name Kate, which had provoked his displeasure, was probably but introduced for the sake of alliteration, he suppressed his wrath, and only asked if the wains had been heard of.

'Why, I have been seeking for you this hour, to tell you that the stuff is in your boat, and that the boat waits your pleasure. Auchtermuchty had only fallen into company with an idle knave like himself, and a stoup of aquavitæ between them. Your boatmen lie on their oars, and there have already been made two wefts from the warder's turret to intimate that those in the castle are impatient for your return. Yet there is time for you to take a slight repast; and, as your friend and physician, I hold it unfit you

should face the water-breeze with an empty stomach.'

Roland Græme had nothing for it but to return, with such cheer as he might, to the place where his boat was moored on the beach, and resisted all offer of refreshment, although the doctor promised that he should prelude the collation with a gentle appetizer—a decoction of herbs, gathered and distilled by himself. Indeed, as Roland had not forgotten the contents of his morning cup, it is possible that the recollection induced him to stand firm in his refusal of all food, to which such an unpalatable preface was the preliminary. As they passed towards the boat (for the ceremonious politeness of the worthy chamberlain would not permit the page to go thither without attendance), Roland Græme, amidst a group who seemed to be assembled around a party of wandering musicians, distinguished, as he thought, the dress of Catherine Seyton. He shook himself clear from his attendant, and at one spring was in the midst of the crowd, and at the side of the damsel. 'Catherine,' he whispered, 'is it well for you to be still here?—will you not return to the castle?'

'To the devil with your Catherines and your castles!' answered the maiden snappishly; 'have you not had time enough already to get rid o your follies? Begone! I desire not your further company, and there will be danger in thrusting it upon me.'

'Nay—but if there be danger, fairest Catherine,' replied Roland, 'why will you not allow me to stay and share it with you?'

'Intruding fool,' said the maiden, 'the danger is all on thine own side—the risk is, in plain terms, that I strike thee on the mouth with the hilt of my dagger.' So saying, she turned haughtily from him, and moved through the crowd, who gave way in some astonishment at the masculine activity with which she forced her way among them.

As Roland, though much irritated, prepared to follow, he was grappled on the other side by Dr. Luke Lundin, who reminded him of the loaded boat, of the two wefts, or signals with the flag, which had been made from the tower, of the danger of the cold breeze to an empty stomach, and of the vanity of spending more time upon coy wenches and sour plums. Roland was thus, in a manner, dragged back to his boat, and obliged to launch her forth upon his return to Lochleven Castle.

That little voyage was speedily accomplished, and the page was greeted at the landing-place by the severe and caustic welcome of old Dryfesdale. 'So, young gallant, you are come at last, after a delay of six hours, and after two signals from the castle? But, I warrant, some idle junketing had occupied you too deeply to think of your service, or your duty. Where is the note of the plate and household-stuff?—Pray Heaven it hath not been diminished under the sleeveless care of so young a gad-about!'

'Diminished under my care, Sir Steward!' retorted the page angrily; 'say so in earnest, and, by Heaven, your grey hair shall hardly protect your saucy tongue!'

'A truce with your swaggering, young esquire,' returned the steward; 'we have bolts and dungeons for brawlers. Go to my lady, and swagger before her, if thou darest—she will give thee proper cause of offence, for she has waited for thee long and impatiently.'

'And where then is the Lady of Lochleven?' said the page; 'for I conceive it is of her thou speakest.'

'Ay—of whom else?' replied Dryfesdale, 'or who besides the Lady of Lochleven hath a right to command in this castle?'

'The Lady of Lochleven is thy mistress,' said Roland Græme; 'but mine is the Queen of Scotland.'

The steward looked at him fixedly for a moment, with an air in which suspicion and dislike were ill concealed by an affectation of contempt. 'The bragging cock-chicken,' he said, 'will betray himself by his rash crowing. I have marked thy altered manner in the chapel of late—ay, and your changing of glances at meal-time with a certain idle damsel, who, like thyself, laughs at all gravity and goodness. There is something about you, my master, which should be looked to. But if you would know whether the Lady of Lochleven, or that other lady, hath a right to command thy service, thou wilt find them together in the Lady Mary's anteroom.'

Roland hastened thither, not unwilling to escape from the ill-natured penetration of the old man, and marvelling at the same time what peculiarity could have occasioned the Lady of Lochleven's being in the queen's apartment at this time of the afternoon, so much contrary to her usual wont. His acuteness instantly penetrated the meaning. 'She wishes,' he concluded, 'to see the meeting betwixt the Queen and me on my return, that she may form a guess whether there is any private intelligence or understanding betwixt us—I must be guarded.'

With this resolution he entered the parlour, where the queen, seated in her chair, with the Lady Fleming leaning upon the back of it, had already kept the Lady of Lochleven standing in her presence for the space of nearly an hour, to the manifest increase of her very visible bad humour. Roland Græme, on entering the apartment, made a deep obeisance to the queen, and another to the lady, and then stood still as if to await their further question. Speaking almost together, the Lady Lochleven said, 'So, young man, you are returned at length?'

And then stopped indignantly short, while the queen went on without regarding her—'Roland, you are welcome home to us—you have proved the true dove and not the raven—Yet I am sure I could have forgiven you, if, once dismissed from this water-circled ark of ours, you had never again returned to us. I trust you have brought back an olive-branch, for our kind and worthy hostess has chafed herself much on account of your long absence, and we never needed more some symbol of peace and reconciliation.'

'I grieve I should have been detained, madam,' answered the page; 'but from the delay of the person entrusted with the matters for which I was sent, I did not receive them till late in the day.'

'See you there, now,' said the queen to the Lady Lochleven; 'we could not persuade you, our dearest hostess, that your household goods

were in all safe keeping and surety. True it is, that we can excuse your anxiety, considering that these august apartments are so scantily furnished, that we have not been able to offer you even the relief of a stool during the long time you have afforded us the pleasure of your society.'

'The will, madam,' said the lady, 'the will to offer such accommodation was more wanting than the means.'

'What!' said the queen, looking round, and affecting surprise, 'there are then stools in this apartment—one, two—no less than four, including the broken one—a royal garniture!—We observed them not—will it please your ladyship to sit?'

'No, madam, I will soon relieve you of my presence,' replied the Lady Lochleven; 'and while with you, my aged limbs can still better brook fatigue, than my mind stoop to accept of constrained courtesy.'

'Nay, Lady of Lochleven, if you take it so deeply,' said the queen, rising and motioning to her own vacant chair, 'I would rather you assumed my seat—you are not the first of your family who has done so.'

The Lady of Lochleven curtseyed a negative, but seemed with much difficulty to suppress the angry answer which rose to her lips.

During this sharp conversation, the page's attention had been almost entirely occupied by the entrance of Catherine Seyton, who came from the inner apartment, in the usual dress in which she attended upon the queen, and with nothing in her manner which marked either the hurry or confusion incident to a hasty change of disguise, or the conscious fear of detection in a perilous enterprise. Roland Græme ventured to make her an obeisance as she entered, but she returned it with an air of the utmost indifference, which, in his opinion, was extremely inconsistent with the circumstances in which they stood towards each other.—'Surely,' he thought, 'she cannot in reason expect to bully me out of the belief due to mine own eyes, as she tried to do concerning the apparition in the hostelry of Saint Michael's—I will try if I cannot make her feel that this will be but a vain task, and that confidence in me is the wiser and safer course to pursue.'

These thoughts had passed rapidly through his mind, when the queen, having finished her altercation with the lady of the castle, again addressed him—'What of the revels at Kinross, Roland Græme? Methought they were gay, if I may judge from some faint sounds of mirth and distant music, which found their way so far as these grated windows, and died when they entered them, as all that is mirthful must—But thou lookest as sad as if thou hadst come from a conventicle of the Huguenots!'

'And so perchance he hath, madam,' replied the Lady of Lochleven, at whom this side-shaft was launched. 'I trust, amid yonder idle foolesies, there wanted not some pouring forth of doctrine to a better purpose than that vain mirth, which, blazing and vanishing like the crackling of dry thorns, leaves to the fools who love it nothing but dust and ashes.'

'Mary Fleming,' said the queen, turning round and drawing her mantle about her, 'I would that we had the chimney-grate supplied with a faggot or two of these same thorns which the Lady of Lochleven describes so well. Methinks the damp air from the lake, which stagnates in these vaulted rooms, renders them deadly cold.'

'Your Grace's pleasure shall be obeyed,' said the Lady of Lochleven; 'yet may I presume to remind you that we are now in summer?'

'I thank you for the information, my good lady,' said the queen; 'for prisoners better learn their calendar from the mouth of their jailer, than from any change they themselves feel in the seasons.—Once more, Roland Græme, what of the revels?'

'They were gay, madam,' said the page, 'but of the usual sort, and little worth your Highness's ear.'

'O, you know not,' said the queen, 'how very indulgent my ear has become to all that speaks of freedom and the pleasures of the free. Methinks I would rather have seen the gay villagers dance their ring round the Maypole, than have witnessed the most stately masques within the precincts of a palace. The absence of stone wall—the sense that the green turf is under the foot which may tread it free and unrestrained, is worth all that art or splendour can add to more courtly revels.'

'I trust,' said the Lady Lochleven, addressing the page in her turn, 'there were amongst these follies none of the riots or disturbances to which they so naturally lead?'

Roland gave a slight glance to Catherine Seyton, as if to bespeak her attention, as he replied—'I witnessed no offence, madam, worthy of marking—none, indeed, of any kind, save that a bold damsel made her hand somewhat too familiar with the cheek of a player-man, and ran some hazard of being ducked in the lake.'

As he uttered these words, he cast a hasty glance at Catherine; but she sustained, with the utmost serenity of manner and countenance, the hint which he had deemed could not have been thrown out before her without exciting some fear and confusion.

'I will cumber your Grace no longer with my presence,' said the Lady Lochleven, 'unless you have aught to command me.'

'Nought, our good hostess,' answered the queen, 'unless it be to pray you, that on another occasion you deem it not needful to postpone your better employment to wait so long upon us.'

'May it please you,' added the Lady Lochleven, 'to command this your gentleman to attend us, that I may receive some account of these matters which have been sent hither for your Grace's use.'

'We may not refuse what you are pleased to require, madam,' answered the queen. 'Go with the lady, Roland, if our commands be indeed necessary to thy doing so. We will hear to-morrow the history of thy Kinross pleasures. For this night we dismiss thy attendance.'

Roland Græme went with the Lady of Lochleven, who failed not to ask him many questions concerning what had passed at the sports, to which he rendered such answers as were most likely to lull asleep any suspicions which she might entertain of his disposition to favour Queen Mary, taking especial care to avoid all allusion

to the apparition of Magdalen Græme and of the Abbot Ambrosius. At length, after undergoing a long and somewhat close examination, he was dismissed with such expressions, as, coming from the reserved and stern Lady of Lochleven, might seem to express a degree of favour and countenance.

His first care was to obtain some refreshment, which was more cheerfully afforded him by a good-natured pantler, than by Dryfesdale, who was on this occasion much disposed to abide by the fashion of Pudding-burn House, where

They who came not the first call,
Gat no more meat till the next meal.

When Roland Græme had finished his repast, having his dismissal from the queen for the evening, and being little inclined for such society as the castle afforded, he stole into the garden, in which he had permission to spend his leisure time when it pleased him. In this place, the ingenuity of the contriver and disposer of the walks had exerted itself to make the most of little space, and by screens, both of stone ornamented with rude sculpture, and hedges of living green, had endeavoured to give as much intricacy and variety as the confined limits of the garden would admit.

Here the young man walked sadly, considering the events of the day, and comparing what had dropped from the Abbot with what he had himself noticed of the demeanour of George Douglas. 'It must be so,' was the painful but inevitable conclusion at which he arrived. 'It must be by his aid that she is thus enabled, like a phantom, to transport herself from place to place, and to appear at pleasure on the mainland or on the islet. It must be so,' he repeated once more; 'with him she holds a close, secret, and intimate correspondence, altogether inconsistent with the eye of favour which she has sometimes cast upon me, and destructive to the hopes which she must have known these glances have necessarily inspired.' And yet (for love will hope where reason despairs) the thought rushed on his mind, that it was possible she only encouraged Douglas's passion so far as might serve her mistress's interest, and that she was of too frank, noble, and candid a nature to hold out to himself hopes which she meant not to fulfil. Lost in these various conjectures, he seated himself upon a bank of turf which commanded a view of the lake on the one side, and on the other of that front of the castle along which the queen's apartments were situated.

The sun had now for some time set, and the twilight of May was rapidly fading into a serene night. On the lake, the expanded water rose and fell, with the slightest and softest influence of a southern breeze, which scarcely dimpled the surface over which it passed. In the distance was still seen the dim outline of the island of Saint Serf, once visited by many a sandalled pilgrim, as the blessed spot trodden by a man of God—now neglected or violated, as the refuge of lazy priests, who had with justice been compelled to give place to the sheep and the heifers of a Protestant baron.

As Roland gazed on the dark speck, amid the lighter blue of the waters which surrounded it, the mazes of polemical discussion again stretched themselves before the eye of his mind. Had these men justly suffered their exile as licentious drones, the robbers at once and disgrace of the busy hive? or had the hand of avarice and rapine expelled from the temple, not the ribalds who polluted, but the faithful priests who served the shrine in honour and fidelity? The arguments of Henderson, in this contemplative hour, rose with double force before him, and could scarcely be parried by the appeal which the Abbot Ambrosius had made from his understanding to his feelings—an appeal which he had felt more forcibly amid the bustle of stirring life, than now when his reflections were more undisturbed. It required an effort to divert his mind from this embarrassing topic; and he found that he best succeeded by turning his eyes to the front of the tower, watching where a twinkling light still streamed from the casement of Catherine Seyton's apartment, obscured by times for a moment as the shadow of the fair inhabitant passed betwixt the taper and the window. At length the light was removed or extinguished, and that object of speculation was also withdrawn from the eyes of the meditative lover. Dare I confess the fact, without injuring his character for ever as a hero of romance? These eyes gradually became heavy; speculative doubts on the subject of religious controversy, and anxious conjectures concerning the state of his mistress's affections, became confusedly blended together in his musings; the fatigues of a busy day prevailed over the harassing subjects of contemplation which occupied his mind, and he fell fast asleep.

Sound were his slumbers, until they were suddenly dispelled by the iron tongue of the castle bell, which sent its deep and sullen sounds wide over the bosom of the lake, and awakened the echoes of Bennarty, the hill which descends steeply on its southern bank. Roland started up, for this bell was always tolled at ten o'clock, as the signal for locking the castle gates, and placing the keys under the charge of the seneschal. He therefore hastened to the wicket by which the garden communicated with the building, and had the mortification, just as he reached it, to hear the bolt leave its sheath with a discordant crash, and enter the stone groove of the door-lintel.

'Hold, hold,' cried the page, 'and let me in ere you lock the wicket.'

The voice of Dryfesdale replied from within, in his usual tone of embittered sullenness, 'The hour is passed, fair master—you like not the inside of these walls—even make it a complete holiday, and spend the night as well as the day out of bounds.'

'Open the door,' exclaimed the indignant page, 'or by Saint Giles I will make thy gold chain smoke for it!'

'Make no alarm here,' retorted the impenetrable Dryfesdale, 'but keep thy sinful oaths and silly threats for those that regard them—I do mine office, and carry the keys to the seneschal.—Adieu, my young master! the cool night air will advantage your hot blood.'

The steward was right in what he said; for the cooling breeze was very necessary to appease

the feverish fit of anger which Roland experienced, nor did the remedy succeed for some time. At length, after some hasty turns made through the garden, exhausting his passion in vain vows of vengeance, Roland Græme began to be sensible that his situation ought rather to be held as matter of laughter than of serious resentment. To one bred a sportsman, a night spent in the open air had in it little of hardship, and the poor malice of the steward seemed more worthy of his contempt than his anger. 'I would to God,' he said, 'that the grim old man may always have contented himself with such sportive revenge. He often looks as he were capable of doing us a darker turn.' Returning, therefore, to the turf-seat, which he had formerly occupied, and which was partially sheltered by a trim fence of green holly, he drew his mantle around him, stretched himself at length on the verdant settle, and endeavoured to resume that sleep which the castle bell had interrupted to so little purpose.

Sleep, like other earthly blessings, is niggard of its favours when most courted. The more Roland invoked her aid, the farther she fled from his eyelids. He had been completely awakened, first, by the sounds of the bell, and then by his own aroused vivacity of temper, and he found it difficult again to compose himself to slumber. At length, when his mind was wearied out with a maze of unpleasing meditation, he succeeded in coaxing himself into a broken slumber. This was again dispelled by the voices of two persons who were walking in the garden, the sound of whose conversation, after mingling for some time in the page's dreams, at length succeeded in awaking him thoroughly. He raised himself from his reclining posture in the utmost astonishment, which the circumstance of hearing two persons at that late hour conversing on the outside of the watchfully guarded Castle of Lochleven, was so well calculated to excite. His first thought was of supernatural beings; his next, upon some attempt on the part of Queen Mary's friends and followers; his last was, that George of Douglas, possessed of the keys, and having the means of ingress and egress at pleasure, was availing himself of his office to hold a rendezvous with Catherine Seyton in the castle garden. He was confirmed in this opinion by the tone of the voice, which asked in a low whisper, 'whether all was ready?'

CHAPTER XXX.

In some breasts passion lies conceal'd and silent,
Like war's swart powder in a castle vault,
Until occasion, like the linstock, lights it:
Then comes at once the lightning and the thunder,
And distant echoes tell that all is rent asunder.
OLD PLAY.

ROLAND GRÆME, availing himself of a breach in the holly screen, and of the assistance of the full moon, which was now arisen, had a perfect opportunity, himself unobserved, to reconnoitre the persons and the motions of those by whom his rest had been thus unexpectedly disturbed; and his observations confirmed his jealous apprehensions. They stood together in close and earnest conversation within four yards of the place of his retreat, and he could easily recognise the tall form and deep voice of Douglas, and the no less remarkable dress and tone of the page at the hostelry of Saint Michael's.

'I have been at the door of the page's apartment,' said Douglas, 'but he is not there, or he will not answer. It is fast bolted on the inside, as is the custom, and we cannot pass through it —and what his silence may bode I know not.'

'You have trusted him too far,' said the other; 'a feather-headed coxcomb, upon whose changeable mind and hot brain there is no making an abiding impression.'

'It was not I who was willing to trust him,' said Douglas, 'but I was assured he would prove friendly when called upon—for'—— Here he spoke so low that Roland lost the tenor of his words, which was the more provoking, as he was fully aware that he was himself the subject of their conversation.

'Nay,' replied the stranger, more aloud, 'I have on my side put him off with fair words, which make fools fain—but now, if you distrust him at the push, deal with him with your dagger, and so make open passage.'

'That were too rash,' said Douglas; 'and besides, as I told you, the door of his apartment is shut and bolted. I will essay again to waken him.'

Græme instantly comprehended that the ladies, having been somehow made aware of his being in the garden, had secured the door of the outer room in which he usually slept, as a sort of sentinel upon that only access to the queen's apartments. But then, how came Catherine Seyton to be abroad, if the queen and the other lady were still within their chambers, and the access to them locked and bolted?—'I will be instantly at the bottom of these mysteries,' he said, 'and then thank Mistress Catherine, if this be really she, for the kind use which she exhorted Douglas to make of his dagger—they seek me, as I comprehend, and they shall not seek me in vain.'

Douglas had by this time re-entered the castle by the wicket, which was now open. The stranger stood alone in the garden walk, his arms folded on his breast, and his eyes cast impatiently up to the moon, as if accusing her of betraying him by the magnificence of her lustre. In a moment Roland Græme stood before him—'A goodly night,' he said, 'Mistress Catherine, for a young lady to stray forth in disguise, and to meet with men in an orchard!'

'Hush!' said the stranger page, 'hush, thou foolish patch, and tell us in a word if thou art friend or foe.'

'How should I be friend to one who deceives me by fair words, and who would have Douglas deal with me with his poniard?' replied Roland.

'The fiend receive George of Douglas and thee too, thou born madcap and sworn marplot!' said the other; 'we shall be discovered, and then death is the word.'

'Catherine,' said the page, 'you have dealt falsely and cruelly with me, and the moment of explanation is now come—neither it nor you shall escape me.'

'Madman!' said the stranger, 'I am neither Kate nor Catherine—the moon shines bright enough surely to know the hart from the hind.'

'That shift shall not serve you, fair mistress,' said the page, laying hold on the lap of the stranger's cloak; 'this time, at least, I will know with whom I deal.'

'Unhand me,' said she, endeavouring to extricate herself from his grasp; and in a tone where anger seemed to contend with a desire to laugh, 'use you so little discretion towards a daughter of Seyton?'

But as Roland, encouraged perhaps by her risibility to suppose his violence was not unpardonably offensive, kept hold on her mantle, she said in a sterner tone of unmixed resentment,—'Madman, let me go!—there is life and death in this moment—I would not willingly hurt thee, and yet beware!'

As she spoke, she made a sudden effort to escape, and in doing so, a pistol, which she carried in her hand or about her person, went off.

This warlike sound instantly awakened the well-warded castle. The warder blew his horn, and began to toll the castle bell, crying out at the same time, 'Fie, treason! treason! cry all! cry all!'

The apparition of Catherine Seyton, which the page had let loose at the first moment of astonishment, vanished in darkness, but the plash of oars was heard, and in a second or two five or six harquebusses and a falconet were fired from the battlements of the castle successively, as if levelled at some object on the water. Confounded with these incidents, no way for Catherine's protection (supposing her to be in the boat which he had heard put from the shore) occurred to Roland, save to have recourse to George of Douglas. He hastened for this purpose towards the apartment of the queen, whence he heard loud voices and much trampling of feet. When he entered, he found himself added to a confused and astonished group, which, assembled in that apartment, stood gazing upon each other. At the upper end of the room stood the queen, equipped as for a journey, and attended not only by the Lady Fleming, but by the omnipresent Catherine Seyton, dressed in the habit of her own sex, and bearing in her hand the casket in which Mary kept such jewels as she had been permitted to retain. At the other end of the hall was the Lady of Lochleven, hastily dressed, as one startled from slumber by the sudden alarm, and surrounded by domestics, some bearing torches, others holding naked swords, partisans, pistols, or such other weapons as they had caught up in the hurry of a night alarm. Betwixt these two parties stood George of Douglas, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes bent on the ground, like a criminal who knows not how to deny, yet continues unwilling to avow, the guilt in which he has been detected.

'Speak, George of Douglas,' said the Lady of Lochleven; 'speak, and clear the horrid suspicion which rests on thy name. Say, "A Douglas was never faithless to his trust, and I am a Douglas." Say this, my dearest son, and it is all I ask thee to say to clear thy name, even under such a foul charge. Say it was but the wile of these unhappy women, and this false boy, which plotted an escape so fatal to Scotland—so destructive to thy father's house.'

'Madam,' said old Dryfesdale the steward, 'this much do I say for this silly page, that he could not be accessory to unlocking the doors, since I myself this night bolted him out of the castle. Whoever limned this night-piece, the lad's share in it seems to have been small.'

'Thou liest, Dryfesdale,' said the lady, 'and wouldst throw the blame on thy master's house, to save the worthless life of a gipsy boy.'

'His death were more desirable to me than his life,' answered the steward sullenly; 'but the truth is the truth.'

At these words Douglas raised his head, drew up his figure to its full height, and spoke boldly and sedately, as one whose resolution was taken. 'Let no life be endangered for me. I alone'——

'Douglas,' said the queen, interrupting him, 'art thou mad? Speak not; I charge you.'

'Madam,' he replied, bowing with the deepest respect, 'gladly would I obey your commands, but they must have a victim, and let it be the true one.—Yes, madam,' he continued, addressing the Lady of Lochleven, 'I alone am guilty in this matter. If the word of a Douglas has yet any weight with you, believe me that this boy is innocent; and on your conscience I charge you, do him no wrong; nor let the Queen suffer hardship for embracing the opportunity of freedom which sincere loyalty—which a sentiment yet deeper—offered to her acceptance. Yes! I had planned the escape of the most beautiful, the most persecuted of women; and far from regretting that I, for a while, deceived the malice of her enemies, I glory in it, and am most willing to yield up life itself in her cause.'

'Now may God have compassion on my age,' said the Lady of Lochleven, 'and enable me to bear this load of affliction! O princess, born in a luckless hour, when will you cease to be the instrument of seduction and of ruin to all who approach you? O ancient house of Lochleven, famed so long for birth and honour, evil was the hour which brought the deceiver under thy roof!'

'Say not so, madam,' replied her grandson; 'the old honours of the Douglas line will be outshone, when one of its descendants dies for the most injured of queens—for the most lovely of women.'

'Douglas,' said the queen, 'must I at this moment—ay, even at this moment, when I may lose a faithful subject for ever—chide thee for forgetting what is due to me as thy Queen?'

'Wretched boy,' said the distracted Lady of Lochleven, 'hast thou fallen even thus far into the snare of this Moabitish woman?—hast thou bartered thy name, thy allegiance, thy knightly oath, thy duty to thy parents, thy country, and thy God, for a feigned tear, or a sickly smile, from lips which flattered the infirm Francis—lured to death the idiot Darnley—read luscious poetry with the minion Chastelar—mingled in the lays of love which were sung by the beggar Rizzio—and which were joined in rapture to those of the foul and licentious Bothwell?'

'Blaspheme not, madam!' said Douglas;—nor you, fair Queen, and virtuous as fair, chide

at this moment the presumption of thy vassal! —Think not that the mere devotion of a subject could have moved me to the part I have been performing. Well you deserve that each of your lieges should die for you; but I have done more —have done that to which love alone could compel a Douglas—I have dissembled.—Farewell, then, Queen of all hearts, and Empress of that of Douglas!—When you are freed from this vile bondage—as freed you shall be, if justice remains in Heaven—and when you load with honours and titles the happy man who shall deliver you, cast one thought on him whose heart would have despised every reward for a kiss of your hand—cast one thought on his fidelity, and drop one tear on his grave.' And, throwing himself at her feet, he seized her hand and pressed it to his lips.

'This before my face!' exclaimed the Lady of Lochleven—'wilt thou court thy adulterous paramour before the eyes of a parent?—Tear them asunder, and put him under strict ward! Seize him, upon your lives!' she added, seeing that her attendants looked on each other with hesitation.

'They are doubtful,' said Mary. 'Save thyself, Douglas, I command thee!'

He started up from the floor, and only exclaiming, 'My life or death are yours, and at your disposal!'—drew his sword, and broke through those who stood betwixt him and the door. The enthusiasm of his onset was too sudden and too lively to have been opposed by anything short of the most decided opposition; and as he was both loved and feared by his father's vassals, none of them would offer him actual injury.

The Lady of Lochleven stood astonished at his sudden escape.—'Am I surrounded,' she said, 'by traitors? Upon him, villains!—pursue, stab, cut him down!'

'He cannot leave the island, madam,' said Dryfesdale, interfering; 'I have the key of the boat-chain.'

But two or three voices of those who pursued from curiosity, or command of their mistress, exclaimed from below, that he had cast himself into the lake.

'Brave Douglas still!' exclaimed the queen—'O, true and noble heart, that prefers death to imprisonment!'

'Fire upon him!' said the Lady of Lochleven; 'if there be here a true servant of his father, let him shoot the runagate dead, and let the lake cover our shame!'

The report of a gun or two was heard, but they were probably shot rather to obey the lady, than with any purpose of hitting the mark; and Randal, immediately entering, said that Master George had been taken up by a boat from the castle, which lay at a little distance.

'Man a barge, and pursue them!' said the lady.

'It were quite vain,' said Randal; 'by this time they are half-way to shore, and a cloud has come over the moon.'

'And has the traitor then escaped?' said the lady, pressing her hands against her forehead with a gesture of despair; 'the honour of our house is for ever gone, and all will be deemed accomplices in this base treachery.'

'Lady of Lochleven,' said Mary, advancing towards her, 'you have this night cut off my fairest hopes—you have turned my expected freedom into bondage, and dashed away the cup of joy in the very instant I was advancing it to my lips—and yet I feel for your sorrow the pity that you deny to mine—Gladly would I comfort you if I might; but as I may not, I would at least part from you in charity.'

'Away, proud woman!' said the lady; 'who ever knew so well as thou to deal the deepest wounds under the pretence of kindness and courtesy?—Who, since the great traitor, could ever so betray with a kiss?'

'Lady Douglas of Lochleven,' said the queen, 'in this moment thou canst not offend me—no, not even by thy coarse and unwomanly language, held to me in the presence of menials and armed retainers. I have this night owed so much to one member of the house of Lochleven, as to cancel whatever its mistress can do or say in the wildness of her passion.'

'We are bounden to you, Princess,' said Lady Lochleven, putting a strong constraint on herself, and passing from her tone of violence to that of bitter irony; 'our poor house hath been but seldom graced with royal smiles, and will hardly, with my choice, exchange their rough honesty for such court-honour as Mary of Scotland has now to bestow.'

'They,' replied Mary, 'who knew so well how to *take*, may think themselves excused from the obligation implied in receiving. And that I have now little to offer, is the fault of the Douglases and their allies.'

'Fear nothing, madam,' replied the Lady of Lochleven, in the same bitter tone, 'you retain an exchequer which neither your own prodigality can drain, nor your offended country deprive you of. While you have fair words and delusive smiles at command, you need no other bribes to lure youth to folly.'

The queen cast not an ungratified glance on a large mirror, which, hanging on one side of the apartment, and illuminated by the torchlight, reflected her beautiful face and person. 'Our hostess grows complaisant,' she said, 'my Fleming; we had not thought that grief and captivity had left us so well stored with that sort of wealth which ladies prize most dearly.'

'Your Grace will drive this severe woman frantic,' said Fleming, in a low tone. 'On my knees I implore you to remember she is already dreadfully offended, and that we are in her power.'

'I will not spare her, Fleming,' answered the queen; 'it is against my nature. She returned my honest sympathy with insult and abuse, and I will gall her in return—if her words are too blunt for answer, let her use her poniard if she dare!'

'The Lady Lochleven,' said the Lady Fleming aloud, 'would surely do well now to withdraw, and to leave her Grace to repose.'

'Ay,' replied the lady, 'or to leave her Grace, and her Grace's minions to think what silly fly they may next wrap their meshes about. My eldest son is a widower—were he not more

worthy the flattering hopes with which you have seduced his brother?—True, the yoke of marriage has been already thrice fitted on—but the Church of Rome calls it a sacrament, and its votaries may deem it one in which they cannot too often participate.'

'And the votaries of the Church of Geneva,' replied Mary, colouring with indignation, 'as they deem marriage *no* sacrament, are said at times to dispense with the holy ceremony.'—Then, as if afraid of the consequences of this home allusion to the errors of Lady Lochleven's early life, the queen added, 'Come, my Fleming, we grace her too much by this altercation; we will to our sleeping apartment. If she would disturb us again to-night, she must cause the door to be forced.' So saying, she retired to her bedroom, followed by her two women.

Lady Lochleven, stunned as it were by this last sarcasm, and not the less deeply incensed that she had drawn it upon herself, remained like a statue on the spot which she had occupied when she received an affront so flagrant. Dryfesdale and Randal endeavoured to rouse her to recollection by questions.

'What is your honourable ladyship's pleasure in the premises?'

'Shall we not double the sentinels, and place one upon the boats and another in the garden?' said Randal.

'Would you that despatches were sent to Sir William at Edinburgh, to acquaint him with what has happened?' demanded Dryfesdale; 'and ought not the place of Kinross to be alarmed, lest there be force upon the shores of the lake?'

'Do all as thou wilt,' said the lady, collecting herself, and about to depart. 'Thou hast the name of a good soldier, Dryfesdale; take all precautions.—Sacred Heaven! that I should be thus openly insulted!'

'Would it be your pleasure,' said Dryfesdale, hesitating, 'that this person--this lady—be more severely restrained?'

'No, vassal!' answered the lady indignantly, 'my revenge stoops not to so low a gratification. But I will have more worthy vengeance, or the tomb of my ancestors shall cover my shame!'

'And you shall have it, madam,' replied Dryfesdale—'Ere two suns go down you shall term yourself amply revenged.'

The lady made no answer—perhaps did not hear his words, as she presently left the apartment. By the command of Dryfesdale, the rest of the attendants were dismissed, some to do the duty of guard, others to their repose. The steward himself remained after they had all departed; and Roland Græme, who was alone in the apartment, was surprised to see the old soldier advance towards him with an air of greater cordiality than he had ever before assumed to him, but which sat ill on his scowling features.

'Youth,' he said, 'I have done thee some wrong—it is thine own fault, for thy behaviour hath seemed as light to me as the feather thou wearest in thy hat; and surely thy fantastic apparel, and idle humour of mirth and folly, have made me construe thee something harshly. But I saw this night from my casement (as I looked out to see how thou hadst disposed of thyself in the garden), I saw, I say, the true efforts which thou didst make to detain the companion of the perfidy of him who is no longer worthy to be called by his father's name, but must be cut off from his house like a rotten branch. I was just about to come to thy assistance, when the pistol went off, and the warden (a false knave, whom I suspect to be bribed for the nonce) saw himself forced to give the alarm, which, perchance, till then he had wilfully withheld. To atone, therefore, for my injustice towards you, I would willingly render you a courtesy, if you would accept of it from my hands.'

'May I first crave to know what it is?' replied the page.

'Simply to carry the news of this discovery to Holyrood, where thou mayest do thyself much grace, as well with the Earl of Morton and the Regent himself, as with Sir William Douglas, seeing thou hast seen the matter from end to end, and borne faithful part therein. The making thine own fortune will be thus lodged in thine own hand, when I trust thou wilt estrange thyself from foolish vanities, and learn to walk in this world as one who thinks upon the next.'

'Sir Steward,' said Roland Græme, 'I thank you for your courtesy, but I may not do your errand. I pass that I am the Queen's sworn servant, and may not be of counsel against her. But, setting this apart, methinks it were a bad road to Sir William of Lochleven's favour to be the first to tell him of his son's defection—neither would the Regent be over well pleased to hear the infidelity of his vassal, nor Morton to learn the falsehood of his kinsman.'

'Um!' said the steward, making that inarticulate sound which expresses surprise mingled with displeasure. 'Nay, then, even fly where ye list; for, giddy-pated as ye may be, you know how to bear you in the world.'

'I will show you my esteem is less selfish than ye think for,' said the page; 'for I hold truth and mirth to be better than gravity and cunning—ay, and in the end to be a match for them.—You never loved me less, Sir Steward, than you do at this moment. I know you will give me no real confidence, and I am resolved to accept no false protestations as current coin. Resume your old course—suspect me as much and watch me as closely as you will, I bid you defiance—you have met with your match.'

'By Heaven, young man,' said the steward, with a look of bitter malignity, 'if thou darest to attempt any treachery towards the house of Lochleven, thy head shall blacken in the sun from the warder's turret!'

'He cannot commit treachery who refuses trust,' said the page; 'and for my head, it stands as securely on my shoulders, as on any turret that ever mason built.'

'Farewell, thou prating and speckled pie,' said Dryfesdale, 'that art so vain of thine idle tongue and variegated coat! Beware trap and lime-twig.'

'And fare thee well, thou hoarse old raven,' answered the page; 'thy solemn flight, sable hue, and deep croak, are no charms against bird-bolt or hail-shot, and that thou mayest find—it

is open war betwixt us, each for the cause of our mistress, and God show the right!'

'Amen, and defend his own people!' said the steward. 'I will let my mistress know what addition thou hast made to this mess of traitors. Good-night, Monsieur Featherpate.'

'Good-night, Seignior Sowersby,' replied the page; and, when the old man departed, he betook himself to rest.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Poison'd,—ill fare! dead, forsook, cast off!
KING JOHN.

HOWEVER weary Roland Græme might be of the Castle of Lochleven—however much he might wish that the plan for Mary's escape had been perfected, I question if he ever awoke with more pleasing feelings than on the morning after George Douglas's plan for accomplishing her deliverance had been frustrated. In the first place, he had the clearest conviction that he had misunderstood the innuendo of the Abbot, and that the affections of Douglas were fixed, not on Catherine Seyton, but on the queen; and, in the second place, from the sort of explanation which had taken place betwixt the steward and him, he felt himself at liberty, without any breach of honour towards the family of Lochleven, to contribute his best aid to any scheme which should in future be formed for the queen's escape; and, independently of the good-will which he himself had to the enterprise, he knew he could find no surer road to the favour of Catherine Seyton. He now sought but an opportunity to inform her that he had dedicated himself to this task, and fortune was propitious in affording him one which was unusually favourable.

At the ordinary hour of breakfast, it was introduced by the steward with his usual forms, who, as soon as it was placed on the board in the inner apartment, said to Roland Græme, with a glance of sarcastic import, 'I leave you, my young sir, to do the office of sewer—it has been too long rendered to the Lady Mary by one belonging to the house of Douglas.'

'Were it the prime and principal who ever bore the name,' said Roland, 'the office were an honour to him.'

The steward departed without replying to this bravade, otherwise than by a dark look of scorn. Græme, thus left alone, busied himself, as one engaged in a labour of love, to imitate, as well as he could, the grace and courtesy with which George of Douglas was wont to render his ceremonial service at meals to the Queen of Scotland. There was more than youthful vanity—there was a generous devotion in the feeling with which he took up the task, as a brave soldier assumes the place of a comrade who has fallen in the front of battle. 'I am now,' he said, 'their only champion; and, come weal, come woe, I will be, to the best of my skill and power, as faithful, as trustworthy, as brave, as any Douglas of them all could have been.'

At this moment Catherine Seyton entered alone, contrary to her custom; and, not less contrary to her custom, she entered with her kerchief at her eyes. Roland Græme approached her with beating heart and with downcast eyes, and asked her, in a low and hesitating voice, whether the queen were well.

'Can you suppose it?' said Catherine. 'Think you her heart and body are framed of steel and iron, to endure the cruel disappointment of yester-even, and the infamous taunts of yonder puritanic hag?—Would to God that I were a man, to aid her more effectually!'

'If those who carry pistols, and batons, and poniards,' said the page, 'are not men, they are at least Amazons; and that is as formidable.'

'You are welcome to the flash of your wit, sir,' replied the damsel; 'I am neither in spirits to enjoy nor to reply to it.'

'Well, then,' said the page, 'list to me in all serious truth. And, first, let me say, that the gear last night had been smoother had you taken me into your counsels.'

'And so we meant; but who could have guessed that Master Page should choose to pass all night in the garden, like some moon-stricken knight in a Spanish romance—instead of being in his bedroom, when Douglas came to hold communication with him on our project.'

'And why,' said the page, 'defer to so late a moment so important a confidence?'

'Because your communications with Henderson, and—with pardon—the natural impetuosity and fickleness of your disposition, made us dread to entrust you with a secret of such consequence till the last moment.'

'And why at the last moment?' said the page, offended at this frank avowal; 'why at that, or any other moment, since I had the misfortune to incur so much suspicion?'

'Nay—now you are angry again,' said Catherine; 'and to serve you aright, I should break off this talk; but I will be magnanimous, and answer your question. Know, then, our reason for trusting you was twofold. In the first place, we could scarce avoid it, since you slept in the room through which we had to pass. In the second place'——

'Nay,' said the page, 'you may dispense with a second reason, when the first makes your confidence in me a case of necessity.'

'Good now, hold thy peace,' said Catherine. 'In the second place, as I said before, there is one foolish person among us, who believes that Roland Græme's heart is warm, though his head is giddy—that his blood is pure, though it boils too hastily—and that his faith and honour are true as the load-star, though his tongue sometimes is far less than discreet.'

This avowal Catherine repeated in a low tone, with her eye fixed on the floor, as if she shunned the glance of Roland while she suffered it to escape her lips—'And this single friend,' exclaimed the youth in rapture; 'this only one who would do justice to the poor Roland Græme, and whose own generous heart taught her to distinguish between follies of the brain and faults of the heart—Will you not tell me, dearest Catherine, to whom I owe my most grateful, my most heartfelt thanks?'

'Nay,' said Catherine, with her eyes still fixed on the ground, 'if your own heart tell you not'——

'Dearest Catherine!' said the page, seizing upon her hand, and kneeling on one knee.

ness of the Lady Fleming'.

The page started on his feet. 'By Heaven, Catherine, your tongue wears as many disguises as your person! But you only mock me, cruel girl. You know the Lady Fleming has no more regard for any one, than hath the forlorn princess who is wrought into yonder piece of old figured court tapestry.'

'It may be so,' said Catherine Seyton, 'but you should not speak so loud.'

'Pshaw!' answered the page, but at the same time lowering his voice, 'she cares for no one but herself and the Queen. And you know, besides, there is no one of you whose opinion I value, if I have not your own. No—not that of Queen Mary herself.'

'The more shame for you, if it be so,' said Catherine, with great composure.

'Nay, but, fair Catherine,' said the page, 'why will you thus damp my ardour, when I am devoting myself, body and soul, to the cause of your mistress?'

'It is because in doing so,' said Catherine, 'you debase a cause so noble, by naming along with it any lower or more selfish motive. Believe me,' she said, with kindling eyes, and while the blood mantled on her cheek, 'they think vilely and falsely of women—I mean of those who deserve the name—who deem that they love the gratification of their vanity, or the mean purpose of engrossing a lover's admiration and affection, better than they love the virtue and honour of the man they may be brought to prefer. He that serves his religion, his prince, and his country, with ardour and devotion, need not plead his cause with the commonplace rant of romantic passion—the woman whom he honours with his love becomes his debtor, and her corresponding affection is engaged to repay his glorious toil.'

'You hold a glorious prize for such toil,' said the youth, bending his eyes on her with enthusiasm.

'Only a heart which knows how to value it,' said Catherine. 'He that should free this injured princess from these dungeons, and set her at liberty among her loyal and warlike nobles, whose hearts are burning to welcome her—where is the maiden in Scotland whom the love of such a hero would not honour, were she sprung from the blood-royal of the land, and he the offspring of the poorest cottager that ever held a plough?'

'I am determined,' said Roland, 'to take the adventure. Tell me first, however, fair Catherine, and speak it as if you were confessing to the priest—this poor Queen, I know she is unhappy—but, Catherine, do you hold her innocent? She is accused of murder.'

'Do I hold the lamb guilty, because it is assailed by the wolf?' answered Catherine; 'do I hold yonder sun polluted, because an earth-damp sullies his beams?'

The page sighed and looked down. 'Would my conviction were as deep as thine! But one thing is clear, that in this captivity she hath wrong—She rendered herself up, on a capitulation, and the terms have been refused her—I will embrace her quarrel to the death!'

'Will you—will you, indeed?' said Catherine, taking his hand in her turn. 'O, be but firm in mind, as thou art bold in deed and quick in resolution; keep but thy plighted faith, and after-ages shall honour thee as the saviour of Scotland!'

'But when I have toiled successfully to win that Leah, Honour, thou wilt not, my Catherine,' said the page, 'condemn me to a new term of service for that Rachel, Love?'

'Of that,' said Catherine, again extricating her hand from his grasp, 'we shall have full time to speak; but Honour is the elder sister, and must be won the first.'

'I may not win her,' answered the page; 'but I will venture fairly for her, and man can do no more. And know, fair Catherine,—for you shall see the very secret thought of my heart,—that not Honour only,—not only that other and fairer sister, whom you frown on me for so much as mentioning,—but the stern commands of duty also, compel me to aid the Queen's deliverance.'

'Indeed!' said Catherine; 'you were wont to have doubts on that matter.'

'Ay, but her life was not then threatened,' replied Roland.

'And is it now more endangered than heretofore?' asked Catherine Seyton, in anxious terror.

'Be not alarmed,' said the page; 'but you heard the terms on which your royal mistress parted with the Lady of Lochleven?'

'Too well—but too well,' said Catherine; 'alas! that she cannot rule her princely resentment, and refrain from encounters like these!'

'That hath passed betwixt them,' said Roland, 'for which woman never forgives woman. I saw the lady's brow turn pale, and then black, when, before all the menzie, and in her moment of power, the Queen humbled her to the dust by taxing her with her shame. And I heard the oath of deadly resentment and revenge which she muttered in the ear of one who, by his answer, will, I judge, be but too ready an executioner of her will.'

'You terrify me,' said Catherine.

'Do not so take it—call up the masculine part of your spirit—we will counteract and defeat her plans, be they dangerous as they may. Why do you look upon me thus, and weep?'

'Alas!' said Catherine, 'because you stand there before me a living and breathing man, in all the adventurous glow and enterprise of youth, yet still possessing the frolic spirits of childhood—there you stand, full alike of generous enterprise and childish recklessness; and if to-day, or to-morrow, or some such brief space, you lie a mangled and lifeless corpse upon the floor of these hateful dungeons, who but Catherine Seyton will be the cause of your brave and gay career being broken short as you start from the goal? Alas! she whom you have chosen to twine your wreath, may too probably have to work your shroud!'

'And be it so, Catherine,' said the page, in the full glow of youthful enthusiasm; 'and *do* thou work my shroud! and if thou grace it with such tears as fall now at the thought, it

will honour my remains more than an earl's mantle would my living body. But shame on this faintness of heart! the time craves a firmer mood—Be a woman, Catherine, or rather be a man—thou canst be a man if thou wilt.'

Catherine dried her tears, and endeavoured to smile.

'You must not ask me,' she said, 'about that which so much disturbs your mind; you shall know all in time—nay, you should know all now, but that——Hush! here comes the Queen.'

Mary entered from her apartment, paler than usual, and apparently exhausted by a sleepless night, and by the painful thoughts which had ill supplied the place of repose; yet the languor of her looks was so far from impairing her beauty, that it only substituted the frail delicacy of the lovely woman for the majestic grace of the queen. Contrary to her wont, her toilette had been very hastily despatched, and her hair, which was usually dressed by Lady Fleming with great care, escaping from beneath the head-tire, which had been hastily adjusted, fell in long and luxuriant tresses of Nature's own curling, over a neck and bosom which were somewhat less carefully veiled than usual.

As she stepped over the threshold of her apartment, Catherine, hastily drying her tears, ran to meet her royal mistress, and, having first kneeled at her feet and kissed her hand, instantly rose, and, placing herself on the other side of the queen, seemed anxious to divide with the Lady Fleming the honour of supporting and assisting her. The page, on his part, advanced and put in order the chair of state, which she usually occupied, and, having placed the cushion and footstool for her accommodation, stepped back, and stood ready for service in the place usually occupied by his predecessor, the young seneschal. Mary's eye rested an instant on him, and could not but remark the change of persons. Hers was not the female heart which could refuse compassion, at least, to a gallant youth who had suffered in her cause, although he had been guided in his enterprise by a too presumptuous passion; and the words 'Poor Douglas!' escaped from her lips, perhaps unconsciously, as she leant herself back in her chair, and put the kerchief to her eyes.

'Yes, gracious madam,' said Catherine, assuming a cheerful manner, in order to cheer her sovereign, 'our gallant knight is indeed banished—the adventure was not reserved for him; but he has left behind him a youthful esquire, as much devoted to your Grace's service, and who, by me, makes you tender of his hand and sword.'

'If they may in aught avail your Grace,' said Roland Græme, bowing profoundly.

'Alas!' said the queen, 'what needs this, Catherine?—why prepare new victims to be involved in, and overwhelmed by, my cruel fortune?—were we not better cease to struggle, and ourselves sink in the tide without further resistance, than thus drag into destruction with us every generous heart which makes an effort in our favour?—I have had but too much of plot and intrigue around me, since I was stretched an orphan child in my very cradle, while contending nobles strove which should rule in the name of the unconscious innocent. Surely time it were that all this busy and most dangerous coil should end. Let me call my prison a convent, and my seclusion a voluntary sequestration of myself from the world and its ways.'

'Speak not thus, madam, before your faithful servants,' said Catherine, 'to discourage their zeal at once and to break their hearts. Daughter of kings, be not in this hour so unkingly.—Come, Roland, and let us, the youngest of her followers, show ourselves worthy of her cause—let us kneel before her footstool, and implore her to be her own magnanimous self.' And, leading Roland Græme to the queen's seat, they both kneeled down before her. Mary raised herself in her chair and sat erect, while, extending one hand to be kissed by the page, she arranged with the other the clustering locks which shaded the bold yet lovely brow of the high-spirited Catherine.

'Alas! *ma mignonne*,' she said, for so in fondness she often called her young attendant, 'that you should thus desperately mix with my unhappy fate the fortune of your young lives!—Are they not a lovely couple, my Fleming? and is it not heartrending to think that I must be their ruin?'

'Not so,' said Roland Græme, 'it is we, gracious sovereign, who will be your deliverers.'

'*Ex oribus parvulorum!*' said the queen, looking upward; 'if it is by the mouth of these children that Heaven calls me to resume the stately thoughts which become my birth and my rights, thou wilt grant them thy protection, and to me the power of rewarding their zeal!'—Then, turning to Fleming, she instantly added,—'Thou knowest, my friend, whether to make those who have served me happy, was not ever Mary's favourite pastime. When I have been rebuked by the stern preachers of the Calvinistic heresy—when I have seen the fierce countenances of my nobles averted from me, has it not been because I mixed in the harmless pleasures of the young and gay, and, rather for the sake of their happiness than my own, have mingled in the masque, the song, or the dance, with the youth of my household? Well, I repent not of it—though Knox termed it sin, and Morton degradation. I was happy, because I saw happiness around me; and woe betide the wretched jealousy that can extract guilt out of the overflowings of an unguarded gaiety!—Fleming, if we are restored to our throne, shall we not have one blithesome day at a blithesome bridal, of which we must now name neither the bride nor the bridegroom? but that bridegroom shall have the barony of Blairgowrie, a fair gift even for a queen to give, and that bride's chaplet shall be twined with the fairest pearls that ever were found in the depths of Lochlomond; and thou thyself, Mary Fleming, the best dresser of tires that ever busked the tresses of a queen, and who would scorn to touch those of any woman of lower rank,—thou thyself shalt, for my love, twine them into the bride's tresses.—Look, my Fleming, suppose them such clustered locks as those of our Catherine, they would not put shame upon thy skill.'

So saying, she passed her hand fondly over the head of her youthful favourite, while her more aged attendant replied despondently, 'Alas! madam, your thoughts stray far from home.'

'They do, my Fleming,' said the queen; 'but is it well or kind in you to call them back?—God knows, they have kept the perch this night but too closely—Come, I will recall the gay vision, were it but to punish them. Yes, at that blithesome bridal Mary herself shall forget the weight of sorrows and the toil of state, and herself once more lead a measure.—At whose wedding was it that we last danced, my Fleming? I think care has troubled my memory—yet something of it I should remember—canst thou not aid me?—I know thou canst.'

'Alas, madam!' replied the lady——

'What!' said Mary, 'wilt thou not help us so far? this is a peevish adherence to thine own graver opinion, which holds our talk as folly. But thou art court-bred, and wilt well understand me when I say, the Queen *commands* Lady Fleming to tell her where she led the last *branle*.'

With a face deadly pale, and a mien as if she were about to sink into the earth, the court-bred dame, no longer daring to refuse obedience, faltered out—'Gracious lady—if my memory err not—it was at a masque in Holyrood—at the marriage of Sebastian.'

The unhappy queen, who had hitherto listened with a melancholy smile, provoked by the reluctance with which the Lady Fleming brought out her story, at this ill-fated word interrupted her with a shriek so wild and loud that the vaulted apartment rang, and both Roland and Catherine sprung to their feet in the utmost terror and alarm. Meantime, Mary seemed, by the train of horrible ideas thus suddenly excited, surprised not only beyond self-command, but for the moment beyond the verge of reason.

'Traitress!' she said to the Lady Fleming, 'thou wouldst slay thy sovereign.—Call my French guards—*à moi! à moi! mes Français!*—I am beset with traitors in mine own palace—they have murdered my husband—Rescue! rescue for the Queen of Scotland!' She started up from her chair—her features, late so exquisitely lovely in their paleness, now inflamed with the fury of frenzy, and resembling those of a Bellona. 'We will take the field ourself,' she said; 'warn the city—warn Lothian and Fife—saddle our Spanish barb, and bid French Paris see our petronel be charged!—Better to die at the head of our brave Scotsmen, like our grandfather at Flodden, than of a broken heart, like our ill-starred father!'

'Be patient—be composed, dearest sovereign,' said Catherine; and then, addressing Lady Fleming angrily, she added, 'How could you say aught that reminded her of her husband?'

The word reached the ear of the unhappy princess, who caught it up, speaking with great rapidity. 'Husband!—what husband?—Not his most Christian Majesty—he is ill at ease—he cannot mount on horseback.—Not him of the Lennox—but it was the Duke of Orkney thou wouldst say.'

'For God's love, madam, be patient!' said the Lady Fleming.

But the Queen's excited imagination could by no entreaty be diverted from its course. 'Bid him come hither to our aid,' she said, 'and bring with him his lambs, as he calls them—Bowton, Hay of Talla, Black Ormiston, and his kinsman Hob—Fie! how swart they are, and how they smell of sulphur! What! closeted with Morton? Nay, if the Douglas and the Hepburn hatch the complot together, the bird, when it breaks the shell, will scare Scotland. Will it not, my Fleming?'

'She grows wilder and wilder,' said Fleming; 'we have too many hearers for these strange words.'

'Roland,' said Catherine, 'in the name of God, begone! You cannot aid us here—Leave us to deal with her alone—Away—away!'

She thrust him to the door of the anteroom; yet even when he had entered that apartment, and shut the door, he could still hear the queen talk in a loud and determined tone, as if giving forth orders, until at length the voice died away in a feeble and continued lamentation.

At this crisis Catherine entered the anteroom. 'Be not too anxious,' she said, 'the crisis is now over; but keep the door fast—let no one enter until she is more composed.'

'In the name of God, what does this mean?' said the page; 'or what was there in the Lady Fleming's words to excite so wild a transport?'

'O, the Lady Fleming, the Lady Fleming,' said Catherine, repeating the words impatiently; 'the Lady Fleming is a fool—she loves her mistress, yet knows so little how to express her love, that were the Queen to ask her for very poison, she would deem it a point of duty not to resist her commands. I could have torn her starched head-tire from her formal head.—The Queen should have as soon had the heart out of my body, as the word Sebastian out of my lips.—That that piece of weaved tapestry should be a woman, and yet not have wit enough to tell a lie!'

'And what was this story of Sebastian?' said the page. 'By Heaven, Catherine, you are all riddles alike!'

'You are as great a fool as Fleming,' returned the impatient maiden; 'know ye not, that on the night of Henry Darnley's murder, and at the blowing up of the Kirk of Field, the Queen's absence was owing to her attending on a masque at Holyrood, given by her to grace the marriage of this same Sebastian, who, himself a favoured servant, married one of her female attendants, who was near to her person?'

'By Saint Giles!' said the page, 'I wonder not at her passion, but only marvel by what forgetfulness it was that she could urge the Lady Fleming with such a question.'

'I cannot account for it,' said Catherine; 'but it seems as if great and violent grief and horror sometimes obscure the memory, and spread a cloud like that of an exploding cannon over the circumstances with which they are accompanied. But I may not stay here, where I came not to moralize with your wisdom, but simply to cool my resentment against that unwise Lady Fleming, which I think hath now somewhat abated, so that I shall endure her presence without any desire to damage either her curch or vasquine. Meanwhile, keep fast that door—I would not for my life that any of these heretics saw her in the unhappy state, which, brought on her as it has been by the success of their own diabolical

plottings, they would not stick to call, in their snuffling cant, the judgment of Providence.'

She left the apartment just as the latch of the outward door was raised from without. But the bolt, which Roland had drawn on the inside, resisted the efforts of the person desirous to enter. 'Who is there?' said Græme aloud.

'It is I,' replied the harsh and yet slow voice of the steward Dryfesdale.

'You cannot enter now,' returned the youth.

'And wherefore?' demanded Dryfesdale, 'seeing I come but to do my duty, and inquire what mean the shrieks from the apartment of the Moabitish woman. Wherefore, I say, since such is mine errand, can I not enter?'

'Simply,' replied the youth, 'because the bolt is drawn, and I have no fancy to undo it. I have the right side of the door to-day, as you had last night.'

'Thou art ill-advised, thou malapert boy,' replied the steward, 'to speak to me in such fashion; but I shall inform my lady of thine insolence.'

'The insolence,' said the page, 'is meant for thee only, in fair guerdon of thy discourtesy to me. For thy lady's information, I have answer more courteous--you may say that the Queen is ill at ease, and desires to be disturbed neither by visits nor messages.'

'I conjure you, in the name of God,' said the old man, with more solemnity in his tone than he had hitherto used, 'to let me know if her malady really gains power on her!'

'She will have no aid at your hand, or at your lady's—wherefore, begone and trouble us no more—we neither want, nor will accept of, aid at your hands.'

With this positive reply, the steward, grumbling and dissatisfied, returned down-stairs.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves, who take their humours for a warrant
To break into the bloody house of life,
And on the winking of authority
To understand a law.

KING JOHN.

THE Lady of Lochleven sat alone in her chamber, endeavouring, with sincere but imperfect zeal, to fix her eyes and her attention on the black-lettered Bible which lay before her, bound in velvet and embroidery, and adorned with massive silver clasps and knosps. But she found her utmost efforts unable to withdraw her mind from the resentful recollection of what had last night passed betwixt her and the queen, in which the latter had with such bitter taunt reminded her of her early and long-repented transgression.

'Why,' she said, 'should I resent so deeply that another reproaches me with that which I have never ceased to make matter of blushing to myself? and yet, why should this woman, who reaps—at least, has reaped—the fruits of my folly, and has jostled my son aside from the throne, why should she, in the face of all my domestics, and of her own, dare to upbraid me with my shame? Is she not in my power? Does she not fear me? Ha! wily tempter, I will wrestle with thee strongly, and with better suggestions than my own evil heart can supply!'

She again took up the sacred volume, and was endeavouring to fix her attention on its contents, when she was disturbed by a tap at the door of the room. It opened at her command, and the steward Dryfesdale entered, and stood before her with a gloomy and perturbed expression on his brow.

'What has chanced, Dryfesdale, that thou lookest thus?' said his mistress—'Have there been evil tidings of my son, or of my grandchildren?'

'No, lady,' replied Dryfesdale, 'but you were deeply insulted last night, and I fear me thou art as deeply avenged this morning—Where is the chaplain?'

'What mean you by hints so dark, and a question so sudden? The chaplain, as you well know, is absent at Perth upon an assembly of the brethren.'

'I care not,' answered the steward; 'he is but a priest of Baal.'

'Dryfesdale,' said the lady sternly, 'what meanest thou? I have ever heard that in the Low Countries thou didst herd with the Anabaptist preachers, those boars which tear up the vintage—But the ministry which suits me and my house must content my retainers.'

'I would I had good ghostly counsel, though,' replied the steward, not attending to his mistress's rebuke, and seeming to speak to himself. 'This woman of Moab'——

'Speak of her with reverence,' said the lady; 'she is a king's daughter.'

'Be it so,' replied Dryfesdale; 'she goes where there is little difference betwixt her and a beggar's child—Mary of Scotland is dying.'

'Dying, and in my castle!' said the lady, starting up in alarm; 'of what disease, or by what accident?'

'Bear patience, lady. The ministry was mine.'

'Thine, villain and traitor!—how didst thou dare'——

'I heard you insulted, lady—I heard you demand vengeance—I promised you should have it, and I now bring tidings of it.'

'Dryfesdale, I trust thou ravest!' said the lady.

'I rave not,' replied the steward. 'That which was written of me a million of years ere I saw the light, must be executed by me. She hath that in her veins that, I fear me, will soon stop the springs of life.'

'Cruel villain!' exclaimed the lady, 'thou hast not poisoned her?'

'And if I had,' said Dryfesdale, 'what does it so greatly merit? Men bane vermin—why not rid them of their enemies so? in Italy they will do it for a cruizuedor.'

'Cowardly ruffian, begone from my sight!'

'Think better of my zeal, lady,' said the steward, 'and judge not without looking around you. Lindesay, Ruthven, and your kinsman Morton, poniarded Rizzio, and yet you now see no blood on their embroidery—the Lord Sempill stabbed the Lord of Sanquhar—does his bonnet

[illegible] jot more awry on his brow? What noble lives in Scotland who has not had a share, for policy or revenge, in some such dealing?—and who imputes it to them? Be not cheated with names—a dagger or a draught work to the same end, and are little unlike—a glass phial imprisons the one, and a leathern sheath the other—one deals with the brain, the other sluices the blood—Yet, I say not I gave aught to this lady.'

'What dost thou mean by this dallying with me?' said the lady; 'as thou wouldst save thy neck from the rope it merits, tell me the whole truth of this story—thou hast long been known a dangerous man.'

'Ay, in my master's service I can be cold and sharp as my sword. Be it known to you, that when last on shore, I consulted with a woman of skill and power, called Nicneven, of whom the country has rung for some brief time past. Fools asked her for charms to make them beloved, misers for means to increase their store; some demanded to know the future—an idle wish, since it cannot be altered; others would have an explanation of the past—idler still, since it cannot be recalled. I heard their queries with scorn, and demanded the means of avenging myself of a deadly enemy, for I grow old, and may trust no longer to Bilboa blade. She gave me a packet—"Mix that," said she, "with any liquid, and thy vengeance is complete."'

'Villain! and you mixed it with the food of this imprisoned lady, to the dishonour of thy master's house?'

'To redeem the insulted honour of my master's house, I mixed the contents of the packet with the jar of succory-water: they seldom fail to drain it, and the woman loves it over all.'

'It was a work of hell,' said the Lady Lochleven, 'both the asking and the granting. Away, wretched man, let us see if aid be yet too late!'

'They will not admit us, madam, save we enter by force—I have been twice at the door, but can obtain no entrance.'

'We will beat it level with the ground, if needful—And hold—summon Randal hither instantly.—Randal, here is a foul and evil chance befallen—send off a boat instantly to Kinross, the chamberlain Luke Lundin is said to have skill—Fetch off, too, that foul witch Nicneven; she shall first counteract her own spell, and then be burned to ashes in the island of Saint Serf.* Away—away—Tell them to hoist sail and ply oar, as ever they would have good of the Douglas's hand!'

'Mother Nicneven will not be lightly found, or fetched hither on these conditions,' answered Dryfesdale.

'Then grant her full assurance of safety—Look to it, for thine own life must answer for this lady's recovery.'

'I might have guessed that,' said Dryfesdale sullenly; 'but it is my comfort I have avenged mine own cause, as well as yours. She hath scoffed and scripped at me, and encouraged her saucy minion of a page to ridicule my stiff gait and slow speech. I felt it borne in upon me that I was to be avenged on them.'

'Go to the western turret,' said the lady, 'and remain there in ward until we see how this gear will terminate. I know thy resolved disposition—thou wilt not attempt escape.'

'Not were the walls of the turret of egg-shells, and the lake sheeted with ice,' said Dryfesdale. 'I am well taught, and strong in belief, that man does nought of himself; he is but the foam on the billow, which rises, bubbles, and bursts, not by its own effort, but by the mightier impulse of fate which urges him. Yet, lady, if I may advise, amid this zeal for the life of the Jezebel of Scotland, forget not what is due to thine own honour, and keep the matter secret as you may.'

So saying, the gloomy fatalist turned from her, and stalked off with sullen composure to the place of confinement allotted to him.

His lady caught at his last hint, and only expressed her fear that the prisoner had partaken of some unwholesome food, and was dangerously ill. The castle was soon alarmed and in confusion. Randal was despatched to the shore to fetch off Lundin, with such remedies as could counteract poison; and with further instructions to bring Mother Nicneven, if she could be found, with full power to pledge the Lady of Lochleven's word for her safety.

Meanwhile the Lady of Lochleven herself held parley at the door of the queen's apartment, and in vain urged the page to undo it.

'Foolish boy!' she said, 'thine own life and thy lady's are at stake—Open, I say, or we will cause the door to be broken down.'

'I may not open the door without my royal mistress's orders,' answered Roland; 'she has been very ill, and now she slumbers—if you wake her by using violence, let the consequence be on you and your followers.'

'Was ever woman in a strait so fearful?' exclaimed the Lady of Lochleven.—'At least, thou rash boy, beware that no one tastes the food, but especially the jar of succory-water.'

She then hastened to the turret, where Dryfesdale had composedly resigned himself to imprisonment. She found him reading, and demanded of him, 'Was thy fell potion of speedy operation?'

'Slow,' answered the steward. 'The hag asked me which I chose—I told her I loved a slow and sure revenge. "Revenge," said I, "is the highest-flavoured draught which man tastes upon earth, and he should sip it by little and little—not drain it up greedily at once."'

'Against whom, unhappy man, couldst thou nourish so fell a revenge?'

'I had many objects, but the chief was that insolent page.'

'The boy!—thou inhuman man,' exclaimed the lady; 'what could he do to deserve thy malice?'

'He rose in your favour, and you graced him with your commissions—that was one thing. He rose in that of George Douglas also—that was another. He was the favourite of the Calvinistic Henderson, who hated me because my spirit disowns a separated priesthood. The

* [At an early period this small island, near the south end of Lochleven, contained a religious house of the Culdees, dedicated to Saint Serf or Servanus. It afterwards became a cell or priory of the Canon Regulars of Saint Augustine belonging to Saint Andrews.]

Moabitish Queen held him dear—winds from each opposing point blew in his favour—the old servitor of your house was held lightly among ye—above all, from the first time I saw his face, I longed to destroy him.'

'What fiend have I nurtured in my house!' replied the lady. 'May God forgive me the sin of having given thee food and raiment!'

'You might not choose, lady,' answered the steward. 'Long ere this castle was builded—ay, long ere the islet which sustains it reared its head above the blue water, I was destined to be your faithful slave, and you to be my ungrateful mistress. Remember you not when I plunged amid the victorious French, in the time of this lady's mother, and brought off your husband, when those who had hung at the same breasts with him dared not attempt the rescue?—Remember how I plunged into the lake when your grandson's skiff was overtaken by the tempest, boarded, and steered her safe to the land. Lady, the servant of a Scottish baron is he who regards not his own life, or that of any other, save his master. And, for the death of the woman, I had tried the potion on her sooner, had not Master George been her taster. Her death—would it not be the happiest news that Scotland ever heard? Is she not of the bloody Guisian stock, whose sword was so often red with the blood of God's saints? Is she not the daughter of the wretched tyrant James, whom Heaven cast down from his kingdom and his pride, even as the king of Babylon was smitten?'

'Peace, villain!' said the lady—a thousand varied recollections thronging on her mind at the mention of her royal lover's name; 'peace, and disturb not the ashes of the dead—of the royal, of the unhappy dead. Read thy Bible; and may God grant thee to avail thyself better of its contents than thou hast yet done!' She departed hastily, and, as she reached the next apartment, the tears rose in her eyes so hastily, that she was compelled to stop and use her kerchief to dry them. 'I expected not this,' she said, 'no more than to have drawn water from the dry flint, or sap from a withered tree. I saw with a dry eye the apostasy and shame of George Douglas, the hope of my son's house—the child of my love; and yet I now weep for him who has so long lain in his grave—for him to whom I owe it, that his daughter can make a scoffing and a jest of my name! But she is *his* daughter—my heart, hardened against her for so many causes, relents when a glance of her eye places her father unexpectedly before me—and as often her likeness to that true daughter of the house of Guise, her detested mother, has again confirmed my resolution. But she must not—must not die in my house, and by so foul a practice. Thank God, the operation of the potion is slow, and may be counteracted. I will to her apartment once more. But O, that hardened villain, whose fidelity we held in such esteem, and had such high proof of! What miracle can unite so much wickedness and so much truth in one bosom!'

The Lady of Lochleven was not aware how far minds of a certain gloomy and determined cast by nature may be warped by a keen sense of petty injuries and insults, combining with the love of gain, and sense of self-interest, and amalgamated with the crude, wild, and indigested fanatical opinions which this man had gathered among the crazy sectaries of Germany; or how far the doctrines of fatalism, which he had embraced so decidedly, sear the human conscience, by representing our actions as the result of inevitable necessity.

During her visit to the prisoner, Roland had communicated to Catherine the tenor of the conversation he had had with her at the door of the apartment. The quick intelligence of that lively maiden instantly comprehended the outline of what was believed to have happened, but her prejudices hurried her beyond the truth.

'They meant to have poisoned us,' she exclaimed in horror, 'and there stands the fatal liquor which should have done the deed!—Ay, as soon as Douglas ceased to be our taster, our food was likely to be fatally seasoned. Thou, Roland, who shouldst have made the essay, wert readily doomed to die with us. O, dearest Lady Fleming, pardon, pardon, for the injuries I said to you in my anger—your words were prompted by Heaven to save our lives, and especially that of the injured Queen. But what have we now to do? that old crocodile of the lake will be presently back to shed her hypocritical tears over our dying agonies.—Lady Fleming, what shall we do?'

'Our Lady help us in our need!' she replied; 'how should I tell?—unless we were to make our plaint to the Regent.'

'Make our plaint to the devil,' said Catherine impatiently, 'and accuse his dam at the foot of his burning throne!—The Queen still sleeps—we must gain time. The poisoning hag must not know her scheme has miscarried; the old envenomed spider has but too many ways of mending her broken web.—The jar of succory-water,' said she—'Roland, if thou be'st a man, help me—empty the jar on the chimney or from the window—make such waste among the viands as if we had made our usual meal, and leave the fragments on cup and porringer, but taste nothing, as thou lovest thy life. I will sit by the Queen, and tell her at her waking in what a fearful pass we stand. Her sharp wit and ready spirit will teach us what is best to be done. Meanwhile, till further notice, observe, Roland, that the Queen is in a state of torpor—that Lady Fleming is indisposed—that character' (speaking in a lower tone) 'will suit her best, and save her wits some labour in vain. I am not so much indisposed, thou understandest.'

'And I?' said the page——

'You?' replied Catherine, 'you are quite well—who thinks it worth while to poison puppy-dogs or pages?'

'Does this levity become the time?' asked the page.

'It does, it does,' answered Catherine Seyton; 'if the Queen approves, I see plainly how this disconcerted attempt may do us good service.'

She went to work while she spoke, eagerly assisted by Roland. The breakfast-table soon displayed the appearance as if the meal had been eaten as usual; and the ladies retired as

as possible into the Queen's sleeping apartment. At a new summons of the Lady Lochleven, the page undid the door, and admitted her into the anteroom, asking her pardon for having withstood her, alleging in excuse that the Queen had fallen into a heavy slumber since she had broken her fast.

'She has eaten and drunken, then?' said the Lady of Lochleven.

'Surely,' replied the page, 'according to her Grace's ordinary custom, unless upon the fasts of the Church.'

'The jar,' she said, hastily examining it, 'it is empty—drank the Lady Mary the whole of this water?'

'A large part, madam; and I heard the Lady Catherine Seyton jestingly upbraid the Lady Mary Fleming with having taken more than a just share of what remained, so that but little fell to her own lot.'

'And are they well in health?' said the Lady of Lochleven.

'Lady Fleming,' said the page, 'complains of lethargy, and looks duller than usual; and the Lady Catherine of Seyton feels her head somewhat more giddy than is her wont.'

He raised his voice a little as he said these words, to apprise the ladies of the part assigned to each of them, and not, perhaps, without the wish of conveying to the ears of Catherine the page-like jest which lurked in the allotment.

'I will enter the Queen's bedchamber,' said the Lady Lochleven; 'my business is express.'

As she advanced to the door, the voice of Catherine Seyton was heard from within—'No one can enter here—the Queen sleeps.'

'I will not be controlled, young lady,' replied the Lady of Lochleven; 'there is, I wot, no inner bar, and I will enter in your despite.'

'There is, indeed, no inner bar,' answered Catherine firmly, 'but there are the staples where that bar should be; and into those staples have I thrust mine arm, like an ancestress of your own, when, better employed than the Douglases of our days, she thus defended the bedchamber of her sovereign against murderers. Try your force, then, and see whether a Seyton cannot rival in courage a maiden of the house of Douglas.'

'I dare not attempt the pass at such risk,' said the Lady of Lochleven. 'Strange that this princess, with all that justly attaches to her as blameworthy, should preserve such empire over the minds of her attendants.—Damsel, I give thee my honour that I come for the Queen's safety and advantage. Awaken her, if thou lovest her, and pray her leave that I may enter—I will retire from the door the whilst.'

'Thou wilt not awaken the Queen?' said the Lady Fleming.

'What choice have we?' said the ready-witted maiden, 'unless you deem it better to wait till the Lady Lochleven herself plays lady of the bedchamber. Her fit of patience will not last long, and the Queen must be prepared to meet her.'

'But thou wilt bring back her Grace's fit by thus disturbing her.'

'Heaven forbid!' replied Catherine; 'but if so, it must pass for an effect of the poison. I hope better things, and that the Queen will be able when she wakes to form her own judgment in this terrible crisis. Meanwhile, do thou, dear Lady Fleming, practise to look as dull and heavy as the alertness of thy spirit will permit.'

Catherine kneeled by the side of the Queen's bed, and, kissing her hand repeatedly, succeeded at last in awakening without alarming her. She seemed surprised to find that she was ready dressed, but sat up in her bed, and appeared so perfectly composed, that Catherine Seyton, without further preamble, judged it safe to inform her of the predicament in which they were placed. Mary turned pale, and crossed herself again and again, when she heard the imminent danger in which she had stood. But, like the Ulysses of Homer,

——Hardly waking yet,
Sprung in her mind the momentary wit,

and she at once understood her situation, with the dangers and advantages that attended it.

'We cannot do better,' she said, after her hasty conference with Catherine, pressing her at the same time to her bosom, and kissing her forehead; 'we cannot do better than to follow the scheme so happily devised by thy quick wit and bold affection. Undo the door to the Lady Lochleven—She shall meet her match in art, though not in perfidy. Fleming, draw close the curtain, and get thee behind it—thou art a better tire-woman than an actress; do but breathe heavily, and, if thou wilt, groan slightly, and it will top thy part. Hark! they come. Now, Catherine of Medicis, may thy spirit inspire me, for a cold northern brain is too blunt for this scene!'

Ushered by Catherine Seyton, and stepping as light as she could, the Lady Lochleven was shown into the twilight apartment, and conducted to the side of the couch, where Mary, pallid and exhausted from a sleepless night, and the subsequent agitation of the morning, lay extended so listlessly as might well confirm the worst fears of her hostess.

'Now, God forgive us our sins!' said the Lady of Lochleven, forgetting her pride, and throwing herself on her knees by the side of the bed; 'it is too true—she is murdered!'

'Who is in the chamber?' said Mary, as if awaking from a heavy sleep. Seyton, Fleming, where are you? I heard a strange voice. Who waits?—Call Courcelles.'

'Alas! her memory is at Holyrood, though her body is at Lochleven.—Forgive, madam,' continued the lady, 'if I call your attention to me—I am Margaret Erskine, of the house of Mar, by marriage Lady Douglas of Lochleven.'

'O, our gentle hostess,' answered the queen, 'who hath such care of our lodgings and of our diet—We cumber you too much and too long, good Lady of Lochleven; but we now trust your task of hospitality is well-nigh ended.'

'Her words go like a knife through my heart,' said the Lady of Lochleven.—'With a breaking heart, I pray your Grace to tell me what is your ailment, that aid may be had, if there be yet time.'

'Nay, my ailment,' replied the queen, 'is

nothing worth telling, or worth a leech's notice --my limbs feel heavy—my heart feels cold—a prisoner's limbs and heart are rarely otherwise --fresh air, methinks, and freedom, would soon revive me; but as the Estates have ordered it, death alone can break my prison-doors.'

'Were it possible, madam,' said the lady, 'that your liberty could restore your perfect health, I would myself encounter the resentment of the Regent—of my son, Sir William --of my whole friends, rather than you should meet your fate in this castle.'

'Alas, madam!' said the Lady Fleming, who conceived the time propitious to show that her own address had been held too lightly of; 'it is but trying what good freedom may work upon us; for myself, I think a free walk on the greensward would do me much good at heart.'

The Lady of Lochleven rose from the bedside, and darted a penetrating look at the elder valetudinary. 'Are you so evil-disposed, Lady Fleming?'

'Evil-disposed, indeed, madam,' replied the court dame, 'and more especially since breakfast.'

'Help! help!' exclaimed Catherine, anxious to break off a conversation which boded her schemes no good; 'help! I say, help! the Queen is about to pass away. Aid her, Lady Lochleven, if you be a woman!'

The lady hastened to support the queen's head, who, turning her eyes towards her with an air of great languor, exclaimed, 'Thanks, my dearest Lady of Lochleven—notwithstanding some passages of late, I have never misconstrued or misdoubted your affection to our house. It was proved, as I have heard, before I was born.'

The Lady Lochleven sprung from the floor, on which she had again knelt, and, having paced the apartment in great disorder, flung open the lattice, as if to get air.

'Now, Our Lady forgive me!' said Catherine to herself. 'How deep must the love of sarcasm be implanted in the breasts of us women, since the Queen, with all her sense, will risk ruin rather than rein in her wit!' She then adventured, stooping over the queen's person, to press her arm with her hand, saying, at the same time, 'For God's sake, madam, restrain yourself!'

'Thou art too forward, maiden,' said the queen; but immediately added, in a low whisper, 'Forgive me, Catherine; but when I felt the hag's murderous hands busy about my head and neck, I felt such disgust and hatred, that I must have said something, or died. But I will be schooled to better behaviour—only see that thou let her not touch me.'

'Now, God be praised!' said the Lady of Lochleven, withdrawing her head from the window, 'the boat comes as fast as sail and oar can send wood through water. It brings the leech and a female—certainly, from the appearance, the very person I was in quest of. Were she but well out of this castle, with our honour safe, I would that she were on the top of the wildest mountain in Norway; or I would I had been there myself, ere I had undertaken this trust.'

While she thus expressed herself, standing apart at one window, Roland Græme, from the other, watched the boat bursting through the waters of the lake, which glided from its side in ripple and in foam. He, too, became sensible that at the stern was seated the medical chamberlain, clad in his black velvet cloak; and that his own relative, Magdalen Græme, in her assumed character of Mother Nicneven, stood in the bow, her hands clasped together and pointed towards the castle, and her attitude, even at that distance, expressing enthusiastic eagerness to arrive at the landing-place. They arrived there accordingly, and, while the supposed witch was detained in a room beneath, the physician was ushered to the queen's apartment, which he entered with all due professional solemnity. Catherine had, in the meanwhile, fallen back from the queen's bed, and taken an opportunity to whisper to Roland, 'Methinks from the information of the threadbare velvet cloak and the solemn beard, there would be little trouble in haltering yonder ass. But thy grandmother, Roland—thy grandmother's zeal will ruin us, if she get not a hint to dissemble.'

Roland, without reply, glided towards the door of the apartment, crossed the parlour, and safely entered the antechamber; but when he attempted to pass farther, the word 'Back! back!' echoed from one to the other, by two men armed with carabines, convinced him that the Lady of Lochleven's suspicions had not, even in the midst of her alarms, been so far lulled to sleep as to omit the precaution of stationing sentinels on her prisoners. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the parlour or audience-chamber, in which he found the lady of the castle in conference with her learned leech.

'A truce with your cant phrase and your solemn foppery, Lundin,' in such terms she accosted the man of art, 'and let me know instantly, if thou canst tell, whether this lady hath swallowed aught that is less than wholesome?'

'Nay, but, good lady—honoured patroness—to whom I am alike bondsman in my medical and official capacity, deal reasonably with me. If this, mine illustrious patient, will not answer a question, saving with sighs and moans—if that other honourable lady will do nought but yawn in my face when I inquire after the diagnostics - and if that other young damsel, who I profess is a comely maiden'——

'Talk not to me of comeliness or of damsels,' said the Lady of Lochleven; 'I say, are they evil-disposed?—In one word, man, have they taken poison, ay or no?'

'Poisons, madam,' said the learned leech, 'are of various sorts. There is your animal poison, as the lepus marinus, as mentioned by Dioscorides and Galen—there are mineral and semi-mineral poisons, as those compounded of sublimate regulus of antimony, vitriol, and the arsenical salts—there are your poisons from herbs and vegetables, as the aqua cymbalariæ, opium, aconitum, cantharides, and the like—there are also'——

'Now, out upon thee for a learned fool! and I myself am no better for expecting an oracle from such a log,' said the lady.

'Nay, but if your ladyship will have patience —if I knew what food they have partaken of, or could see but the remnants of what they have last eaten—for as to the external and internal symptoms I can discover nought like; for, as Galen saith in his second book *de Antidotis*'——

'Away, fool!' said the lady; 'send me that hag hither; she shall avouch what it was that she hath given to the wretch Dryfesdale, or the pilniewinks and thumbikins shall wrench it out of her finger-joints!'

'Art hath no enemy unless the ignorant,' said the mortified doctor; veiling, however, his remark under the Latin version, and stepping apart into a corner to watch the result.

In a minute or two Magdalen Græme entered the apartment, dressed as we have described her at the revel, but with her muffler thrown back, and all affectation of disguise. She was attended by two guards, of whose presence she did not seem even to be conscious, and who followed her with an air of embarrassment and timidity, which was probably owing to their belief in her supernatural power, coupled with the effect produced by her bold and undaunted demeanour. She confronted the Lady of Lochleven, who seemed to endure with high disdain the confidence of her air and manner.

'Wretched woman!' said the lady, after essaying for a moment to bear her down, before she addressed her, by the stately severity of her look, 'what was that powder which thou didst give to a servant of this house, by name Jasper Dryfesdale, that he might work out with it some slow and secret vengeance? Confess its nature and properties, or, by the honour of Douglas, I give thee to fire and stake before the sun is lower!'

'Alas!' said Magdalen Græme in reply, 'and when became a Douglas or a Douglas's man so unfurnished of his means of revenge, that he should seek them at the hands of a poor and solitary woman? The towers in which your captives pine away into unpitied graves, yet stand fast on their foundation—the crimes wrought in them have not yet burst their vaults asunder—your men have still their cross-bows, pistolets, and daggers—why need you seek to herbs or charms for the execution of your revenges?'

'Hear me, foul hag,' said the Lady Lochleven,—'but what avails speaking to thee?—Bring Dryfesdale hither, and let them be confronted together.'

'You may spare your retainers the labour,' replied Magdalen Græme. 'I came not here to be confronted with a base groom, nor to answer the interrogatories of James's heretical leman—I came to speak with the Queen of Scotland.—Give place there!'

And while the Lady Lochleven stood confounded at her boldness, and at the reproach she had cast upon her, Magdalen Græme strode past her into the bedchamber of the queen, and, kneeling on the floor, made a salutation as if, in the oriental fashion, she meant to touch the earth with her forehead.

'Hail, princess!' she said, 'hail, daughter of many a king, but graced above them all in that thou art called to suffer for the true faith!—hail to thee, the pure gold of whose crown has been tried in the seven-times heated furnace of affliction—hear the comfort which God and Our Lady send thee by the mouth of thy unworthy servant.—But first'—and, stooping her head, she crossed herself repeatedly, and, still upon her knees, appeared to be rapidly reciting some formula of devotion.

'Seize her, and drag her to the massy-more!—to the deepest dungeon with the sorceress, whose master, the devil, could alone have inspired her with boldness enough to insult the mother of Douglas in his own castle!'

Thus spoke the incensed Lady of Lochleven, but the physician presumed to interpose.

'I pray of you, honoured madam, she be permitted to take her course without interruption. Peradventure we shall learn something concerning the nostrum she hath ventured, contrary to law and the rules of art, to adhibit to these ladies, through the medium of the steward Dryfesdale.'

'For a fool,' replied the Lady of Lochleven, 'thou hast counselled wisely—I will bridle my resentment till their conference be over.'

'God forbid, honoured lady,' said Dr. Lundin, 'that you should suppress it longer—nothing may more endanger the frame of your honoured body; and truly, if there be witchcraft in this matter, it is held by the vulgar, and even by solid authors on demonology, that three scruples of the ashes of the witch, when she hath been well and carefully burned at a stake, is a grand catholicon in such matters, even as they prescribe *crinis canis rabidi*, a hair of the dog that bit the patient, in cases of hydrophobia. I warrant neither treatment, being out of the regular practice of the schools; but, in the present case, there can be little harm in trying the conclusion upon this old necromancer and quacksalver—*fiat experimentum* (as we say) *in corpore vili.*'

'Peace, fool!' said the lady, 'she is about to speak.'

At that moment Magdalen Græme arose from her knees, and turned her countenance on the queen, at the same time advancing her foot, extending her arm, and assuming the mien and attitude of a sibyl in frenzy. As her grey hair floated back from beneath her coif, and her eye gleamed fire from under its shaggy eyebrow, the effect of her expressive, though emaciated features, was heightened by an enthusiasm approaching to insanity, and her appearance struck with awe all who were present. Her eyes for a time glanced wildly around, as if seeking for something to aid her in collecting her powers of expression, and her lips had a nervous and quivering motion, as those of one who would fain speak, yet rejects as inadequate the words which present themselves. Mary herself caught the infection as if by a sort of magnetic influence, and, raising herself from her bed, without being able to withdraw her eyes from those of Magdalen, waited as if for the oracle of a Pythoness. She waited not long, for no sooner had the enthusiast collected herself, than her gaze became intensely steady, her features assumed a determined energy, and when she began to speak, the words flowed from her with a profuse fluency, which might have passed for inspiration, and which, perhaps, she herself mistook for such.

'Arise,' she said, 'Queen of France and of England! Arise, Lioness of Scotland, and be not dismayed though the nets of the hunters have encircled thee! Stoop not to feign with the false ones, whom thou shalt soon meet in the

field. The issue of battle is with the God of armies, but by battle thy cause shall be tried. Lay aside, then, the arts of lower mortals, and assume those which become a queen! True defender of the only true faith, the armoury of Heaven is open to thee! Faithful daughter of the Church, take the keys of Saint Peter, to bind and to loose!—Royal princess of the land, take the sword of Saint Paul, to smite and to shear! There is darkness in thy destiny;—but not in these towers, not under the rule of their haughty mistress, shall that destiny be closed—In other lands the lioness may crouch to the power of the tigress, but not in her own—not in Scotland shall the Queen of Scotland long remain captive—nor is the fate of the royal Stuart in the hands of the traitor Douglas. Let the Lady of Lochleven double her bolts and deepen her dungeons, they shall not retain thee—each element shall give thee its assistance ere thou shalt continue captive—the land shall lend its earthquakes, the water its waves, the air its tempests, the fire its devouring flashes, to desolate this house, rather than it shall continue the place of thy captivity.—Hear this, and tremble, all ye who fight against the light, for she says it, to whom it hath been assured!'

She was silent, and the astonished physician said, 'If there was ever an *Energumene*, or possessed demoniac, in our days, there is a devil speaking with that woman's tongue!'

'Practice,' said the Lady of Lochleven, recovering her surprise; 'here is all practice and imposture—To the dungeon with her!'

'Lady of Lochleven,' said Mary, arising from her bed, and coming forward with her wonted dignity, 'ere you make arrest on any one in our presence, hear me but one word. I have done you some wrong—I believed you privy to the murderous purpose of your vassal, and I deceived you in suffering you to believe it had taken effect. I did you wrong, Lady of Lochleven, for I perceive your purpose to aid me was sincere. We tasted not of the liquid, nor are we now sick, save that we languish for our freedom.'

'It is avowed like Mary of Scotland,' said Magdalen Græme; 'and know, besides, that had the Queen drained the draught to the dregs, it was harmless as the water from a sainted spring.—Trow ye, proud woman,' she added, addressing herself to the Lady of Lochleven, 'that I—I—would have been the wretch to put poison in the hands of a servant or vassal of the house of Lochleven, knowing whom that house contained? As soon would I have furnished drug to slay my own daughter!'

'Am I thus bearded in mine own castle?' said the lady; 'to the dungeon with her!—she shall abye what is due to the vendor of poisons and practiser of witchcraft.'

'Yet hear me for an instant, Lady of Lochleven,' said Mary; 'and do you,' to Magdalen, 'be silent at my command.—Your steward, lady, has by confession attempted my life, and those of my household, and this woman hath done her best to save them, by furnishing him with what was harmless, in place of the fatal drugs which he expected. Methinks I propose to you but a fair exchange, when I say I forgive your vassal with all my heart, and leave vengeance to God and to his conscience, so that you also forgive the boldness of this woman in your presence; for we trust you do not hold it as a crime that she substituted an innocent beverage for the mortal poison which was to have drenched our cup.'

'Heaven forefend, madam,' said the lady, 'that I should account that a crime which saved the house of Douglas from a foul breach of honour and hospitality! We have written to our son touching our vassal's delict, and he must abide his doom, which will most likely be death. Touching this woman, her trade is damnable by Scripture, and is mortally punished by the wise laws of our ancestry—she also must abide her doom.'

'And have I then,' said the queen, 'no claim on the house of Lochleven for the wrong I have so nearly suffered within their walls? I ask but in requital the life of a frail and aged woman, whose brain, as yourself may judge, seems somewhat affected by years and suffering.'

'If the Lady Mary,' replied the inflexible Lady of Lochleven, 'hath been menaced with wrong in the house of Douglas, it may be regarded as some compensation, that her complots have cost that house the exile of a valued son.'

'Plead no more for me, my gracious sovereign,' said Magdalen Græme, 'nor abase yourself to ask so much as a grey hair of my head at her hands. I knew the risk at which I served my Church and my Queen, and was ever prompt to pay my poor life as the ransom. It is a comfort to think that, in slaying me, or in restraining my freedom, or even in injuring that single grey hair, the house, whose honour she boasts so highly, will have filled up the measure of their shame by the breach of their solemn written assurance of safety.'—And, taking from her bosom a paper, she handed it to the queen.

'It is a solemn assurance of safety in life and limb,' said Queen Mary, 'with space to come and go, under the hand and seal of the Chamberlain of Kinross, granted to Magdalen Græme, commonly called Mother Nicneven, in consideration of her consenting to put herself for the space of twenty-four hours, if required, within the iron gate of the Castle of Lochleven.'

'Knave!' said the lady, turning to the chamberlain, 'how dared you grant her such a protection?'

'It was by your ladyship's orders, transmitted by Randal, as he can bear witness,' replied Dr. Lundin; 'nay, I am only like the pharmacopolist, who compounds the drugs after the order of the mediciner.'

'I remember—I remember,' answered the lady; 'but I meant the assurance only to be used in case, by residing in another jurisdiction, she could not have been apprehended under our warrant.'

'Nevertheless,' said the queen, 'the Lady of Lochleven is bound by the action of her deputy in granting the assurance.'

'Madam,' replied the lady, 'the house of Douglas have never broken their safe-conduct, and never will—too deeply did they suffer by such a breach of trust, exercised on themselves, when your Grace's ancestor, the second James, in defiance of the rights of hospitality, and of

his own written assurance of safety, poniarded the brave Earl of Douglas with his own hand, and within two yards of the social board, at which he had just before sat the King of Scotland's honoured guest.'

'Methinks,' said the queen carelessly, 'in consideration of so very recent and enormous a tragedy, which I think only chanced some six-score years agone, the Douglases should have shown themselves less tenacious of the company of their sovereigns, than you, Lady of Lochleven, seem to be of mine.'

'Let Randal,' said the lady, 'take the hag back to Kinross, and set her at full liberty, discharging her from our bounds in future, on peril of her head.—And let your wisdom,' to the chamberlain, 'keep her company. And fear not for your character, though I send you in such company; for, granting her to be a witch, it would be a waste of faggots to burn you for a wizard.'

The crestfallen chamberlain was preparing to depart; but Magdalen Græme, collecting herself, was about to reply, when the queen interposed, saying, 'Good mother, we heartily thank you for your unfeigned zeal towards our person, and pray you, as our liege-woman, that you abstain from whatever may lead you into personal danger; and further, it is our will that you depart without a word of further parley with any one in this castle. For thy present guerdon, take this small reliquary—it was given to us by our uncle the Cardinal, and hath had the benediction of the Holy Father himself;—and now depart in peace and in silence.—For you, learned sir,' continued the queen, advancing to the doctor, who made his reverence in a manner doubly embarrassed by the awe of the queen's presence, which made him fear to do too little, and by the apprehension of his lady's displeasure in case he should chance to do too much—'for you, learned sir, as it was not your fault, though surely our own good fortune, that we did not need your skill at this time, it would not become us, however circumstanced, to suffer our leech to leave us without such guerdon as we can offer.'

With these words, and with the grace which never forsook her, though in the present case there might lurk under it a little gentle ridicule, she offered a small embroidered purse to the chamberlain, who, with extended hand and arched back, his learned face stooping until a physiognomist might have practised the metoposcopical science upon it, as seen from behind betwixt his gambadoes, was about to accept of the professional recompense offered by so fair as well as illustrious a hand. But the lady interposed, and, regarding the chamberlain, said aloud, 'No servant of our house, without instantly relinquishing that character, and incurring withal our highest displeasure, shall dare receive any gratuity at the hand of the Lady Mary.'

Sadly and slowly the chamberlain raised his depressed stature into the perpendicular attitude, and left the apartment dejectedly, followed by Magdalen Græme, after, with mute but expressive gesture, she had kissed the reliquary with which the queen had presented her, and, raising her clasped hands and uplifted eyes towards heaven, had seemed to entreat a benediction upon the royal dame. As she left the castle, and went towards the quay where the boat lay, Roland Græme, anxious to communicate with her if possible, threw himself in her way, and might have succeeded in exchanging a few words with her, as she was guarded only by the dejected chamberlain and his halberdiers, but she seemed to have taken, in its most strict and literal acceptation, the command to be silent which she had received from the queen; for, to the repeated signs of her grandson, she only replied by laying her finger on her lip. Dr. Lundin was not so reserved. Regret for the handsome gratuity, and for the compulsory task of self-denial imposed on him, had grieved the spirit of that worthy officer and learned mediciner—'Even thus, my friend,' said he, squeezing the page's hand as he bade him farewell, 'is merit rewarded. I came to cure this unhappy lady—and I profess she well deserves the trouble, for, say what they will of her, she hath a most winning manner, a sweet voice, a gracious smile, and a most majestic wave of her hand. If she was not poisoned, say, my dear Master Roland, was that fault of mine, I being ready to cure her if she had?—and now I am denied the permission to accept my well-earned honorarium.—O Galen! O Hippocrates! is the graduate's cap and doctor's scarlet brought to this pass? *Frustra fatigamus remediis ægros!*'

He wiped his eyes, stepped on the gunwale, and the boat pushed off from the shore, and went merrily across the lake, which was dimpled by the summer wind.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

> Death distant?—No, alas! he's ever with us,
> And shakes the dart at us in all our actings:
> He lurks within our cup, while we're in health;
> Sits by our sick-bed, mocks our medicines;
> We cannot walk, or sit, or ride, or travel,
> But Death is by to seize us when he lists.
>
> THE SPANISH FATHER.

FROM the agitating scene in the queen's presence-chamber, the Lady of Lochleven retreated to her own apartment, and ordered the steward to be called before her.

'Have they not disarmed thee, Dryfesdale?' she said, on seeing him enter, accoutred as usual with sword and dagger.

'No!' replied the old man; 'how should they?—Your ladyship, when you commanded me to ward, said nought of laying down my arms; and I think none of your menials, without your order or your son's, dare approach Jasper Dryfesdale for such a purpose.—Shall I now give up my sword to you?—it is worth little now, for it has fought for your house till it is

* A romancer, to use a Scottish phrase, wants but a hair to make a tether of. The whole detail of the steward's supposed conspiracy against the life of Mary is grounded upon an expression in one of her letters, which affirms that Jasper Dryfesdale, one of the Laird of Lochleven's servants, had threatened to murder William Douglas (for his share in the queen's escape), and averred that he would plant a dagger in Mary's own heart.'—CHALMERS' *Life of Queen Mary*, vol. i. p. 278.

worn down to old iron, like the pantler's old chipping-knife.'

'You have attempted a deadly crime—poison under trust.'

'Under trust?—hem!—I know not what your ladyship thinks of it, but the world without thinks the trust was given you even for that very end; and you would have been well off had it been so ended as I proposed, and you neither the worse nor the wiser.'

'Wretch!' exclaimed the lady, 'and fool as well as villain, who could not even execute the crime he had planned!'

'I bid as fair for it as man could,' replied Dryfesdale; 'I went to a woman—a witch and a Papist—if I found not poison, it was because it was otherwise predestined. I tried fair for it; but the half-done job may be clouted, if you will.'

'Villain! I am even now about to send off an express messenger to my son, to take order how thou shouldst be disposed of. Prepare thyself for death, if thou canst.'

'He that looks on death, lady,' answered Dryfesdale, 'as that which he may not shun, and which has its own fixed and certain hour, is ever prepared for it. He that is hanged in May will eat no flaunes * in midsummer—so there is the moan made for the old serving-man. But whom, pray I, send you on so fair an errand?'

'There will be no lack of messengers,' answered his mistress.

'By my hand, but there will,' replied the old man; 'your castle is but poorly manned, considering the watches that you must keep, having this charge—There is the warder, and two others, whom you discarded for tampering with Master George; then for the warder's tower, the bailie, the donjon—five men mount each guard, and the rest must sleep for the most part in their clothes. To send away another man were to harass the sentinels to death—unthrifty misuse for a household. To take in new soldiers were dangerous, the charge requiring tried men. I see but one thing for it—I will do your errand to Sir William Douglas myself.'

'That were indeed a resource!—And on what day within twenty years would it be done?' said the lady.

'Even with the speed of man and horse,' said Dryfesdale; 'for though I care not much about the latter days of an old serving-man's life, yet I would like to know as soon as may be whether my neck is mine own or the hangman's.'

'Holdest thou thy own life so lightly?' said the lady.

'Else I had recked more of that of others,' said the predestinarian.—'What is death?—it is but ceasing to live.—And what is living?—a weary return of light and darkness, sleeping and waking, being hungered and eating. Your dead man needs neither candle nor can, neither fire nor feather-bed; and the joiner's chest serves him for an eternal frieze-jerkin.'

'Wretched man! believest thou not that after death comes the judgment?'

'Lady,' answered Dryfesdale, 'as my mistress, I may not dispute your words; but, as spiritually speaking, you are still but a burner of bricks in Egypt, ignorant of the freedom of the saints; for, as was well shown to me by that gifted man, Nicolaus Schœfferbach, who was martyred by the bloody Bishop of Munster, he cannot sin who doth but execute that which is predestined, since'——

'Silence!' said the lady, interrupting him—'Answer me not with thy bold and presumptuous blasphemy, but hear me. Thou hast been long the servant of our house'——

'The born servant of the Douglas—they have had the best of me—I served them since I left Lockerbie: I was then ten years old, and you may soon add the threescore to it.'

'Thy foul attempt has miscarried, so thou art guilty only in intention. It were a deserved deed to hang thee on the warder's tower; and yet, in thy present mind, it were but giving a soul to Satan. I take thine offer, then—Go hence—here is my packet—I will add to it but a line, to desire him to send me a faithful servant or two to complete the garrison. Let my son deal with you as he will. If thou art wise, thou wilt make for Lockerbie so soon as thy foot touches dry land, and let the packet find another bearer; at all rates, look it miscarries not.'

'Nay, madam,' replied he—'I was born, as I said, the Douglas's servant, and I will be no corbie-messenger † in mine old age—Your message to your son shall be done as truly by me as if it concerned another man's neck. I take my leave of your honour.'

The lady issued her commands, and the old man was ferried over to the shore, to proceed on his extraordinary pilgrimage. It is necessary the reader should accompany him on his journey, which Providence had determined should not be of long duration.

On arriving at the village, the steward, although his disgrace had transpired, was readily accommodated with a horse, by the chamberlain's authority; and, the roads being by no means esteemed safe, he associated himself with Auchtermuchty, the common carrier, in order to travel in his company to Edinburgh.

The worthy waggoner, according to the established custom of all carriers, stage-coachmen, and other persons in public authority, from the earliest days to the present, never wanted good reasons for stopping upon the road as often as he would; and the place which had most captivation for him as a resting-place was a change-house, as it was termed, not very distant from a romantic dell, well known by the name of Kiery-craigs.‡ Attractions of a kind very different from those which arrested the progress of John Auchtermuchty and his wains, still continue to hover round this romantic spot, and none has visited its vicinity without a desire to remain long and to return soon.

Arrived near his favourite *howff*, not all the authority of Dryfesdale (much diminished, indeed, by the rumours of his disgrace) could prevail on the carrier, obstinate as the brutes which he drove, to pass on without his accustomed halt,

* Pancakes.

† [*Corbie-messenger*. A messenger who either returns not at all, or too late; alluding to Noah's raven.—*Jamieson*.]

‡ Note K. Kiery-craigs.

for which the distance he had travelled furnished little or no pretence. Old Keltie, the landlord, who has bestowed his name on a bridge in the neighbourhood of his quondam dwelling, received the carrier with his usual festive cordiality, and adjourned with him into the house, under pretence of important business, which, I believe, consisted in their emptying together a mutchkin stoup of usquebaugh. While the worthy host and his guest were thus employed, the discarded steward, with a double portion of moroseness in his gesture and look, walked discontentedly into the kitchen of the place, which was occupied but by one guest. The stranger was a slight figure, scarce above the age of boyhood, and in the dress of a page, but bearing an air of haughty aristocratic boldness and even insolence in his look and manner, that might have made Dryfesdale conclude he had pretensions to superior rank, had not his experience taught him how frequently these airs of superiority were assumed by the domestics and military retainers of the Scottish nobility.—'The pilgrim's morning to you, old sir,' said the youth; 'you come, as I think, from Lochleven Castle?—What news of our bonnie Queen?—a fairer dove was never pent up in so wretched a dovecot.'

'They that speak of Lochleven, and of those whom its walls contain,' answered Dryfesdale, 'speak of what concerns the Douglas; and they who speak of what concerns the Douglas, do it at their peril.'

'Do you speak from fear of them, old man, or would you make a quarrel for them?—I should have deemed your age might have cooled your blood.'

'Never, while there are empty-pated coxcombs at each corner to keep it warm.'

'The sight of thy grey hairs keeps mine cold,' said the boy, who had risen up and now sat down again.

'It is well for thee, or I had cooled it with this holly-rod,' replied the steward. 'I think thou be'st one of those swashbucklers, who brawl in alehouses and taverns; and who, if words were pikes, and oaths were Andrew Ferraras, would soon place the religion of Babylon in the land once more, and the woman of Moab upon the throne.'

'Now, by Saint Bennet of Seyton,' said the youth, 'I will strike thee on the face, thou foul-mouthed old railing heretic!'

'Saint Bennet of Seyton!' echoed the steward; 'a proper warrant is Saint Bennet's, and for a proper nest of wolf-birds like the Seytons!—I will arrest thee as a traitor to King James and the good Regent.—Ho! John Auchtermuchty, raise aid against the King's traitor!'

So saying, he laid his hand on the youth's collar, and drew his sword. John Auchtermuchty looked in, but, seeing the naked weapon, ran faster out than he entered. Keltie, the landlord, stood by and helped neither party, only exclaiming, 'Gentlemen! gentlemen! for the love of Heaven!' and so forth. A struggle ensued, in which the young man, chafed at Dryfesdale's boldness, and unable, with the ease he expected, to extricate himself from the old man's determined grasp, drew his dagger, and with the speed of light dealt him three wounds in the breast and body, the least of which was mortal. The old man sunk on the ground with a deep groan, and the host set up a piteous exclamation of surprise.

'Peace, ye brawling hound!' said the wounded steward; 'are dagger-stabs and dying men such rarities in Scotland, that you should cry as if the house were falling?—Youth, I do not forgive thee, for there is nought betwixt us to forgive. Thou hast done what I have done to more than one—And I suffer what I have seen them suffer—it was all ordained to be thus and not otherwise. But if thou wouldst do me right, thou wilt send this packet safely to the hands of Sir William Douglas; and see that my memory suffer not, as if I would have loitered on mine errand for fear of my life.'

The youth, whose passion had subsided the instant he had done the deed, listened with sympathy and attention, when another person, muffled in his cloak, entered the apartment, and exclaimed—'Good God! Dryfesdale, and expiring!'—

'Ay, and Dryfesdale would that he had been dead,' answered the wounded man, 'rather than that his ears had heard the words of the only Douglas that ever was false—but yet it is better as it is. Good my murderer, and the rest of you, stand back a little, and let me speak with this unhappy apostate.—Kneel down by me, Master George—You have heard that I failed in my attempt to take away that Moabitish stumbling-block and her retinue—I gave them that which I thought would have removed the temptation out of thy path—and this, though I had other reasons to show to thy mother and others, I did chiefly purpose for love of thee.'

'For the love of me, base poisoner!' answered Douglas; 'wouldst thou have committed so horrible, so unprovoked a murder, and mentioned my name with it?'

'And wherefore not, George of Douglas?' answered Dryfesdale. 'Breath is now scarce with me, but I would spend my last gasp on this argument. Hast thou not, despite the honour thou owest to thy parents, the faith that is due to thy religion, the truth that is due to thy King, been so carried away by the charms of this beautiful sorceress, that thou wouldst have helped her to escape from her prison-house, and lent her thine arm again to ascend the throne, which she had made a place of abomination?—Nay, stir not from me—my hand, though fast stiffening, has yet force enough to hold thee—What dost thou aim at?—to wed this witch of Scotland!—I warrant thee, thou mayest succeed—her heart and hand have been oft won at a cheaper rate than thou, fool that thou art, would think thyself happy to pay. But should a servant of thy father's house have seen thee embrace the fate of the idiot Darnley, or of the villain Bothwell—the fate of the murdered fool, or of the living pirate—while an ounce of ratsbane would have saved thee?'

'Think on God, Dryfesdale,' said George Douglas, 'and leave the utterance of those horrors—Repent, if thou canst—if not, at least be silent.—Seyton, aid me to support this dying wretch, that he may compose himself to better thoughts, if it be possible.'

'Seyton!' answered the dying man; 'Seyton! Is it by a Seyton's hand that I fall at last?—There is something of retribution in that—since the house had nigh lost a sister by my deed.' Fixing his fading eyes on the youth, he added, 'He hath her very features and presence!—Stoop down, youth, and let me see thee closer—I would know thee when we meet in yonder world, for homicides will herd together there, and I have been one.' He pulled Seyton's face, in spite of some resistance, closer to his own, looked at him fixedly, and added, 'Thou hast begun young—thy career will be the briefer—ay, thou wilt be met with, and that anon—a young plant never throve that was watered with an old man's blood.—Yet why blame I thee? Strange turns of fate,' he muttered, ceasing to address Seyton, 'I designed what I could not do, and he has done what he did not perchance design.—Wondrous, that our will should ever oppose itself to the strong and uncontrollable tide of destiny—that we should strive with the stream when we might drift with the current! My brain will serve me to question it no further—I would Schœfferbach were here—yet why?—I am on a course which the vessel can hold without a pilot.—Farewell, George of Douglas—I die true to thy father's house.' He fell into convulsions at these words, and shortly after expired.

Seyton and Douglas stood looking on the dying man, and when the scene was closed, the former was the first to speak. 'As I live, Douglas, I meant not this, and am sorry; but he laid hands on me, and compelled me to defend my freedom, as I best might, with my dagger. If he were ten times thy friend and follower, I can but say that I am sorry.'

'I blame thee not, Seyton,' said Douglas, 'though I lament the chance. There is an overruling destiny above us, though not in the sense in which it was viewed by that wretched man, who, beguiled by some foreign mystagogue, used the awful word as the ready apology for whatever he chose to do—We must examine the packet.'

They withdrew into an inner room, and remained deep in consultation, until they were disturbed by the entrance of Keltie, who, with an embarrassed countenance, asked Master George Douglas's pleasure respecting the disposal of the body. 'Your honour knows,' he added, 'that I make my bread by living men, not by dead corpses; and old Master Dryfesdale, who was but a sorry customer while he was alive, occupies my public room now that he is deceased, and can neither call for ale nor brandy.'

'Tie a stone round his neck,' said Seyton, 'and when the sun is down, have him to the Loch of Ore, heave him in, and let him alone for finding out the bottom.'

'Under your favour, sir,' said George Douglas, 'it shall not be so.—Keltie, thou art a true fellow to me, and thy having been so shall advantage thee. Send or take the body to the chapel at Scotland's wall, or to the church of Ballingry, and tell what tale thou wilt of his having fallen in a brawl with some unruly guests of thine. Auchtermuchty knows nought else, nor are the times so peaceful as to admit close looking into such accounts.'

'Nay, let him tell the truth,' said Seyton, 'so far as it harms not our scheme.—Say that Henry Seyton met with him, my good fellow;—I care not a brass bodle for the feud.'

'A feud with the Douglas was ever to be feared, however,' said George, displeasure mingling with his natural deep gravity of manner.

'Not when the best of the name is on my side,' replied Seyton.

'Alas, Henry, if thou meanest me, I am but half a Douglas in this emprise—half head, half heart, and half hand.—But I will think on one who can never be forgotten, and be all, or more, than any of my ancestors was ever.—Keltie, say it was Henry Seyton did the deed; but beware, not a word of me!—Let Auchtermuchty carry this packet' (which he had resealed with his own signet) 'to my father at Edinburgh; and here is to pay for the funeral expenses, and thy loss of custom.'

'And the washing of the floor,' said the landlord, 'which will be an extraordinary job; for blood, they say, will scarcely ever cleanse out.'

'But as for your plan,' said George of Douglas, addressing Seyton, as if in continuation of what they had been before treating of, 'it has a good face; but, under your favour, you are yourself too hot and too young, besides other reasons which are much against your playing the part you propose.'

'We will consult the Father Abbot upon it,' said the youth. 'Do you ride to Kinross to-night?'

'Ay—so I purpose,' answered Douglas; 'the night will be dark, and suits a muffled man.*—Keltie, I forgot, there should be a stone laid on that man's grave, recording his name, and his only merit, which was being a faithful servant to the Douglas.'

'What religion was the man of?' said Seyton; 'he used words which make me fear I have sent Satan a subject before his time.'

'I can tell you little of that,' said George Douglas; 'he was noted for disliking both Rome and Geneva, and spoke of lights he had learned among the fierce sectaries of Lower Germany—an evil doctrine it was, if we judge by the fruits. God keep us from presumptuously judging of Heaven's secrets!'

'Amen!' said young Seyton, 'and from my meeting any encounter this evening.'

'It is not thy wont to pray so,' said George Douglas.

'No! I leave that to you,' replied the youth, 'when you are seized with scruples of engaging with your father's vassals. But I would fain have this old man's blood off these hands of mine ere I shed more—I will confess to the Abbot to-night, and I trust to have light penance for ridding the earth of such a miscreant. All I sorrow for is, that he was not a score of years younger.—He drew steel first, however; that is one comfort.'

* Generally, a disguised man; originally, one who wears the cloak or mantle muffled round the lower part of the face to conceal his countenance. I have on an ancient piece of iron the representation of a robber thus accoutred, endeavouring to make his way into a house, and opposed by a mastiff, to whom he in vain offers food. The motto is *spernit dona fides*. It is part of a fire-grate said to have belonged to Archbishop Sharp.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Ay, Pedro,—Come you here with mask and lantern,
Ladder of ropes and other moonshine tools—
Why, youngster, thou mayest cheat the old duenna,
Flatter the waiting-woman, bribe the valet;
But know that I her father play the Gryphon,
Tameless and sleepless, proof to fraud or bribe,
And guard the hidden treasure of her beauty.

THE SPANISH FATHER.

THE tenor of our tale carries us back to the Castle of Lochleven, when we take up the order of events on the same remarkable day on which Dryfesdale had been dismissed from the castle. It was past noon, the usual hour of dinner, yet no preparations seemed made for the queen's entertainment. Mary herself had retired into her own apartment, where she was closely engaged in writing. Her attendants were together in the presence-chamber, and much disposed to speculate on the delay of the dinner; for it may be recollected that their breakfast had been interrupted. 'I believe in my conscience,' said the page, 'that, having found the poisoning scheme miscarry, by having gone to the wrong merchant for their deadly wares, they are now about to try how famine will work upon us.'

Lady Fleming was somewhat alarmed at this surmise, but comforted herself by observing that the chimney of the kitchen had reeked that whole day in a manner which contradicted the supposition.—Catherine Seyton presently exclaimed, 'They were bearing the dishes across the court, marshalled by the Lady Lochleven herself, dressed out in her highest and stiffest ruff, with her partlet and sleeves of cyprus, and her huge old-fashioned farthingale of crimson velvet.'

'I believe on my word,' said the page, approaching the window also, 'it was in that very farthingale that she captivated the heart of gentle King Jamie, which procured our poor Queen her precious bargain of a brother.'

'That may hardly be, Master Roland,' answered the Lady Fleming, who was a great recorder of the changes of fashion, 'since the farthingales came first in when the Queen Regent went to Saint Andrews, after the battle of Pinkie, and were then called *Vertugardins*'——

She would have proceeded further in this important discussion, but was interrupted by the entrance of the Lady of Lochleven, who preceded the servants bearing the dishes, and formally discharged the duty of tasting each of them. Lady Fleming regretted, in courtly phrase, that the Lady of Lochleven should have undertaken so troublesome an office.

'After the strange incident of this day, madam,' said the lady, 'it is necessary for my honour, and that of my son, that I partake whatever is offered to my involuntary guest. Please to inform the Lady Mary that I attend her commands.'

'Her Majesty,' replied Lady Fleming, with due emphasis on the word, 'shall be informed that the Lady Lochleven waits.'

Mary appeared instantly, and addressed her hostess with courtesy, which even approached to something more cordial. 'This is nobly done, Lady Lochleven,' she said; 'for though we ourselves apprehend no danger under your roof, our ladies have been much alarmed by this morning's chance, and our meal will be the more cheerful for your presence and assurance. Please you to sit down.'

The Lady Lochleven obeyed the queen's commands, and Roland performed the office of carver and attendant as usual. But, notwithstanding what the queen had said, the meal was silent and unsocial; and every effort which Mary made to excite some conversation, died away under the solemn and chill replies of the Lady of Lochleven. At length it became plain that the queen, who had considered these advances as a condescension on her part, and who piqued herself justly on her powers of pleasing, became offended at the repulsive conduct of her hostess. After looking with a significant glance at Lady Fleming and Catherine, she slightly shrugged her shoulders, and remained silent. A pause ensued, at the end of which the Lady Douglas spoke:—'I perceive, madam, I am a check on the mirth of this fair company. I pray you to excuse me—I am a widow—alone here in a most perilous charge—deserted by my grandson—betrayed by my servant.—I am little worthy of the grace you do me in offering me a seat at your table, where I am aware that wit and pastime are usually expected from the guests.'

'If the Lady Lochleven is serious,' said the queen, 'we wonder by what simplicity she expects our present meals to be seasoned with mirth. If she is a widow, she lives honoured and uncontrolled, at the head of her late husband's household. But I know at least of one widowed woman in the world, before whom the words desertion and betrayal ought never to be mentioned, since no one has been made so bitterly acquainted with their import.'

'I meant not, madam, to remind you of your misfortunes, by the mention of mine,' answered the Lady Lochleven, and there was again a deep silence.

Mary at length addressed Lady Fleming. 'We can commit no deadly sins here, *ma bonne*, where we are so well warded and looked to; but if we could, this Carthusian silence might be useful as a kind of penance. If thou hast adjusted my wimple amiss, my Fleming, or if Catherine hath made a wry stitch in her broidery, when she was thinking of something else than her work, or if Roland Græme hath missed a wild-duck on the wing, and broke a quarrel-pane * of glass in the turret window, as chanced to him a week since, now is the time to think on your sins and to repent of them.'

'Madam, I speak with all reverence,' said the Lady Lochleven; 'but I am old, and claim the privilege of age. Methinks your followers might find fitter subjects for repentance than the trifles you mention, and so mention—once more I crave your pardon—as if you jested with sin and repentance both.'

'You have been our taster, Lady Lochleven,' said the queen, 'I perceive you would eke out your duty with that of our Father Confessor—and since you choose that our conversation should be serious, may I ask you why the Regent's promise—since your son so styles him.

* Diamond-shaped; literally, formed like the head of a *quarrel*, or arrow for the crossbow.

self—has not been kept to me in that respect? From time to time this promise has been renewed, and as constantly broken. Methinks those who pretend themselves to so much gravity and sanctity, should not debar from others the religious succours which their consciences require.'

'Madam, the Earl of Murray was indeed weak enough,' said the Lady Lochleven, 'to give so far way to your unhappy prejudices, and a religioner of the Pope presented himself on his part at our town of Kinross. But the Douglas is lord of his own castle, and will not permit his threshold to be darkened, no, not for a single moment, by an emissary belonging to the Bishop of Rome.'

'Methinks it were well, then,' said Mary, 'that my Lord Regent would send me where there is less scruple and more charity.'

'In this, madam,' answered the Lady Lochleven, 'you mistake the nature both of charity and of religion. Charity giveth to those who are in delirium the medicaments which may avail their health, but refuses those enticing cates and liquors which please the palate, but augment the disease.'

'This your charity, Lady Lochleven, is pure cruelty, under the hypocritical disguise of friendly care. I am oppressed amongst you as if you meant the destruction both of my body and soul; but Heaven will not endure such iniquity for ever, and they who are the most active agents in it may speedily expect their reward.'

At this moment Randal entered the apartment, with a look so much perturbed, that the Lady Fleming uttered a faint scream, the queen was obviously startled, and the Lady of Lochleven, though too bold and proud to evince any marked signs of alarm, asked hastily what was the matter?

'Dryfesdale has been slain, madam,' was the reply; 'murdered as soon as he gained the dry land by young Master Henry Seyton.'

It was now Catherine's turn to start and grow pale—'Has the murderer of the Douglas's vassal escaped?' was the lady's hasty question.

'There was none to challenge him but old Keltie, and the carrier Auchtermuchty,' replied Randal; 'unlikely men to stay one of the frackest* youths in Scotland of his years, and who was sure to have friends and partakers at no great distance.'

'Was the deed completed?' said the lady.

'Done, and done thoroughly,' said Randal; 'a Seyton seldom strikes twice—But the body was not despoiled, and your honour's packet goes forward to Edinburgh by Auchtermuchty, who leaves Keltie Bridge early to-morrow—marry, he has drunk two bottles of aquavitæ to put the fright out of his head, and now sleeps them off beside his cart-avers.'†

There was a pause when this fatal tale was told. The queen and Lady Douglas looked on each other, as if each thought how she could best turn the incident to her own advantage in the controversy which was continually kept alive betwixt them—Catherine Seyton kept her kerchief at her eyes, and wept.

'You see, madam, the bloody maxims and practice of the deluded Papists,' said Lady Lochleven.

'Nay, madam,' replied the queen, 'say rather you see the deserved judgment of Heaven upon a Calvinistical poisoner.'

'Dryfesdale was not of the Church of Geneva, or of Scotland,' said the Lady of Lochleven hastily.

'He was a heretic, however,' replied Mary; 'there is but one true and unerring guide; the others lead alike into error.'

'Well, madam, I trust it will reconcile you to your retreat, that this deed shows the temper of those who might wish you at liberty. Bloodthirsty tyrants and cruel men-quellers are they all, from the Clan-Ranald and Clan-Tosach in the north, to the Fernihurst and Buccleuch in the south—the murdering Seytons in the east, and'— —

'Methinks, madam, you forget that I am a Seyton?' said Catherine, withdrawing her kerchief from her face, which was now coloured with indignation.

'If I had forgot it, fair mistress, your forward bearing would have reminded me,' said Lady Lochleven.

'If my brother has slain the villain that would have poisoned his sovereign and his sister,' said Catherine, 'I am only so far sorry that he should have spared the hangman his proper task. For aught further, had it been the best Douglas in the land, he would have been honoured in falling by the Seyton's sword.'

'Farewell, gay mistress,' said the Lady of Lochleven, rising to withdraw; 'it is such maidens as you who make giddy-fashioned revellers and deadly brawlers. Boys must needs rise, forsooth, in the grace of some sprightly damsel, who thinks to dance through life as through a French galliard.' She then made her reverence to the queen, and added, 'Do you also, madam, fare you well, till curfew time, when I will make, perchance, more bold than welcome in attending upon your supper board.—Come with me, Randal, and tell me more of this cruel fact.'

''Tis an extraordinary chance,' said the queen, when she had departed; 'and, villain as he was, I would this man had been spared time for repentance. We will cause something to be done for his soul, if we ever attain our liberty, and the Church will permit such grace to a heretic.—But, tell me, Catherine, *ma mignonne*—this brother of thine, who is so *frack*, as the fellow called him, bears he the same wonderful likeness to thee as formerly?'

'If your Grace means in temper, you know whether I am so *frack* as the serving-man spoke him.'

'Nay, thou art prompt enough in all reasonable conscience,' replied the queen; 'but thou art my own darling notwithstanding.—But I meant, is this thy twin-brother as like thee in form and features as formerly? I remember thy dear mother alleged it as a reason for destining thee to the veil, that, were ye both to go at large, thou wouldst surely get the credit of some of thy brother's mad pranks.'

'I believe, madam,' said Catherine, 'there are some unusually simple people even yet, who can

* Boldest—most forward. † Cart-horses.

hardly distinguish betwixt us, especially when, for diversion's sake, my brother hath taken a female dress,'—and as she spoke, she gave a quick glance at Roland Græme, to whom this conversation conveyed a ray of light, welcome as ever streamed into the dungeon of a captive through the door which opened to give him freedom.

'He must be a handsome cavalier, this brother of thine, if he be so like you,' replied Mary. 'He was in France, I think, for these late years, so that I saw him not at Holyrood.'

'His looks, madam, have never been much found fault with,' answered Catherine Seyton; 'but I would he had less of that angry and heady spirit, which evil times have encouraged amongst our young nobles. God knows, I grudge not his life in your Grace's quarrel; and love him for the willingness with which he labours for your rescue. But wherefore should he brawl with an old ruffianly serving-man, and stain at once his name with such a broil, and his hands with the blood of an old and ignoble wretch?'

'Nay, be patient, Catherine; I will not have thee traduce my gallant young knight. With Henry for my knight, and Roland Græme for my trusty squire, methinks I am like a princess of romance, who may shortly set at defiance the dungeons and the weapons of all wicked sorcerers. —But my head aches with the agitation of the day. Take me *La Mer des Histoires*, and resume where we left off on Wednesday.—Our Lady help thy head, girl, or rather may she help thy heart—I asked thee for the Sea of Histories, and thou hast brought *La Cronique d'Amour*.' *

Once embarked upon the Sea of Histories, the queen continued her labours with her needle, while Lady Fleming and Catherine read to her alternately for two hours.

As to Roland Græme, it is probable that he continued in secret intent upon the Chronicle of Love, notwithstanding the censure which the queen seemed to pass upon that branch of study. He now remembered a thousand circumstances of voice and manner, which, had his own prepossession been less, must surely have discriminated the brother from the sister; and he felt ashamed that, having as it were by heart every particular of Catherine's gestures, words, and manners, he should have thought her, notwithstanding her spirits and levity, capable of assuming the bold step, loud tones, and forward assurance which accorded well enough with her brother's hasty and masculine character. He endeavoured repeatedly to catch a glance of Catherine's eye, that he might judge how she was disposed to look upon him since he had made the discovery, but he was unsuccessful; for Catherine, when she was not reading herself, seemed to take so much interest in the exploits of the Teutonic knights against the heathens of Esthonia and Livonia, that he could not surprise her eye even for a second. But when, closing the book, the queen commanded their attendance in the garden, Mary, perhaps of set purpose (for Roland's anxiety could not escape so practised an observer), afforded him a favourable opportunity of accosting his mistress. The queen commanded them to a little distance, while she engaged Lady Fleming in a particular and private conversation; the subject whereof we learn, from another authority, to have been the comparative excellence of the high-standing ruff and the falling band. Roland must have been duller and more sheepish than ever was youthful lover, if he had not endeavoured to avail himself of this opportunity.

'I have been longing this whole evening to ask of you, fair Catherine,' said the page, 'how foolish and unapprehensive you must have thought me, in being capable to mistake betwixt your brother and you?'

'The circumstance does indeed little honour to my rustic manners,' said Catherine, 'since those of a wild young man were so readily mistaken for mine. But I shall grow wiser in time; and with that view I am determined not to think of your follies, but to correct my own.'

'It will be the lighter subject of meditation of the two,' said Roland.

'I know not that,' said Catherine, very gravely; 'I fear we have been both unpardonably foolish.'

'I have been mad,' said Roland, 'unpardonably mad. But you, lovely Catherine'——

'I,' said Catherine, in the same tone of unusual gravity, 'have too long suffered you to use such expressions towards me—I fear I can permit it no longer, and I blame myself for the pain it may give you.'

'And what can have happened so suddenly to change our relation to each other, or alter, with such sudden cruelty, your whole deportment to me?'

'I can hardly tell,' replied Catherine, 'unless it is that the events of the day have impressed on my mind the necessity of our observing more distance to each other. A chance similar to that which betrayed to you the existence of my brother, may make known to Henry the terms you have used to me; and, alas! his whole conduct, as well as his deed this day, makes me too justly apprehensive of the consequences.'

'Fear nothing for that, fair Catherine,' answered the page; 'I am well able to protect myself against risks of that nature.'

'That is to say,' replied she, 'that you would fight with my twin-brother to show your regard for his sister? I have heard the Queen say, in her sad hours, that men are, in love or in hate, the most selfish animals of creation; and your carelessness in this matter looks very like it. But be not so much abashed—you are no worse than others.'

'You do me injustice, Catherine,' replied the page; 'I thought but of being threatened with a sword, and did not remember in whose hand your fancy had placed it. If your brother stood before me, with his drawn weapon in his hand, so like is he to you in word, person, and favour, he might shed my life's blood ere I could find in my heart to resist him to his injury.'

'Alas!' she said, 'it is not my brother alone. But you remember only the singular circumstances in which we have met in equality, and I

* [*La Mer des Histoires* was a large chronicle or universal history, continued to the death of Louis XI. of France, 1483. In the list of books belonging to Queen Mary, delivered to her son, the young king, by the Earl of Morton, 1578, we find 'four volumes of *La Mer des Histoires*, covered with quhite parchment.']

may say in intimacy. You think not that, whenever I re-enter my father's house, there is a gulf between us you may not pass, but with peril of your life—Your only known relative is of wild and singular habits, of a hostile and broken clan *—the rest of your lineage unknown—forgive me that I speak what is the undeniable truth.'

'Love, my beautiful Catherine, despises genealogies,' answered Roland Græme.

'Love may, but so will not the Lord Seyton,' rejoined the damsel.

'The Queen, thy mistress and mine, she will intercede. O, drive me not from you at the moment I thought myself most happy!—And if I shall aid her deliverance, said not yourself that you and she would become my debtors?'

'All Scotland will become your debtors,' said Catherine; 'but for the active effects you might hope from our gratitude, you must remember I am wholly subjected to my father; and the poor Queen is, for a long time, more likely to be dependent on the pleasure of the nobles of her party, than possessed of power to control them.'

'Be it so,' replied Roland; 'my deeds shall control prejudice itself—it is a bustling world, and I will have my share. The Knight of Avenel, high as he now stands, rose from as obscure an origin as mine.'

'Ay!' said Catherine, 'there spoke the doughty knight of romance, that will cut his way to the imprisoned princess, through fiends and fiery dragons!'

'But if I can set the princess at large, and procure her the freedom of her own choice,' said the page, 'where, dearest Catherine, will that choice alight?'

'Release the princess from duresse, and she will tell you,' said the damsel; and, breaking off the conversation abruptly, she joined the queen so suddenly, that Mary exclaimed half aloud,—

'No more tidings of evil import—no dissension, I trust, in my limited household?'—Then, looking on Catherine's blushing cheek, and Roland's expanded brow and glancing eye—'No—no,' she said, 'I see all is well—*Ma petite mignonne*, go to my apartment and fetch me down—let me see—ay, fetch my pomander-box.'

And, having thus disposed of her attendant in the manner best qualified to hide her confusion, the queen added, speaking apart to Roland, 'I should at least have two grateful subjects of Catherine and you; for what sovereign but Mary would aid true love so willingly?—Ay, you lay your hand on your sword—your *petite flamberge à rien* there—Well, short time will show if all the good be true that is protested to us—I hear them toll curfew from Kinross. To our chamber—this old dame hath promised to be with us again at our evening meal. Were it not for the hope of speedy deliverance, her presence would drive me distracted. But I will be patient.'

'I profess,' said Catherine, who just then entered, 'I would I could be Henry, with all a man's privileges, for one moment—I long to throw my plate at that confect of pride and formality and ill-nature.'

The Lady Fleming reprimanded her young companion for this explosion of impatience; the queen laughed, and they went to the presence-chamber, where almost immediately entered supper, and the lady of the castle. The queen, strong in her prudent resolutions, endured her presence with great fortitude and equanimity, until her patience was disturbed by a new form, which had hitherto made no part of the ceremonial of the castle. When the other attendant had retired, Randal entered, bearing the keys of the castle fastened upon a chain, and, announcing that the watch was set, and the gates locked, delivered the keys with all reverence to the Lady of Lochleven.

The queen and her ladies exchanged with each other a look of disappointment, anger, and vexation; and Mary said aloud, 'We cannot regret the smallness of our court, when we see our hostess discharge in person so many of its offices. In addition to her charges of principal steward of our household, and grand almoner, she has to-night done duty as captain of our guard.'

'And will continue to do so in future, madam,' answered the Lady Lochleven, with much gravity; 'the history of Scotland may teach me how ill the duty is performed, which is done by an accredited deputy—We have heard, madam, of favourites of later date, and as little merit, as Oliver Sinclair.' †

'O, madam,' replied the queen, 'my father had his female as well as his male favourites—there were the Ladies Sandilands and Olifaunt,‡ and some others, methinks; but their names cannot survive in the memory of so grave a person as you.'

The Lady Lochleven looked as if she could have slain the queen on the spot, but commanded her temper, and retired from the apartment, bearing in her hand the ponderous bunch of keys.

'Now God be praised for that woman's youthful frailty!' said the queen. 'Had she not that weak point in her character, I might waste my words on her in vain—But that stain is the very reverse of what is said of the witch's mark—I can make her feel there, though she is otherwise insensible all over. But how say you, girls?—here is a new difficulty—How are these keys to be come by?—there is no deceiving or bribing this dragon, I trow.'

'May I crave to know,' said Roland, 'whether, if your Grace were beyond the walls of the castle, you could find means of conveyance to the firm land, and protection when you are there?'

'Trust us for that, Roland,' said the queen; 'for to that point our scheme is indifferent well laid.'

'Then, if your Grace will permit me to speak my mind, I think I could be of some use in this matter.'

'As how, my good youth?—speak on,' said the queen, 'and fearlessly.'

'My patron the Knight of Avenel used to compel the youth educated in his household to learn the use of axe and hammer, and working

* A broken clan was one who had no chief able to find security for their good behaviour—a clan of outlaws; and the Græmes of the Debateable Land were in that condition.

† A favourite, and said to be an unworthy one, of James V.

‡ The names of these ladies, and a third frail favourite of James (Lady Weir), are preserved in an epigram too *gaillard* for quotation.

[They will be found in Allan Ramsay's 'Evergreen;' the lines are written, however, by Ramsay himself.]

in wood and iron—he used to speak of old northern champions, who forged their own weapons, and of the Highland captain, Donald nan Ord, or Donald of the Hammer, whom he himself knew, and who used to work at the anvil with a sledge-hammer in each hand. Some said he praised this art, because he was himself of churl's blood. However, I gained some practice in it, as the Lady Catherine Seyton partly knows; for since we were here I wrought her a silver brooch.'

'Ay,' replied Catherine, 'but you should tell her Grace that your workmanship was so indifferent that it broke to pieces next day, and I flung it away.'

'Believe her not, Roland,' said the queen; 'she wept when it was broken, and put the fragments into her bosom. But for your scheme—could your skill avail to forge a second set of keys?'

'No, madam, because I know not the wards. But I am convinced I could make a set so like that hateful bunch which the lady bore off even now, that, could they be exchanged against them by any means, she would never dream she was possessed of the wrong.'

'And the good dame, thank Heaven, is somewhat blind,' said the queen; 'but then for a forge, my boy, and the means of labouring unobserved?'

'The armourer's forge, at which I used sometimes to work with him, is the round vault at the bottom of the turret—he was dismissed with the warder for being supposed too much attached to George Douglas. The people are accustomed to see me work there, and I warrant I shall find some excuse that will pass current with them for putting bellows and anvil to work.'

'The scheme has a promising face,' said the queen; 'about it, my lad, with all speed, and beware the nature of your work is not discovered.'

'Nay, I will take the liberty to draw the bolt against chance visitors, so that I will have time to put away what I am working upon before I undo the door.'

'Will not that of itself attract suspicion, in a place where it is so current already?' said Catherine.

'Not a whit,' replied Roland; 'Gregory the armourer, and every good hammerman, locks himself in when he is about some masterpiece of craft. Besides, something must be risked.'

'Part we then to-night,' said the queen; 'and God bless you, my children!—If Mary's head ever rises above water, you shall all rise along with her.'

CHAPTER XXXV.

It is a time of danger, not of revel,
When churchmen turn to masquers.
SPANISH FATHER.

THE enterprise of Roland Græme appeared to prosper. A trinket or two, of which the work did not surpass the substance (for the materials were silver, supplied by the queen), were judiciously presented to those most likely to be inquisitive into the labours of the forge and anvil, which they thus were induced to reckon profitable to others and harmless in itself. Openly, the page was seen working about such trifles. In private, he forged a number of keys resembling so nearly in weight and in form those which were presented every evening to the Lady Lochleven, that, on a slight inspection, it would have been difficult to perceive the difference. He brought them to the dark rusty colour by the use of salt and water; and, in the triumph of his art, presented them at length to Queen Mary in her presence-chamber, about an hour before the tolling of the curfew. She looked at them with pleasure, but at the same time with doubt.—'I allow,' she said, 'that the Lady Lochleven's eyes, which are not of the clearest, may be well deceived, could we pass those keys on her in place of the real implements of her tyranny. But how is this to be done, and which of my little court dare attempt this *tour de jongleur* with any chance of success? Could we but engage her in some earnest matter of argument—but those which I hold with her always have been of a kind which make her grasp her keys the faster, as if she said to herself,—Here I hold what sets me above your taunts and reproaches—And even for her liberty, Mary Stuart could not stoop to speak the proud heretic fair.—What shall we do? Shall Lady Fleming try her eloquence in describing the last new head-tire from Paris?—alas! the good dame has not changed the fashion of her head-gear since Pinkie-field, for aught that I know. Shall my *mignonne* Catherine sing to her one of those touching airs, which draw the very souls out of me and Roland Græme?—Alas! Dame Margaret Douglas would rather hear a Huguenot psalm of Clement Marrot, sung to the tune of *Réveillez vous, belle endormie.*—Cousins and liege counsellors, what is to be done, for our wits are really astray in this matter?—Must our man-at-arms and the champion of our body, Roland Græme, manfully assault the old lady, and take the keys from her *par voie du fait?*'

'Nay! with your Grace's permission,' said Roland, 'I do not doubt being able to manage the matter with more discretion; for though in your Grace's service, I do not fear'——

'A host of old women,' interrupted Catherine, 'each armed with rock and spindle; yet he has no fancy for pikes and partisans, which might rise at the cry of *Help! a Douglas, a Douglas!*'

'They that do not fear fair ladies' tongues,' continued the page, 'need dread nothing else.—But, gracious liege, I am well-nigh satisfied that I could pass the exchange of these keys on the Lady Lochleven; but I dread the sentinel who is now planted nightly in the garden, which, by necessity, we must traverse.'

'Our last advices from our friends on the shore have promised us assistance in that matter,' replied the queen.

'And is your Grace well assured of the fidelity and watchfulness of those without?'

'For their fidelity I will answer with my life, and for their vigilance I will answer with my life—I will give thee instant proof, my faithful Roland, that they are ingenuous and trusty as thyself. Come hither—Nay, Catherine, attend us; we carry not so deft a page into our private

chamber alone. Make fast the door of the parlour, Fleming, and warn us if you hear the least step—or stay, go thou to the door, Catherine' (in a whisper, 'thy ears and thy wits are both sharper').—'Good Fleming, attend us thyself'—(and again she whispered, 'her reverend presence will be as safe a watch on Roland as thine can—so be not jealous, *mignonne*.')

Thus speaking, they were lighted by the Lady Fleming into the queen's bedroom, a small apartment enlightened by a projecting window.

'Look from that window, Roland,' she said; 'see you amongst the several lights which begin to kindle, and to glimmer palely through the grey of the evening from the village of Kinross—seest thou, I say, one solitary spark apart from the others, and nearer it seems to the verge of the water?—It is no brighter at this distance than the torch of the poor glow-worm, and yet, my good youth, that light is more dear to Mary Stuart than every star that twinkles in the blue vault of heaven. By that signal, I know that more than one true heart is plotting my deliverance; and without that consciousness, and the hope of freedom it gives me, I had long since stooped to my fate, and died of a broken heart. Plan after plan has been formed and abandoned, but still the light glimmers; and while it glimmers, my hope lives.—O, how many evenings have I sat musing in despair over our ruined schemes, and scarce hoping that I should again see that blessed signal; when it has suddenly kindled, and, like the lights of Saint Elmo in a tempest, brought hope and consolation, where there was only dejection and despair!'

'If I mistake not,' answered Roland, 'the candle shines from the house of Blinkhoolie, the mail-gardener.'

'Thou hast a good eye,' said the queen; 'it is there where my trusty lieges—God and the saints pour blessings on them—hold consultation for my deliverance. The voice of a wretched captive would die on these blue waters, long ere it could mingle in their councils; and yet I can hold communication—I will confide the whole to thee—I am about to ask those faithful friends, if the moment for the great attempt is nigh.—Place the lamp in the window, Fleming.'

She obeyed, and immediately withdrew it. No sooner had she done so, than the light in the cottage of the gardener disappeared.

'Now count,' said Queen Mary, 'for my heart beats so thick that I cannot count myself.'

The Lady Fleming began deliberately to count one, two, three, and when she had arrived at ten, the light on the shore showed its pale twinkle.

'Now, Our Lady be praised!' said the queen; 'it was but two nights since, that the absence of the light remained, while I could tell thirty. The hour of deliverance approaches. May God bless those who labour in it with such truth to me!—alas! with such hazard to themselves—and bless you, too, my children!—Come, we must to the audience-chamber again. Our absence might excite suspicion, should they serve supper.'

They returned to the presence-chamber, and the evening concluded as usual.

The next morning, at dinner-time, an unusual incident occurred. While Lady Douglas of Lochleven performed her daily duty of assistant and taster at the queen's table, she was told a man-at-arms had arrived, recommended by her son, but without any letter or other token than what he brought by word of mouth.

'Hath he given you that token?' demanded the lady.

'He reserved it, as I think, for your ladyship's ear,' replied Randal.

'He doth well,' said the lady; 'tell him to wait in the hall—But no—with your permission, madam' (to the queen), 'let him attend me here.'

'Since you are pleased to receive your domestics in my presence,' said the queen, 'I cannot choose'——

'My infirmities must plead my excuse, madam,' replied the lady; 'the life I must lead here ill suits with the years which have passed over my head, and compels me to waive ceremonial.'

'O, my good lady,' replied the queen, 'I would there were nought in this your castle more strongly compulsive than the cobweb chains of ceremony; but bolts and bars are harder matters to contend with.'

As she spoke, the person announced by Randal entered the room, and Roland Græme at once recognised in him the Abbot Ambrosius.

'What is your name, good fellow?' said the lady.

'Edward Glendinning,' answered the Abbot, with a suitable reverence.

'Art thou of the blood of the Knight of Avenel?' said the Lady of Lochleven.

'Ay, madam, and that nearly,' replied the pretended soldier.

'It is likely enough,' said the lady, 'for the knight is the son of his own good works, and has risen from obscure lineage to his present high rank in the Estate—But he is of sure truth and approved worth, and his kinsman is welcome to us. You hold, unquestionably, the true faith?'

'Do not doubt of it, madam,' said the disguised churchman.

'Hast thou a token to me from Sir William Douglas?' said the lady.

'I have, madam,' replied he; 'but it must be said in private.'

'Thou art right,' said the lady, moving towards the recess of a window; 'say in what does it consist?'

'In the words of an old bard,' replied the Abbot.

'Repeat them,' answered the lady; and he uttered, in a low tone, the lines from an old poem, called The Howlet,—

> 'O Douglas! Douglas!
> Tender and true.'

'Trusty Sir John Holland,'* said the Lady Douglas, apostrophizing the poet, 'a kinder heart never inspired a rhyme, and the Douglas's honour was ever on thy heart-string! We re-

* Sir John [Richard] Holland's poem of The Howlet is known to collectors by the beautiful edition presented to the Bannatyne Club by Mr. David Laing. [The preface contains remarks by Sir Walter Scott, who was president of the club. The poem was composed about the middle of the fifteenth century, and has generally been supposed to be a satire on James II. of Scotland.]

ceive you among our followers, Glendinning.—But, Randal, see that he keep the outer ward only, till we shall hear more touching him from our son.—Thou fearest not the night-air, Glendinning?'

'In the cause of the lady before whom I stand, I fear nothing, madam,' answered the disguised Abbot.

'Our garrison, then, is stronger by one trustworthy soldier,' said the matron.—'Go to the buttery, and let them make much of thee.'

When the Lady Lochleven had retired, the queen said to Roland Græme, who was now almost constantly in her company, 'I spy comfort in that stranger's countenance; I know not why it should be so, but I am well persuaded he is a friend.'

'Your Grace's penetration does not deceive you,' answered the page; and he informed her that the Abbot of Saint Mary's himself played the part of the newly-arrived soldier.

The queen crossed herself and looked upwards. 'Unworthy sinner that I am,' she said, 'that for my sake a man so holy, and so high in spiritual office, should wear the garb of a base swonder, and run the risk of dying the death of a traitor!'

'Heaven will protect its own servant, madam,' said Catherine Seyton; 'his aid would bring a blessing on our undertaking, were it not already blest for its own sake.'

'What I admire in my spiritual father,' said Roland, 'was the steady front with which he looked on me, without giving the least sign of former acquaintance. I did not think the like was possible, since I have ceased to believe that Henry was the same person with Catherine.'

'But marked you not how astuciously the good father,' said the queen, 'eluded the questions of the woman Lochleven, telling her the very truth, which yet she received not as such?'

Roland thought in his heart, that when the truth was spoken for the purpose of deceiving, it was little better than a lie in disguise. But it was no time to agitate such questions of conscience.

'And now for the signal from the shore,' exclaimed Catherine; 'my bosom tells me we shall see this night two lights instead of one gleam from that garden of Eden—And then, Roland, do you play your part manfully, and we will dance on the greensward like midnight fairies!'

Catherine's conjecture misgave not, nor deceived her. In the evening two beams twinkled from the cottage, instead of one; and the page heard, with beating heart, that the new retainer was ordered to stand sentinel on the outside of the castle. When he intimated this news to the queen, she held her hand out to him—he knelt, and when he raised it to his lips in all dutiful homage, he found it was damp and cold as marble. 'For God's sake, madam, droop not now,—sink not now!'

'Call upon Our Lady, my liege,' said the Lady Fleming—'call upon your tutelar saint.'

'Call the spirits of the hundred kings you are descended from,' exclaimed the page; 'in this hour of need, the resolution of a monarch were worth the aid of a hundred saints.'

'O, Roland Græme,' said Mary, in a tone of deep despondency, 'be true to me!—many have been false to me. Alas! I have not always been true to myself. My mind misgives me that I shall die in bondage, and that this bold attempt will cost all our lives. It was foretold me by a soothsayer in France, that I should die in prison, and by a violent death, and here comes the hour—O, would to God it found me prepared!'

'Madam,' said Catherine Seyton, 'remember you are a queen. Better we all died in bravely attempting to gain our freedom, than remained here to be poisoned, as men rid them of the noxious vermin that haunt old houses.'

'You are right, Catherine,' said the queen; 'and Mary will bear her like herself. But alas! your young and buoyant spirit can ill spell the causes which have broken mine. Forgive me, my children, and farewell for a while—I will prepare both mind and body for this awful venture.'

They separated, till again called together by the toiling of the curfew. The queen appeared grave, but firm and resolved; the Lady Fleming, with the art of an experienced courtier, knew perfectly how to disguise her inward tremors; Catherine's eye was fired, as if with the boldness of the project, and the half-smile which dwelt upon her beautiful mouth seemed to contemn all the risk and all the consequences of discovery; Roland, who felt how much success depended on his own address and boldness, summoned together his whole presence of mind, and if he found his spirits flag for a moment, cast his eye upon Catherine, whom he thought he had never seen look so beautiful.—'I may be foiled,' he thought, 'but with this reward in prospect, they must bring the devil to aid them ere they cross me.' Thus resolved, he stood like a greyhound in the slips, with hand, heart, and eye intent upon making and seizing opportunity for the execution of their project.

The keys had, with the wonted ceremonial, been presented to the Lady Lochleven. She stood with her back to the casement, which, like that of the queen's apartment, commanded a view of Kinross, with the church, which stands at some distance from the town, and nearer to the lake, then connected with the town by straggling cottages. With her back to this casement, then, and her face to the table, on which the keys lay for an instant while she tasted the various dishes which were placed there, stood the Lady of Lochleven, more provokingly intent than usual—so at least it seemed to her prisoners—upon the huge and heavy bunch of iron, the implements of their restraint. Just when, having finished her ceremony as taster of the queen's table, she was about to take up the keys, the page, who stood beside her, and had handed her the dishes in succession, looked sideways to the churchyard, and exclaimed he saw corpse-candles in the churchyard. The Lady of Lochleven was not without a touch, though a slight one, of the superstitions of the time; the fate of her sons made her alive to omens, and a corpse-light, as it was called, in the family burial-place boded death. She turned her head towards the casement—saw a distant glimmering—forgot her charge for one second, and in that second were

lost the whole fruits of her former vigilance. The page held the forged keys under his cloak, and with great dexterity exchanged them for the real ones. His utmost address could not prevent a slight clash as he took up the latter bunch. 'Who touches the keys?' said the lady; and while the page answered that the sleeve of his cloak had stirred them, she looked round, possessed herself of the bunch which now occupied the place of the genuine keys, and again turned to gaze on the supposed corpse-candles.

'I hold these gleams,' she said, after a moment's consideration, 'to come, not from the churchyard, but from the hut of the old gardener Blinkhoolie. I wonder what thrift that churl drives, that of late he hath ever had light in his house till the night grew deep. I thought him an industrious, peaceful man—If he turns resetter of idle companions and night-walkers, the place must be rid of him.'

'He may work his baskets, perchance,' said the page, desirous to stop the train of her suspicion.

'Or nets, may he not?' answered the lady.

'Ay, madam,' said Roland, 'for trout and salmon.'

'Or for fools and knaves,' replied the lady; 'but this shall be looked after to-morrow.—I wish your Grace and your company a good evening.—Randal, attend us.' And Randal, who waited in the antechamber, after having surrendered his bunch of keys, gave his escort to his mistress as usual, while, leaving the queen's apartments, she retired to her own.

'To-morrow!' said the page, rubbing his hands with glee as he repeated the lady's last words; 'fools look to to-morrow, and wise folk use tonight.—May I pray you, my gracious liege, to retire for one half-hour, until all the castle is composed to rest? I must go and rub with oil these blessed implements of our freedom. Courage and constancy, and all will go well, provided our friends on the shore fail not to send the boat you spoke of.'

'Fear them not,' said Catherine, 'they are true as steel—if our dear mistress do but maintain her noble and royal courage.' *

'Doubt not me, Catherine,' replied the queen; 'a while since I was overborne, but I have recalled the spirit of my earlier and more sprightly days, when I used to accompany my armed nobles, and wish to be myself a man, to know what life it was to be in the fields with sword and buckler, jack and knapsack.'

'O, the lark lives not a gayer life, nor sings a lighter and gayer song, than the merry soldier,' answered Catherine. 'Your Grace shall be in the midst of them soon, and the look of such a liege sovereign will make each of your host worth three in the hour of need:—but I must to my task.'

'We have but brief time,' said Queen Mary; 'one of the two lights in the cottage is extinguished—that shows the boat is put off.'

'They will row very slow,' said the page, 'or kent where depth permits, to avoid noise.—To our several tasks—I will communicate with the good father.'

* Note L. Queen Mary's demeanour.

At the dead hour of midnight, when all was silent in the castle, the page put the key into the lock of the wicket which opened into the garden, and which was at the bottom of a staircase which descended from the queen's apartment. 'Now, turn smooth and softly, thou good bolt,' said he, 'if ever oil softened rust!' and his precautions had been so effectual, that the bolt revolved with little or no sound of resistance. He ventured not to cross the threshold, but, exchanging a word with the disguised Abbot, asked if the boat were ready.

'This half-hour,' said the sentinel. 'She lies beneath the wall, too close under the islet to be seen by the warder, but I fear she will hardly escape his notice in putting off again.'

'The darkness,' said the page, 'and our profound silence, may take her off unobserved, as she came in. Hildebrand has the watch on the tower—a heavy-headed knave, who holds a can of ale to be the best headpiece upon a night-watch. He sleeps, for a wager.'

'Then bring the Queen,' said the Abbot, 'and I will call Henry Seyton to assist them to the boat.'

On tiptoe, with noiseless step and suppressed breath, trembling at every rustle of their own apparel, one after another the fair prisoners glided down the winding stair, under the guidance of Roland Græme, and were received at the wicket-gate by Henry Seyton and the churchman. The former seemed instantly to take upon himself the whole direction of the enterprise. 'My Lord Abbot,' he said, 'give my sister your arm—I will conduct the Queen—and that youth will have the honour to guide Lady Fleming.'

This was no time to dispute the arrangement, although it was not that which Roland Græme would have chosen. Catherine Seyton, who well knew the garden path, tripped on before like a sylph, rather leading the Abbot than receiving assistance—the queen, her native spirit prevailing over female fear, and a thousand painful reflections, moved steadily forward, by the assistance of Henry Seyton—while the Lady Fleming encumbered with her fears and her helplessness Roland Græme, who followed in the rear, and who bore under the other arm a packet of necessaries belonging to the queen. The door of the garden, which communicated with the shore of the islet, yielded to one of the keys of which Roland had possessed himself, although not until he had tried several—a moment of anxious terror and expectation. The ladies were then partly led, partly carried, to the side of the lake, where a boat with six rowers attended them, the men couched along the bottom to secure them from observation. Henry Seyton placed the queen in the stern; the Abbot offered to assist Catherine, but she was seated by the queen's side before he could utter his proffer of help; and Roland Græme was just lifting Lady Fleming over the boat-side, when a thought suddenly occurred to him, and exclaiming, 'Forgotten, forgotten! wait for me but one half-minute,' he replaced on the shore the helpless lady of the bedchamber, threw the queen's packet into the boat, and sped back through the garden with the noiseless speed of a bird on the wing.

'By Heaven, he is false at last!' said Seyton; 'I ever feared it!'

'He is as true,' said Catherine, 'as Heaven itself, and that I will maintain.'

'Be silent, minion,' said her brother, 'for shame, if not for fear.—Fellows, put off, and row for your lives!'

'Help me, help me on board!' said the deserted Lady Fleming, and that louder than prudence warranted.

'Put off—put off!' cried Henry Seyton; 'leave all behind, so the queen is safe.'

'Will you permit this, madam?' said Catherine imploringly; 'you leave your deliverer to death.'

'I will not,' said the queen.—'Seyton, I command you to stay at every risk.'

'Pardon me, madam, if I disobey,' said the intractable young man; and with one hand lifting in Lady Fleming, he began himself to push off the boat.

She was two fathoms' length from the shore, and the rowers were getting her head round, when Roland Græme, arriving, bounded from the beach, and attained the boat, overturning Seyton, on whom he lighted. The youth swore a deep but suppressed oath, and, stopping Græme as he stepped towards the stern, said, 'Your place is not with high-born dames—keep at the head and trim the vessel.—Now give way—give way—Row, for God and the Queen!'

The rowers obeyed, and began to pull vigorously.

'Why did ye not muffle the oars?' said Roland Græme; 'the dash must awaken the sentinel—Row, lads, and get out of reach of shot; for had not old Hildebrand, the warder, supped upon poppy-porridge, this whispering must have waked him.'

'It was all thine own delay,' said Seyton; 'thou shalt reckon with me hereafter for that and other matters.'

But Roland's apprehension was verified too instantly to permit him to reply. The sentinel, whose slumbering had withstood the whispering, was alarmed by the dash of the oars. His challenge was instantly heard. 'A boat—a boat!—bring to, or I shoot!' And as they continued to ply their oars, he called aloud, 'Treason! treason!' rung the bell of the castle, and discharged his harquebuss at the boat. The ladies crowded on each other like startled wild-fowl, at the flash and report of the piece, while the men urged the rowers to the utmost speed. They heard more than one ball whiz along the surface of the lake, at no great distance from their little bark; and from the lights which glanced like meteors from window to window, it was evident the whole castle was alarmed, and their escape discovered.

'Pull!' again exclaimed Seyton; 'stretch to your oars, or I will spur you to the task with my dagger—they will launch a boat immediately.'

'That is cared for,' said Roland; 'I locked gate and wicket on them when I went back, and no boat will stir from the island this night, if doors of good oak and bolts of iron can keep men within stone walls.—And now I resign my office of porter of Lochleven, and give the keys to the Kelpie's keeping.'

As the heavy keys plunged in the lake, the Abbot, who till then had been repeating his prayers, exclaimed, 'Now, bless thee, my son! for thy ready prudence puts shame on us all.'[1]

'I knew,' said Mary, drawing her breath more freely, as they were now out of reach of the musketry—'I knew my squire's truth, promptitude, and sagacity.—I must have him dear friends with my no less true knights, Douglas and Seyton—but where, then, is Douglas?'

'Here, madam,' answered the deep and melancholy voice of the boatman who sat next her, and who acted as steersman.

'Alas! was it you who stretched your body before me,' said the queen, 'when the balls were raining around us?'

'Believe you,' said he, in a low tone, 'that Douglas would have resigned to any one the chance of protecting his Queen's life with his own?'

The dialogue was here interrupted by a shot or two from one of those small pieces of artillery called falconets, then used in defending castles. The shot was too vague to have any effect, but the broader flash, the deeper sound, the louder return which was made by the midnight echoes of Bennarty, terrified and imposed silence on the liberated prisoners. The boat was alongside of a rude quay or landing-place, running out from a garden of considerable extent, ere any of them again attempted to speak. They landed, and while the Abbot returned thanks aloud to Heaven, which had thus far favoured their enterprise, Douglas enjoyed the best reward of his desperate undertaking, in conducting the queen to the house of the gardener. Yet, not unmindful of Roland Græme even in that moment of terror and exhaustion, Mary expressly commanded Seyton to give his assistance to Fleming, while Catherine voluntarily, and without bidding, took the arm of the page. Seyton presently resigned Lady Fleming to the care of the Abbot, alleging, he must look after their horses; and his attendants, disencumbering themselves of their boat-cloaks, hastened to assist him.

While Mary spent in the gardener's cottage the few minutes which were necessary to prepare the steeds for their departure, she perceived, in a corner, the old man to whom the garden belonged, and called him to approach. He came as it were with reluctance.

'How, brother,' said the Abbot, 'so slow to welcome thy royal Queen and mistress to liberty and to her kingdom!'

The old man, thus admonished, came forward, and, in good terms of speech, gave her Grace joy of her deliverance. The queen returned him thanks in the most gracious manner, and added, 'It will remain to us to offer some immediate reward for your fidelity, for we wot well your house has been long the refuge in which our trusty servants have met to concert measures for our freedom.' So saying, she offered gold, and added, 'We will consider your services more fully hereafter.'

'Kneel, brother,' said the Abbot, 'kneel instantly, and thank her Grace's kindness.'

'Good brother, that wert once a few steps under me, and art still many years younger,'

[1] Note M. Escape of Queen Mary.

replied the gardener pettishly, 'let me do mine acknowledgments in my own way. Queens have knelt to me ere now, and in truth my knees are too old and stiff to bend even to this lovely-faced lady. May it please your Grace, if your Grace's servants have occupied my house, so that I could not call it mine own—if they have trodden down my flowers in the zeal of their midnight comings and goings, and destroyed the hope of the fruit season by bringing their war-horses into my garden, I do but crave of your Grace in requital, that you will choose your residence as far from me as possible. I am an old man, who would willingly creep to my grave as easily as I can, in peace, good-will, and quiet labour.'

'I promise you fairly, good man,' said the queen, 'I will not make yonder castle my residence again, if I can help it. But let me press on you this money—It will make some amends for the havoc we have made in your little garden and orchard.'

'I thank your Grace, but it will make me not the least amends,' said the old man. 'The ruined labours of a whole year are not so easily replaced to him who has perchance but that one year to live; and besides, they tell me I must leave this place and become a wanderer in mine old age—I that have nothing on earth saving these fruit-trees, and a few old parchments and family secrets not worth knowing. As for gold, if I had loved it, I might have remained Lord Abbot of Saint Mary's—and yet I wot not—for if Abbot Boniface be but the poor peasant Blinkhoolie, his successor, the Abbot Ambrosius, is still transmuted for the worse into the guise of a sword-and-buckler man.'

'Is this indeed the Abbot Boniface of whom I have heard?' said the queen. 'It is indeed I who should have bent the knee for your blessing, good father.'

'Bend no knee to me, lady! The blessing of an old man, who is no longer an abbot, go with you over dale and down—I hear the trampling of your horses.'

'Farewell, father,' said the queen. 'When we are once more seated at Holyrood, we will neither forget thee nor thine injured garden.'

'Forget us both,' said the ex-Abbot Boniface, 'and may God be with you!'

As they hurried out of the house, they heard the old man talking and muttering to himself, as he hastily drew bolt and bar behind them.

'The revenge of the Douglases will reach the poor old man,' said the queen. 'God help me, I ruin every one whom I approach!'

'His safety is cared for,' said Seyton; 'he must not remain here, but will be privately conducted to a place of greater security. But I would your Grace were in the saddle.—To horse! to horse!'

The party of Seyton and of Douglas were increased to about ten by those attendants who had remained with the horses. The queen and her ladies, with all the rest who came from the boat, were instantly mounted; and, holding aloof from the village, which was already alarmed by the firing from the castle, with Douglas acting as their guide, they soon reached the open ground, and began to ride as fast as was consistent with keeping together in good order.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

He mounted himself on a coal-black steed,
  And her on a freckled grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down from his side,
  And roundly they rode away.
    OLD BALLAD.

The influence of the free air, the rushing of the horses over high and low, the ringing of the bridles, the excitation at once arising from a sense of freedom and of rapid motion, gradually dispelled the confused and dejected sort of stupefaction by which Queen Mary was at first overwhelmed. She could not at last conceal the change of her feelings to the person who rode at her rein, and who she doubted not was the Father Ambrosius; for Seyton, with all the heady impetuosity of a youth, proud, and justly so, of his first successful adventure, assumed all the bustle and importance of commander of the little party, which escorted, in the language of the time, the Fortune of Scotland. He now led the van, now checked his bounding steed till the rear had come up, exhorted the leaders to keep a steady though rapid pace, and commanded those who were hindmost of the party to use their spurs, and allow no interval to take place in their line of march; and anon he was beside the queen, or her ladies, inquiring how they brooked the hasty journey, and whether they had any commands for him. But while Seyton thus busied himself in the general cause with some advantage to the regular order of the march, and a good deal of personal ostentation, the horseman who rode beside the queen gave her his full and undivided attention, as if he had been waiting upon some superior being. When the road was rugged and dangerous, he abandoned almost entirely the care of his own horse, and kept his hand constantly upon the queen's bridle; if a river or larger brook traversed their course, his left arm retained her in the saddle, while his right held her palfrey's rein.

'I had not thought, reverend father,' said the queen, when they reached the other bank, 'that the convent bred such good horsemen.'—The person she addressed sighed, but made no other answer.—'I know not how it is,' said Queen Mary, 'but either the sense of freedom, or the pleasure of my favourite exercise, from which I have been so long debarred, or both combined, seem to have given wings to me—no fish ever shot through the water, no bird through the air, with the hurried feeling of liberty and rapture with which I sweep through this night-wind, and over these wolds. Nay, such is the magic of feeling myself once more in the saddle, that I could almost swear I am at this moment mounted on my own favourite Rosabelle, who was never matched in Scotland for swiftness, for ease of motion, and for sureness of foot.'

'And if the horse which bears so dear a burden could speak,' answered the deep voice of the melancholy George of Douglas, 'would she not reply, Who but Rosabelle ought at such an emergence as this to serve her beloved mistress, or who but Douglas ought to hold her bridle-rein?'

Queen Mary started; she foresaw at once all

the evils like to arise to herself and him from the deep enthusiastic passion of this youth; but her feelings as a woman, grateful at once and compassionate, prevented her assuming the dignity of a queen, and she endeavoured to continue the conversation in an indifferent tone.

'Methought,' she said, 'I heard that, at the division of my spoils, Rosabelle had become the property of Lord Morton's paramour and lady-love, Alice.'

'The noble palfrey had indeed been destined to so base a lot,' answered Douglas; 'she was kept under four keys, and under the charge of a numerous crew of grooms and domestics—but Queen Mary needed Rosabelle, and Rosabelle is here.'

'And was it well, Douglas,' said Queen Mary, 'when such fearful risks of various kinds must needs be encountered, that you should augment their perils to yourself, for a subject of so little moment as a palfrey?'

'Do you call that of little moment,' answered Douglas, 'which has afforded you a moment's pleasure?—Did you not start with joy when I first said you were mounted on Rosabelle?—And to purchase you that pleasure, though it were to last no longer than the flash of lightning doth, would not Douglas have risked his life a thousand times?'

'O, peace, Douglas, peace,' said the queen, 'this is unfitting language; and, besides, I would speak,' said she, recollecting herself, 'with the Abbot of Saint Mary's—Nay, Douglas, I will not let you quit my rein in displeasure.'

'Displeasure, lady?' answered Douglas: 'alas! sorrow is all that I can feel for your well-warranted contempt—I should be as soon displeased with Heaven for refusing the wildest wish which mortal can form.'

'Abide by my rein, however,' said Mary; 'there is room for my Lord Abbot on the other side; and, besides, I doubt if his assistance would be so useful to Rosabelle and me as yours has been, should the road again require it.'

The Abbot came up on the other side, and she immediately opened a conversation with him on the topic of the state of parties, and the plan fittest for her to pursue in consequence of her deliverance. In this conversation Douglas took little share, and never but when directly applied to by the queen, while, as before, his attention seemed entirely engrossed by the care of Mary's personal safety. She learned, however, she had a new obligation to him, since, by his contrivance, the Abbot, whom he had furnished with the family password, was introduced into the castle as one of the garrison.

Long before daybreak they ended their hasty and perilous journey before the gates of Niddrie, a castle in West Lothian, belonging to Lord Seyton.* When the Queen was about to alight, Henry Seyton, preventing Douglas, received her in his arms, and, kneeling down, prayed her Majesty to enter the house of his father, her faithful servant.

'Your Grace,' he added, 'may repose yourself here in perfect safety—it is already garrisoned with good men for your protection; and I have sent a post to my father, whose instant arrival, at the head of five hundred men, may be looked for. Do not dismay yourself, therefore, should your sleep be broken by the trampling of horse; but only think that here are some scores more of the saucy Seytons come to attend you.'

'And by better friends than the saucy Seytons a Scottish queen cannot be guarded,' replied Mary. 'Rosabelle went fleet as the summer breeze, and well-nigh as easy; but it is long since I have been a traveller, and I feel that repose will be welcome.—Catherine, *ma mignonne*, you must sleep in my apartment to-night, and bid me welcome to your noble father's castle.—Thanks, thanks to all my kind deliverers—thanks, and a good-night is all I can now offer; but if I climb once more to the upper side of Fortune's wheel, I will not have her bandage. Mary Stuart will keep her eyes open, and distinguish her friends.—Seyton, I need scarcely recommend the venerable Abbot, the Douglas, and my page to your honourable care and hospitality.'

Henry Seyton bowed, and Catherine and Lady Fleming attended the queen to her apartment; where, acknowledging to them that she should have found it difficult in that moment to keep her promise of holding her eyes open, she resigned herself to repose, and awakened not till the morning was advanced.

Mary's first feeling when she awoke, was the doubt of her freedom; and the impulse prompted her to start from bed, and, hastily throwing her mantle over her shoulders, to look out at the casement of her apartment. O, sight of joy! instead of the crystal sheet of Lochleven, unaltered save by the influence of the wind, a landscape of wood and moorland lay before her, and the park around the castle was occupied by the troops of her most faithful and most favourite nobles.

'Rise, rise, Catherine,' cried the enraptured princess; 'arise and come hither!—here are swords and spears in true hands, and glittering armour on loyal breasts. Here are banners, my girl, floating in the wind, as lightly as summer clouds—Great God! what pleasure to my weary eyes to trace their devices—thine own brave father's—the princely Hamilton's—the faithful Fleming's—See—see, they have caught a glimpse of me, and throng towards the window!'

She flung the casement open, and with her bare head, from which the tresses flew back loose and dishevelled, her fair arm slenderly veiled by her mantle, returned by motion and sign the exulting shouts of the warriors, which echoed for many a furlong around. When the first burst of ecstatic joy was over, she recollected how lightly she was dressed, and, putting her hands to her face, which was covered with blushes at the recollection, withdrew abruptly from the window. The cause of her retreat was easily conjectured, and increased the general enthusiasm for a princess, who had forgotten her rank in her haste to acknowledge the services of her subjects. The unadorned beauties of the lovely woman, too, moved the military spectators more than the highest display of her regal state might; and what might have seemed too free in

* [This castle is now the property of Lord Hopetoun. It stands—a ruin—nearly midway between Edinburgh and Linlithgow.]

her mode of appearing before them, was more than atoned for by the enthusiasm of the moment, and by the delicacy evinced in her hasty retreat. Often as the shouts died away, as often were they renewed, till wood and hill rung again; and many a deep oath was made that morning on the cross of the sword, that the hand should not part with the weapon, till Mary Stuart was restored to her rights. But what are promises, what the hopes of mortals? In ten days, these gallant and devoted votaries were slain, were captives, or had fled.

Mary flung herself into the nearest seat, and still blushing, yet half smiling, exclaimed, '*Ma mignonne*, what will they think of me?—to show myself to them with my bare feet hastily thrust into the slippers—only this loose mantle about me—my hair loose on my shoulders—my arms and neck so bare.—O, the best they can suppose is, that her abode in yonder dungeon has turned their Queen's brain! But my rebel subjects saw me exposed when I was in the depth of affliction, why should I hold colder ceremony with these faithful and loyal men?—Call Fleming, however—I trust she has not forgotten the little mail with my apparel—We must be as brave as we can, *mignonne*.'

'Nay, madam, our good Lady Fleming was in no case to remember anything.'

'You jest, Catherine,' said the queen, somewhat offended; 'it is not in her nature, surely, to forget her duty so far as to leave us without a change of apparel?'

'Roland Græme, madam, took care of that,' answered Catherine; 'for he threw the mail, with your Highness's clothes and jewels, into the boat, ere he ran back to lock the gate—I never saw so awkward a page as that youth—the packet well-nigh fell on my head.'

'He shall make thy heart amends, my girl,' said Queen Mary, laughing, 'for that and all other offences given. But call Fleming, and let us put ourselves into apparel to meet our faithful lords.'

Such had been the preparations, and such was the skill of Lady Fleming, that the queen appeared before her assembled nobles in such attire as became, though it could not enhance, her natural dignity. With the most winning courtesy, she expressed to each individual her grateful thanks, and dignified not only every noble, but many of the lesser barons, by her particular attention.

'And whither now, my lords?' she said; 'what way do your counsels, determine for us?'

'To Draphane Castle,' replied Lord Arbroath, 'if your Majesty is so pleased; and thence to Dumbarton, to place your Grace's person in safety, after which we long to prove if these traitors will abide us in the field.'

'And when do we journey?'

'We propose,' said Lord Seyton, 'if your Grace's fatigue will permit, to take horse after the morning's meal.'

'Your pleasure, my lords, is mine,' replied the queen; 'we will rule our journey by your wisdom now, and hope hereafter to have the advantage of governing by it our kingdom.—You will permit my ladies and me, my good lords, to break our fasts along with you—We must be half soldiers ourselves, and set state apart.'

Low bowed many a helmeted head at this gracious proffer, when the queen, glancing her eyes through the assembled leaders, missed both Douglas and Roland Græme, and inquired for them in a whisper to Catherine Seyton.

'They are in yonder oratory, madam, sad enough,' replied Catherine; and the queen observed that her favourite's eyes were red with weeping.

'This must not be,' said the queen. 'Keep the company amused—I will seek them and introduce them myself.'

She went into the oratory, where the first she met was George Douglas, standing, or rather reclining, in the recess of a window, his back rested against the wall, and his arms folded on his breast. At the sight of the queen he started, and his countenance showed, for an instant, an expression of intense delight, which was instantly exchanged for his usual deep melancholy.

'What means this?' she said; 'Douglas, why does the first deviser and bold executor of the happy scheme for our freedom, shun the company of his fellow-nobles, and of the sovereign whom he has obliged?'

'Madam,' replied Douglas, 'those whom you grace with your presence bring followers to aid your cause, wealth to support your state,—can offer you halls in which to feast, and impregnable castles for your defence. I am a houseless and landless man—disinherited by my mother, and laid under her malediction—disowned by my name and kindred—who bring nothing to your standard but a single sword, and the poor life of its owner.'

'Do you mean to upbraid me, Douglas,' replied the queen, 'by showing what you have lost for my sake?'

'God forbid, madam!' interrupted the young man eagerly; 'were it to do again, and had I ten times as much rank and wealth, and twenty times as many friends to lose, my losses would be overpaid by the first step you made, as a free princess, upon the soil of your native kingdom.'

'And what then ails you, that you will not rejoice with those who rejoice upon the same joyful occasion?' said the queen.

'Madam,' replied the youth, 'though exheridated and disowned, I am yet a Douglas: with most of yonder nobles my family have been in feud for ages—a cold reception amongst them were an insult, and a kind one yet more humiliating.'

'For shame, Douglas,' replied the queen; 'shake off this unmanly gloom!—I can make thee match for the best of them in title and fortune, and, believe me, I will.—Go then amongst them, I command you.'

'That word,' said Douglas, 'is enough—I go. This only let me say, that not for wealth or title would I have done that which I have done—Mary Stuart will not, and the Queen cannot, reward me.'

So saying, he left the oratory, mingled with the nobles, and placed himself at the bottom of the table. The queen looked after him, and put her kerchief to her eyes.

'Now, Our Lady pity me,' she said, 'for no sooner are my prison cares ended, than those

which beset me as a woman and a queen again thicken around me.—Happy Elizabeth! to whom political interest is everything, and whose heart never betrays thy head.—And now must I seek this other boy, if I would prevent daggers-drawing betwixt him and the young Seyton.'

Roland Græme was in the same oratory, but at such a distance from Douglas that he could not overhear what passed betwixt the queen and him. He also was moody and thoughtful, but cleared his brow at the queen's question, 'How now, Roland? you are negligent in your attendance this morning. Are you so much overcome with your night's ride?'

'Not so, gracious madam,' answered Græme; 'but I am told the page of Lochleven is not the page of Niddrie Castle; and so Master Henry Seyton hath in a manner been pleased to supersede my attendance.'

'Now, Heaven forgive me,' said the queen, 'how soon these cock-chickens begin to spar! —with children and boys, at least, I may be a queen.—I will have you friends. Some one send me Henry Seyton hither.' As she spoke the last words aloud, the youth whom she had named entered the apartment. 'Come hither,' she said, 'Henry Seyton—I will have you give your hand to this youth, who so well aided in the plan of my escape.'

'Willingly, madam,' answered Seyton, 'so that the youth will grant me, as a boon, that he touch not the hand of another Seyton whom he knows of. My hand has passed current for hers with him before now—and to win my friendship, he must give up thoughts of my sister's love.'

'Henry Seyton,' said the queen, 'does it become you to add any condition to my command?'

'Madam,' said Henry, 'I am the servant of your Grace's throne, son to the most loyal man in Scotland. Our goods, our castles, our blood, are yours: our honour is in our own keeping. I could say more, but'——

'Nay, speak on, rude boy,' said the queen; 'what avails it that I am released from Lochleven, if I am thus enthralled under the yoke of my pretended deliverers, and prevented from doing justice to one who has deserved as well of me as yourself?'

'Be not in this distemperature for me, sovereign lady,' said Roland, 'this young gentleman, being the faithful servant of your Grace, and the brother of Catherine Seyton, bears that about him which will charm down my passion at the hottest.'

'I warn thee once more,' said Henry Seyton haughtily, 'that you make no speech which may infer that the daughter of Lord Seyton can be aught to thee beyond what she is to every churl's blood in Scotland.'

The queen was again about to interfere, for Roland's complexion rose, and it became somewhat questionable how long his love for Catherine would suppress the natural fire of his temper. But the interposition of another person, hitherto unseen, prevented Mary's interference. There was in the oratory a separate shrine, enclosed with a high screen of pierced oak, within which was placed an image of Saint Bennet, of peculiar sanctity. From this recess, in which she had been probably engaged in her devotions, issued suddenly Magdalen Græme, and addressed Henry Seyton, in reply to his last offensive expressions —'And of what clay, then, are they moulded, these Seytons, that the blood of the Græmes may not aspire to mingle with theirs? Know, proud boy, that when I call this youth my daughter's child, I affirm his descent from Malise, Earl of Strathern, called Malise with the Bright Brand; and I trow the blood of your house springs from no higher source.'

'Good mother,' said Seyton, 'methinks your sanctity should make you superior to these worldly vanities; and indeed it seems to have rendered you somewhat oblivious touching them, since, to be of gentle descent, the father's name and lineage must be as well qualified as the mother's.'

'And if I say he comes of the blood of Avenel by the father's side,' replied Magdalen Græme, 'name I not blood as richly coloured as thine own?'

'Of Avenel?' said the queen; 'is my page descended of Avenel?'

'Ay, gracious Princess, and the last male heir of that ancient house—Julian Avenel was his father, who fell in battle against the Southron.'

'I have heard the tale of sorrow,' said the queen; 'it was thy daughter, then, who followed that unfortunate baron to the field, and died on his body? Alas! how many ways does woman's affection find to work out her own misery! The tale has oft been told and sung in hall and bower. —And thou, Roland, art that child of misfortune, who was left among the dead and dying? Henry Seyton, he is thine equal in blood and birth.'

'Scarcely so,' said Henry Seyton, 'even were he legitimate; but if the tale be told and sung aright, Julian Avenel was a false knight, and his leman a frail and credulous maiden.'

'Now, by Heaven, thou liest!' said Roland Græme, and laid his hand on his sword. The entrance of Lord Seyton, however, prevented violence.

'Save me, my lord,' said the queen, 'and separate these wild and untamed spirits.'

'How, Henry,' said the baron, 'are my castle, and the Queen's presence, no checks on thine insolence and impetuosity?—And with whom art thou brawling?—unless my eyes spell that token false, it is with the very youth who aided me so gallantly in the skirmish with the Leslies.—Let me look, fair youth, at the medal which thou wearest in thy cap. By Saint Bennet, it is the same!—Henry, I command thee to forbear him, as thou lovest my blessing'——

'And as you honour my command,' said the queen; 'good service hath he done me.'

'Ay, madam,' replied young Seyton, 'as when he carried the billet enclosed in the sword-sheath to Lochleven—marry, the good youth knew no more than a pack-horse what he was carrying.'

'But I, who dedicated him to this great work,' said Magdalen Græme—'I, by whose advice and agency this just heir hath been unloosed from her thraldom—I, who spared not the last remaining hope of a falling house in this great action—I, at least, knew and counselled; and what merit may be mine, let the reward, most gracious Queen, descend upon this youth. My ministry here is ended; you are free—a sovereign

Princess, at the head of a gallant army, surrounded by valiant barons—My service could avail you no further, but might well prejudice you; your fortune now rests upon men's hearts and men's swords—May they prove as trusty as the faith of women!'

'You will not leave us, mother,' said the queen—'you whose practices in our favour were so powerful, who dared so many dangers, and wore so many disguises, to blind our enemies and to confirm our friends—you will not leave us in the dawn of our reviving fortunes, ere we have time to know and to thank you?'

'You cannot know her,' answered Magdalen Græme, 'who knows not herself—There are times when, in this woman's frame of mine, there is the strength of him of Gath—in this overtoiled brain, the wisdom of the most sage counsellor—and again the mist is on me, and my strength is weakness, my wisdom folly. I have spoken before princes and cardinals—ay, noble Princess, even before the princes of thine own house of Lorraine; and I know not whence the words of persuasion came which flowed from my lips, and were drunk in by their ears.—And now, even when I most need words of persuasion, there is something which chokes my voice, and robs me of utterance.'

'If there be aught in my power to do thee pleasure,' said the queen, 'the barely naming it shall avail as well as all thine eloquence.'

'Sovereign lady,' replied the enthusiast, 'it shames me that at this high moment something of human frailty should cling to one, whose vows the saints have heard, whose labours in the rightful cause Heaven has prospered. But it will be thus while the living spirit is shrined in the clay of mortality—I will yield to the folly,' she said, weeping as she spoke, 'and it shall be the last.' Then, seizing Roland's hand, she led him to the queen's feet, kneeling herself upon one knee, and causing him to kneel on both. 'Mighty Princess,' she said, 'look on this flower—it was found by a kindly stranger on a bloody field of battle, and long it was ere my anxious eyes saw, and my arms pressed, all that was left of my only daughter. For your sake, and for that of the holy faith we both profess, I could leave this plant, while it was yet tender, to the nurture of strangers—ay, of enemies, by whom, perchance, his blood would have been poured forth as wine, had the heretic Glendinning known that he had in his house the heir of Julian Avenel. Since then I have seen him only in a few hours of doubt and dread, and now I part with the child of my love—for ever—for ever!—O, for every weary step I have made in your rightful cause, in this and in foreign lands, give protection to the child whom I must no more call mine!'

'I swear to you, mother,' said the queen, deeply affected, 'that, for your sake and his own, his happiness and fortunes shall be our charge!'

'I thank you, daughter of princes,' said Magdalen, and pressed her lips, first to the queen's hand, then to the brow of her grandson. 'And now,' she said, drying her tears, and rising with dignity, 'Earth has had its own, and Heaven claims the rest.—Lioness of Scotland, go forth and conquer! and if the prayers of a devoted votaress can avail thee, they will rise in many a land, and from many a distant shrine. I will glide like a ghost from land to land, from temple to temple; and where the very name of my country is unknown, the priests shall ask who is the Queen of that distant northern land, for whom the aged pilgrim was so fervent in prayer. Farewell! Honour be thine, and earthly prosperity, if it be the will of God—if not, may the penance thou shalt do here insure thee happiness hereafter!—Let no one speak or follow me—my resolution is taken—my vow cannot be cancelled.'

She glided from their presence as she spoke, and her last look was upon her beloved grandchild. He would have risen and followed, but the queen and Lord Seyton interfered.

'Press not on her now,' said Lord Seyton, 'if you would not lose her for ever. Many a time have we seen the sainted mother, and often at the most needful moment; but to press on her privacy, or to thwart her purpose, is a crime which she cannot pardon. I trust we shall yet see her at her need—a holy woman she is for certain, and dedicated wholly to prayer and penance; and hence the heretics hold her as one distracted, while true Catholics deem her a saint.'

'Let me then hope,' said the queen, 'that you, my lord, will aid me in the execution of her last request.'

'What! in the protection of my young second?—cheerfully—that is, in all that your Majesty can think it fitting to ask of me.—Henry, give thy hand upon the instant to Roland Avenel, for so I presume he must now be called.'

'And shall be lord of the barony,' said the queen, 'if God prosper our rightful arms.'

'It can only be to restore it to my kind protectress, who now holds it,' said young Avenel. 'I would rather be landless all my life, than she lost a rood of ground by me.'

'Nay,' said the queen, looking to Lord Seyton, 'his mind matches his birth.—Henry, thou hast not yet given thy hand.'

'It is his,' said Henry, giving it with some appearance of courtesy, but whispering Roland at the same time,—'For all this thou hast not my sister's.'

'May it please your Grace,' said Lord Seyton, 'now that these passages are over, to honour our poor meal? Time it were that our banners were reflected in the Clyde. We must to horse with as little delay as may be.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

> Ay, sir, our ancient crown, in these wild times,
> Oft stood upon a cast—the gamester's ducat,
> So often staked and lost, and then regain'd,
> Scarce knew so many hazards.
>
> THE SPANISH FATHER.

It is not our object to enter into the historical part of the reign of the ill-fated Mary, or to recount how, during the week which succeeded her flight from Lochleven, her partizans mustered around her with their followers, forming a gallant army, amounting to six thousand men. So much

light has been lately thrown on the most minute details of the period, by Mr. Chalmers, in his valuable History of Queen Mary, that the reader may be safely referred to it for the fullest information which ancient records afford concerning that interesting time.* It is sufficient for our purpose to say, that while Mary's headquarters were at Hamilton, the Regent and his adherents had, in the king's name, assembled a host at Glasgow, inferior indeed to that of the queen in numbers, but formidable from the military talents of Murray, Morton, the Laird of Grange, and others, who had been trained from their youth in foreign and domestic wars.

In these circumstances, it was the obvious policy of Queen Mary to avoid a conflict, secure that, were her person once in safety, the number of her adherents must daily increase; whereas the forces of those opposed to her must, as had frequently happened in the previous history of her reign, have diminished, and their spirits become broken. And so evident was this to her counsellors, that they resolved their first step should be to place the queen in the strong castle of Dumbarton, there to await the course of events, the arrival of succours from France, and the levies which were made by her adherents in every province of Scotland. Accordingly, orders were given that all men should be on horseback or on foot, apparelled in their armour, and ready to follow the queen's standard in array of battle, the avowed determination being to escort her to the Castle of Dumbarton in defiance of her enemies.

The muster was made upon Hamilton Moor, and the march commenced in all the pomp of feudal times. Military music sounded, banners and pennons waved, armour glittered far and wide, and spears glanced and twinkled like stars in a frosty sky. The gallant spectacle of warlike parade was on this occasion dignified by the presence of the queen herself, who, with a fair retinue of ladies and household attendants, and a special guard of gentlemen, amongst whom young Seyton and Roland were distinguished, gave grace at once and confidence to the army, which spread its ample files before, around, and behind her. Many churchmen also joined the cavalcade, most of whom did not scruple to assume arms, and declare their intention of wielding them in defence of Mary and the Catholic faith. Not so the Abbot of Saint Mary's. Roland had not seen this prelate since the night of their escape from Lochleven, and he now beheld him, robed in the dress of his Order, assume his station near the queen's person. Roland hastened to pull off his basnet, and beseech the Abbot's blessing.

'Thou hast it, my son!' said the priest; 'I see thee now under thy true name, and in thy rightful garb. The helmet with the holly branch befits your brows well—I have long waited for the hour thou shouldst assume it.'

'Then you knew of my descent, my good father?' said Roland.

'I did so, but it was under seal of confession from thy grandmother; nor was I at liberty to tell the secret, till she herself should make it known.'

'Her reason for such secrecy, my father?' said Roland Avenel.

'Fear, perchance, of my brother—a mistaken fear, for Halbert would not, to insure himself a kingdom, have offered wrong to an orphan; besides that, your title, in quiet times, even had your father done your mother that justice which I well hope he did, could not have competed with that of my brother's wife, the child of Julian's elder brother.'

'They need fear no competition from me,' said Avenel. 'Scotland is wide enough, and there are many manors to win, without plundering my benefactor. But prove to me, my reverend father, that my father was just to my mother—show me that I may call myself a legitimate Avenel—and make me your bounden slave for ever.'

'Ay,' replied the Abbot, 'I hear the Seytons hold thee cheap for that stain on thy shield. Something, however, I have learnt from the late Abbot Boniface, which, if it prove sooth, may redeem that reproach.'

'Tell me that blessed news,' said Roland, 'and the future service of my life'——

'Rash boy!' said the Abbot, 'I should but madden thine impatient temper, by exciting hopes that may never be fulfilled—and is this a time for them? Think on what perilous march we are bound, and if thou hast a sin unconfessed, neglect not the only leisure which Heaven may perchance afford thee for confession and absolution.'

'There will be time enough for both, I trust, when we reach Dumbarton,' answered the page.

'Ay,' said the Abbot, 'thou crowest as loudly as the rest—but we are not yet at Dumbarton, and there is a lion in the path.'

'Mean you Murray, Morton, and the other rebels at Glasgow, my reverend father? Tush! they dare not look on the royal banner.'

'Even so,' replied the Abbot, 'speak many of those who are older, and should be wiser, than thou.—I have returned from the southern shires, where I left many a chief of name arming in the Queen's interest—I left the lords here wise and considerate men—I find them madmen on my return—they are willing, for mere pride and vain-glory, to brave the enemy, and to carry the Queen, as it were in triumph, past the walls of Glasgow, and under the beards of the adverse army.—Seldom does Heaven smile on such mistimed confidence. We shall be encountered, and that to the purpose.'

'And so much the better,' replied Roland; 'the field of battle was my cradle.'

'Beware it be not thy dying bed,' said the Abbot. 'But what avails it whispering to young wolves the dangers of the chase? You will know, perchance, ere this day is out, what yonder men are, whom you hold in rash contempt.'

'Why, what are they?' said Henry Seyton, who now joined them: 'have they sinews of wire, and flesh of iron?—Will lead pierce and steel cut them?—If so, reverend father, we have little to fear.'

'They are evil men,' said the Abbot, 'but the

* [Chalmers' Life of Mary Queen of Scots, drawn from the State Papers, with subsidiary memoirs, was published at London 1819, 2 vols. 4to; and a second edition, corrected and enlarged, 1822, 3 vols. 8vo.]

trade of war demands no saints.—Murray and Morton are known to be the best generals in Scotland. No one ever saw Lindesay's or Ruthven's back—Kirkaldy of Grange was named by the Constable Montmorency the first soldier in Europe—My brother, too good a name for such a cause, has been far and wide known for a soldier.'

'The better, the better!' said Seyton triumphantly; 'we shall have all these traitors of rank and name in a fair field before us. Our cause is the best, our numbers are the strongest, our hearts and limbs match theirs—Saint Bennet, and set on!'

The Abbot made no reply, but seemed lost in reflection; and his anxiety in some measure communicated itself to Roland Avenel, who ever, as their line of march led over a ridge or an eminence, cast an anxious look towards the towers of Glasgow, as if he expected to see symptoms of the enemy issuing forth. It was not that he feared the fight, but the issue was of such deep import to his country and to himself, that the natural fire of his spirit burned with a less lively, though with a more intense glow. Love, honour, fame, fortune, all seemed to depend on the issue of one field, rashly hazarded, perhaps, but now likely to become unavoidable and decisive.

When, at length, their march came to be nearly parallel with the city of Glasgow, Roland became sensible that the high grounds before them were already in part occupied by a force, showing, like their own, the royal banner of Scotland, and on the point of being supported by columns of infantry and squadrons of horse, which the city gates had poured forth, and which hastily advanced to sustain those troops who already possessed the ground in front of the queen's forces. Horseman after horseman galloped in from the advanced guard, with tidings that Murray had taken the field with his whole army; that his object was to intercept the queen's march, and his purpose unquestionably to hazard a battle. It was now that the tempers of men were subjected to a sudden and a severe trial; and that those who had too presumptuously concluded that they would pass without combat, were something disconcerted, when, at once, and with little time to deliberate, they found themselves placed in front of a resolute enemy.—Their chiefs immediately assembled around the queen, and held a hasty council of war. Mary's quivering lip confessed the fear which she endeavoured to conceal under a bold and dignified demeanour. But her efforts were overcome by painful recollections of the disastrous issue of her last appearance in arms at Carberry Hill; and when she meant to have asked them their advice for ordering the battle, she involuntarily inquired whether there were no means of escaping without an engagement.

'Escaping?' answered the Lord Seyton; 'when I stand as one to ten of your Highness's enemies, I may think of escape—but never while I stand with three to two!'

'Battle! battle!' exclaimed the assembled lords; 'we will drive the rebels from their vantage-ground, as the hound turns the hare on the hill-side.'

'Methinks, my noble lords,' said the Abbot, 'it were as well to prevent his gaining that advantage.—Our road lies through yonder hamlet on the brow, and whichever party hath the luck to possess it, with its little gardens and enclosures, will attain a post of great defence.'

'The reverend father is right,' said the queen. 'O, haste thee, Seyton, haste, and get thither before them—they are marching like the wind.'

Seyton bowed low, and turned his horse's head.—'Your Highness honours me,' he said; 'I will instantly press forward and seize the pass.'

'Not before me, my lord, whose charge is the command of the vanguard,' said the Lord of Arbroath.

'Before you, or any Hamilton in Scotland,' said the Seyton, 'having the queen's command. Follow me, gentlemen, my vassals and kinsmen—Saint Bennet, and set on!'

'And follow me,' said Arbroath, 'my noble kinsmen and brave men-tenants, we will see which will first reach the post of danger. For God and Queen Mary!'

'Ill-omened haste, and most unhappy strife,' said the Abbot, who saw them and their followers rush hastily and emulously to ascend the height without waiting till their men were placed in order.—'And you, gentlemen,' he continued, addressing Roland and Seyton, who were each about to follow those who hastened thus disorderly to the conflict, 'will you leave the Queen's person unguarded?'

'O, leave me not, gentlemen!' said the queen—'Roland and Seyton, do not leave me—there are enough of arms to strike in this fell combat—withdraw not those to whom I trust for my safety.'

'We may not leave her Grace,' said Roland, looking at Seyton, and turning his horse.

'I ever looked when thou wouldst find out that,' rejoined the fiery youth.

Roland made no answer, but bit his lip till the blood came, and, spurring his horse up to the side of Catherine Seyton's palfrey, he whispered in a low voice, 'I never thought to have done aught to deserve you; but this day I have heard myself upbraided with cowardice, and my sword remained still sheathed, and all for the love of you.'

'There is madness among us all,' said the damsel; 'my father, my brother, and you, are all alike bereft of reason. Ye should think only of this poor Queen, and you are all inspired by your own absurd jealousies—The monk is the only soldier and man of sense amongst you all.—My Lord Abbot,' she cried aloud, 'were it not better we should draw to the westward, and wait the event that God shall send us, instead of remaining here in the highway, endangering the Queen's person, and cumbering the troops in their advance?'

'You say well, my daughter,' replied the Abbot; 'had we but one to guide us where the Queen's person may be in safety—Our nobles hurry to the conflict, without casting a thought on the very cause of the war.'

'Follow me,' said a knight, or man-at-arms, well mounted, and attired completely in black armour, but having the visor of his helmet

closed, and bearing no crest on his helmet, or device upon his shield.

'We will follow no stranger,' said the Abbot, 'without some warrant of his truth.'

'I am a stranger and in your hands,' said the horseman; 'if you wish to know more of me, the Queen herself will be your warrant.'

The queen had remained fixed to the spot, as if disabled by fear, yet mechanically smiling, bowing, and waving her hand, as banners were lowered and spears depressed before her, while, emulating the strife betwixt Seyton and Arbroath, band on band pressed forward their march towards the enemy. Scarce, however, had the black rider whispered something in her ear, than she assented to what he said; and when he spoke aloud, and with an air of command, 'Gentlemen, it is the Queen's pleasure that you should follow me,' Mary uttered, with something like eagerness, the word 'Yes.'

All were in motion in an instant; for the black horseman, throwing off a sort of apathy of manner, which his first appearance indicated, spurred his horse to and fro, making him take such active bounds and short turns, as showed the rider master of the animal; and, getting the queen's little retinue in some order for marching, he led them to the left, directing his course towards a castle, which, crowning a gentle yet commanding eminence, presented an extensive view over the country beneath, and, in particular, commanded a view of those heights which both armies hastened to occupy, and which it was now apparent must almost instantly be the scene of struggle and dispute.

'Yonder towers,' said the Abbot, questioning the sable horseman, 'to whom do they belong?—and are they now in the hands of friends?'

'They are untenanted,' replied the stranger, 'or, at least, they have no hostile inmates.—But urge these youths, Sir Abbot, to make more haste—this is but an evil time to satisfy their idle curiosity, by peering out upon the battle in which they are to take no share.'

'The worse luck mine,' said Henry Seyton, who overheard him; 'I would rather be under my father's banner at this moment than be made Chamberlain of Holyrood, for this my present duty of peaceful ward well and patiently discharged.'

'Your place under your father's banner will shortly be right dangerous,' said Roland Avenel, who, pressing his horse towards the westward, had still his look reverted to the armies; 'for I see yonder body of cavalry, which presses from the eastward, will reach the village ere Lord Seyton can gain it.'

'They are but cavalry,' said Seyton, looking attentively; 'they cannot hold the village without shot of harquebuss.'

'Look more closely,' said Roland; 'you will see that each of these horsemen who advance so rapidly from Glasgow, carries a footman behind him.'

'Now, by Heaven, he speaks well!' said the black cavalier; 'one of you two must go carry the news to Lord Seyton and Lord Arbroath, that they hasten not their horsemen on before the foot, but advance more regularly.'

'Be that my errand,' said Roland, 'for I first marked the stratagem of the enemy.'

'But, by your leave,' said Seyton, 'yonder is my father's banner engaged, and it best becomes me to go to the rescue.'

'I will stand by the Queen's decision,' said Roland Avenel.

'What new appeal?—what new quarrel?' said Queen Mary—'Are there not in yonder dark host enemies enough to Mary Stuart, but must her very friends turn enemies to each other?'

'Nay, madam,' said Roland, 'the young Master of Seyton and I did but dispute who should leave your person to do a most needful message to the host. He thought his rank entitled him, and I deemed that the person of least consequence, being myself, were better perilled'——

'Not so,' said the queen; 'if one must leave me, be it Seyton.'

Henry Seyton bowed till the white plumes on his helmet mixed with the flowing mane of his gallant war-horse, then placed himself firm in the saddle, shook his lance aloft with an air of triumph and determination, and, striking his horse with the spurs, made towards his father's banner, which was still advancing up the hill, and dashed his steed over every obstacle that occurred in his headlong path.

'My brother! my father!' exclaimed Catherine, with an expression of agonized apprehension—'they are in the midst of peril, and I in safety!'

'Would to God,' said Roland, 'that I were with them, and could ransom every drop of their blood by two of mine!'

'Do I not know thou dost wish it?' said Catherine—'Can a woman say to a man what I have well-nigh said to thee, and yet think that he could harbour fear or faintness of heart?—There is that in yon distant sound of approaching battle that pleases me even while it affrights me. I would I were a man, that I might feel that stern delight, without the mixture of terror!'

'Ride up, ride up, Lady Catherine Seyton,' cried the Abbot, as they still swept on at a rapid pace, and were now close beneath the walls of the castle—'ride up, and aid Lady Fleming to support the Queen—she gives way more and more.'

They halted and lifted Mary from the saddle, and were about to support her towards the castle, when she said faintly, 'Not there—not there—these walls will I never enter more!'

'Be a queen, madam,' said the Abbot, 'and forget that you are a woman.'

'O, I must forget much, much more,' answered the unfortunate Mary, in an undertone, 'ere I can look with steady eyes on these well-known scenes!—I must forget the days which I spent here as the bride of the lost—the murdered'——

'This is the Castle of Crookstone,'* said the Lady Fleming, 'in which the Queen held her first court after she was married to Darnley.'

'Heaven,' said the Abbot, 'thy hand is upon us!—Bear yet up, madam—your foes are the foes of Holy Church, and God will this day decide whether Scotland shall be Catholic or heretic.'

* See Note N. Battle of Langside.

A heavy and continued fire of cannon and musketry bore a tremendous burden to his words, and seemed far more than they to recall the spirits of the queen.

'To yonder tree,' she said, pointing to a yew-tree which grew on a small mount close to the castle; 'I know it well—from thence you may see a prospect wide as from the peaks of Schehallion.'

And, freeing herself from her assistants, she walked with a determined, yet somewhat wild step, up to the stem of the noble yew. The Abbot, Catherine, and Roland Avenel followed her, while Lady Fleming kept back the inferior persons of her train. The black horseman also followed the queen, waiting on her as closely as the shadow upon the light, but ever remaining at the distance of two or three yards—he folded his arms on his bosom, turned his back to the battle, and seemed solely occupied by gazing on Mary through the bars of his closed visor. The queen regarded him not, but fixed her eyes upon the spreading yew.

'Ay, fair and stately tree,' she said, as if at the sight of it she had been rapt away from the present scene, and had overcome the horror which had oppressed her at the first approach to Crookstone, 'there thou standest, gay and goodly as ever, though thou hearest the sounds of war, instead of the vows of love. All is gone since I last greeted thee—love and lover—vows and vower—king and kingdom.—How goes the field, my Lord Abbot?—with us, I trust—yet what but evil can Mary's eyes witness from this spot?'

Her attendants eagerly bent their eyes on the field of battle, but could discover nothing more than that it was obstinately contested. The small enclosures and cottage gardens in the village, of which they had a full and commanding view, and which shortly before lay, with their lines of sycamore and ash trees, so still and quiet in the mild light of a May sun, were now each converted into a line of fire, canopied by smoke; and the sustained and constant report of the musketry and cannon, mingled with the shouts of meeting combatants, showed that as yet neither party had given ground.

'Many a soul finds its final departure to heaven or hell in these awful thunders,' said the Abbot; 'let those that believe in the Holy Church join me in orisons for victory in this dreadful combat.'

'Not here—not here,' said the unfortunate queen; 'pray not here, father, or pray in silence—my mind is too much torn between the past and the present, to dare to approach the heavenly throne—Or, if we will pray, be it for one whose fondest affections have been her greatest crimes, and who has ceased to be a queen, only because she was a deceived and tender-hearted woman.'

'Were it not well,' said Roland, 'that I rode somewhat nearer the hosts, and saw the fate of the day?'

'Do so, in the name of God,' said the Abbot; 'for if our friends are scattered, our flight must be hasty—but beware thou approach not too nigh the conflict; there is more than thine own life depends on thy safe return.'

'O, go not too nigh,' said Catherine; 'but fail not to see how the Seytons fight, and how they bear themselves.'

'Fear nothing, I will be on my guard,' said Roland Avenel; and, without waiting further answer, rode towards the scene of conflict, keeping, as he rode, the higher and unenclosed ground, and ever looking cautiously around him, for fear of involving himself in some hostile party. As he approached, the shots rung sharp and more sharply on his ear, the shouts came wilder and wilder, and he felt that thick beating of the heart, that mixture of natural apprehension, intense curiosity, and anxiety for the dubious event, which even the bravest experience when they approach alone to a scene of interest and of danger.

At length he drew so close, that from a bank, screened by bushes and underwood, he could distinctly see where the struggle was most keenly maintained. This was in a hollow way, leading to the village, up which the queen's vanguard had marched, with more hasty courage than well-advised conduct, for the purpose of possessing themselves of that post of advantage. They found their scheme anticipated, and the hedges and enclosures already occupied by the enemy, led by the celebrated Kirkaldy of Grange and the Earl of Morton; and not small was the loss which they sustained while struggling forward to come to close with the men-at-arms on the other side. But, as the queen's followers were chiefly noblemen and barons, with their kinsmen and followers, they had pressed onward, contemning obstacles and danger, and had, when Roland arrived on the ground, met hand to hand at the gorge of the pass with the Regent's vanguard, and endeavoured to bear them out of the village at the spear-point; while their foes, equally determined to keep the advantage which they had attained, struggled with the like obstinacy to drive back the assailants.

Both parties were on foot, and armed in proof; so that, when the long lances of the front ranks were fixed in each other's shields, corslets, and breastplates, the struggle resembled that of two bulls, who, fixing their frontlets hard against each other, remain in that posture for hours, until the superior strength or obstinacy of the one compels the other to take to flight, or bears him down to the earth. Thus locked together in the deadly struggle, which swayed slowly to and fro, as one or other party gained the advantage, those who fell were trampled on alike by friends and foes; those whose weapons were broken retired from the front rank, and had their place supplied by others; while the rearward ranks, unable otherwise to share in the combat, fired their pistols, and hurled their daggers, and the points and truncheons of the broken weapons, like javelins against the enemy.

'God and the Queen!' resounded from the one party; 'God and the King!' thundered from the other; while, in the name of their sovereign, fellow-subjects on both sides shed each other's blood, and, in the name of their Creator, defaced his image. Amid the tumult was often heard the voices of the captains, shouting their commands; of leaders and chiefs, crying their gathering words; of groans and shrieks from the falling and the dying.

The strife had lasted nearly an hour. The strength of both parties seemed exhausted; but their rage was unabated, and their obstinacy unsubdued, when Roland, who turned eye and ear to all around him, saw a column of infantry, headed by a few horsemen, wheel round the base of the bank where he had stationed himself, and, levelling their long lances, attack the flank of the queen's vanguard, closely engaged as they were in conflict on their front. The very first glance showed him that the leader who directed this movement was the Knight of Avenel, his ancient master; and the next convinced him that its effects would be decisive. The result of the attack of fresh and unbroken forces upon the flank of those already wearied with a long and obstinate struggle, was, indeed, instantaneous.

The column of the assailants, which had hitherto shown one dark, dense, and united line of helmets, surmounted with plumage, was at once broken and hurled in confusion down the hill, which they had so long endeavoured to gain. In vain were the leaders heard calling upon their followers to stand to the combat, and seen personally resisting when all resistance was evidently vain. They were slain, or felled to the earth, or hurried backwards by the mingled tide of flight and pursuit. What were Roland's feelings on beholding the rout, and feeling that all that remained for him was to turn bridle, and endeavour to insure the safety of the queen's person! Yet, keen as his grief and shame might be, they were both forgotten when, almost close beneath the bank which he occupied, he saw Henry Seyton forced away from his own party in the tumult, covered with dust and blood, and defending himself desperately against several of the enemy who had gathered around him, attracted by his gay armour. Roland paused not a moment, but, pushing his steed down the bank, leaped him amongst the hostile party, dealt three or four blows amongst them, which struck down two, and made the rest stand aloof; then, reaching Seyton his hand, he exhorted him to seize fast on his horse's mane.

'We live or die together this day,' said he; 'keep but fast hold till we are out of the press, and then my horse is yours.'

Seyton heard, and exerted his remaining strength, and, by their joint efforts, Roland brought him out of danger, and behind the spot from whence he had witnessed the disastrous conclusion of the fight. But no sooner were they under shelter of the trees, than Seyton let go his hold, and, in spite of Roland's efforts to support him, fell at length on the turf. 'Trouble yourself no more with me,' he said; 'this is my first and my last battle—and I have already seen too much to wish to see the close. Hasten to save the Queen—and commend me to Catherine—she will never more be mistaken for me nor I for her—the last sword-stroke has made an eternal distinction.'

'Let me aid you to mount my horse,' said Roland eagerly, 'and you may yet be saved—I can find my own way on foot—turn but my horse's head westward, and he will carry you fleet and easy as the wind.'

'I will never mount steed more,' said the youth; 'farewell—I love thee better dying, than ever I thought to have done while in life—I would that old man's blood were not on my hand!—*Sancte Benedicte, ora pro me!*—Stand not to look on a dying man, but haste to save the Queen!'

These words were spoken with the last effort of his voice, and scarce were they uttered ere the speaker was no more. They recalled Roland to a sense of the duty which he had well-nigh forgotten, but they did not reach his ears only.

'The Queen—where is the Queen?' said Halbert Glendinning, who, followed by two or three horsemen, appeared at this instant. Roland made no answer, but, turning his horse, and confiding in his speed, gave him at once rein and spur, and rode over height and hollow towards the Castle of Crookstone. More heavily armed, and mounted upon a horse of less speed, Sir Halbert Glendinning followed with couched lance, calling out as he rode, 'Sir with the holly-branch, halt, and show your right to bear that badge—fly not thus cowardly, nor dishonour the cognizance thou deservest not to wear!—Halt, sir coward, or, by Heaven, I will strike thee with my lance on the back, and slay thee like a dastard—I am the Knight of Avenel—I am Halbert Glendinning.'

But Roland, who had no purpose of encountering his old master, and who, besides, knew the queen's safety depended on his making the best speed he could, answered not a word to the defiances and reproaches which Sir Halbert continued to throw out against him; but, making the best use of his spurs, rode yet harder than before, and had gained about a hundred yards upon his pursuer, when, coming near to the yew-tree where he had left the queen, he saw them already getting to horse, and cried out as loud as he could, 'Foes! foes!—ride for it, fair ladies—Brave gentlemen, do your devoir to protect them!'

So saying, he wheeled his horse, and, avoiding the shock of Sir Halbert Glendinning, charged one of that knight's followers, who was nearly on a line with him, so rudely with his lance, that he overthrew horse and man. He then drew his sword and attacked the second, while the black man-at-arms, throwing himself in the way of Glendinning, they rushed on each other so fiercely, that both horses were overthrown, and the riders lay rolling on the plain. Neither was able to arise, for the black horseman was pierced through with Glendinning's lance, and the Knight of Avenel, oppressed with the weight of his own horse, and sorely bruised besides, seemed in little better plight than he whom he had mortally wounded.

'Yield thee, Sir Knight of Avenel, rescue or no rescue,' said Roland, who had put a second antagonist out of condition to combat, and hastened to prevent Glendinning from renewing the conflict.

'I may not choose but yield,' said Sir Halbert, 'since I can no longer fight; but it shames me to speak such a word to a coward like thee!'

'Call me not coward,' said Roland, lifting his visor, and helping his prisoner to rise, 'since but for old kindness at thy hands, and yet more at thy lady's, I had met thee as a brave man should.

'The favourite page of my wife!' said Sir Halbert, astonished. 'Ah, wretched boy, I have heard of thy treason at Lochleven.'

'Reproach him not, my brother,' said the Abbot; 'he was but an agent in the hands of Heaven.'

'To horse, to horse!' said Catherine Seyton; 'mount and begone, or we are all lost. I see our gallant army flying for many a league.—To horse, my Lord Abbot—To horse, Roland—My gracious liege, to horse! Ere this, we should have ridden many a mile.'

'Look on these features,' said Mary, pointing to the dying knight, who had been unhelmed by some compassionate hand; 'look there, and tell me if she who ruins all who love her, ought to fly a foot farther to save her wretched life!'

The reader must have long anticipated the discovery which the queen's feelings had made before her eyes confirmed it. It was the features of the unhappy George Douglas, on which death was stamping his mark.

'Look—look at him well,' said the queen; 'thus has it been with all who loved Mary Stuart!—The royalty of Francis, the wit of Chastelar, the power and gallantry of the gay Gordon, the melody of Rizzio, the portly form and youthful grace of Darnley, the bold address and courtly manners of Bothwell—and now the deep-devoted passion of the noble Douglas—nought could save them—they looked on the wretched Mary, and to have loved her was crime enough to deserve early death! No sooner had the victims formed a kind thought of me, than the poisoned cup, the axe and block, the dagger, the mine, were ready to punish them for casting away affection on such a wretch as I am!—Importune me not—I will fly no farther—I can die but once, and I will die here!'

While she spoke, her tears fell fast on the face of the dying man, who continued to fix his eyes on her with an eagerness of passion, which death itself could hardly subdue.—'Mourn not for me,' he said faintly, 'but care for your own safety—I die in mine armour as a Douglas should, and I die pitied by Mary Stuart!'

He expired with these words, and without withdrawing his eyes from her face; and the queen, whose heart was of that soft and gentle mould, which in domestic life, and with a more suitable partner than Darnley, might have made her happy, remained weeping by the dead man, until recalled to herself by the Abbot, who found it necessary to use a style of unusual remonstrance. 'We also, madam,' he said, 'we, your Grace's devoted followers, have friends and relatives to weep for. I leave a brother in imminent jeopardy—the husband of the Lady Fleming—the father and brothers of the Lady Catherine, are all in yonder bloody field, slain, it is to be feared, or prisoners. We forget the fate of our own nearest and dearest, to wait on our Queen, and she is too much occupied with her own sorrows to give one thought to ours.'

'I deserve not your reproach, father,' said the queen, checking her tears; 'but I am docile to it—Where must we go—what must we do?'

'We must fly, and that instantly,' said the Abbot; 'whither is not so easily answered, but we may dispute it upon the road.—Lift her to her saddle, and set forward.' *

They set off accordingly.—Roland lingered a moment, to command the attendants of the Knight of Avenel to convey their master to the Castle of Crookstone, and to say that he demanded from him no other condition of liberty, than his word, that he and his followers would keep secret the direction in which the queen fled. As he turned his rein to depart, the honest countenance of Adam Woodcock stared upon him with an expression of surprise, which at another time would have excited his hearty mirth. He had been one of the followers who had experienced the weight of Roland's arm, and they now knew each other, Roland having put up his visor, and the good yeoman having thrown away his barret-cap, with the iron bars in front, that he might the more readily assist his master. Into this barret-cap, as it lay on the ground, Roland forgot not to drop a few gold pieces (fruits of the queen's liberality), and, with a signal of kind recollection and enduring friendship, he departed at full gallop to overtake the queen, the dust raised by her train being already far down the hill.

'It is not fairy-money,' said honest Adam, weighing and handling the gold—'And it was Master Roland himself, that is a certain thing—the same open hand, and, by Our Lady!' (shrugging his shoulders)—'the same ready fist!—My lady will hear of this gladly, for she mourns for him as if he were her son. And to see how gay he is! But these light lads are sure to be uppermost as the froth to be on the top of the quart-pot—Your man of solid parts remains ever a falconer.' So saying, he went to aid his comrades, who had now come up in greater numbers, to carry his master into the Castle of Crookstone.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

My native land, good-night!

BYRON.

MANY a bitter tear was shed, during the hasty flight of Queen Mary, over fallen hopes, future prospects, and slaughtered friends. The deaths of the brave Douglas, and of the fiery but gallant young Seyton, seemed to affect the queen as much as the fall from the throne, on which she had so nearly been again seated. Catherine Seyton devoured in secret her own grief, anxious to support the broken spirits of her mistress; and the Abbot, bending his troubled thoughts upon futurity, endeavoured in vain to form some plan which had a shadow of hope. The spirit of young Roland—for he also mingled in the hasty debates held by the companions of the queen's flight—continued unchecked and unbroken.

'Your Majesty,' he said, 'has lost a battle—Your ancestor Bruce lost seven successively, ere he sat triumphant on the Scottish throne, and proclaimed with the voice of a victor, in the field of Bannockburn, the independence of his country. Are not these heaths, which we may traverse at will, better than the locked, guarded, and lake-

* Note N. Battle of Langside.

moated Castle of Lochleven!—We are free—in that one word there is comfort for all our losses.'

He struck a bold note, but the heart of Mary made no response.

'Better,' she said, 'I had still been in Lochleven, than seen the slaughter made by rebels among the subjects who offered themselves to die for my sake. Speak not to me of further efforts—they would only cost the lives of you, the friends who recommend them! I would not again undergo what I felt, when I saw from yonder mount the swords of the fell horsemen of Morton raging among the faithful Seytons and Hamiltons, for their loyalty to their queen—I would not again feel what I felt when Douglas's life-blood stained my mantle for his love to Mary Stuart—not to be empress of all that Britain's seas enclose. Find for me some place where I can hide my unhappy head, which brings destruction on all who love it—it is the last favour that Mary asks of her faithful followers.'

In this dejected mood, but still pursuing her flight with unabated rapidity, the unfortunate Mary, after having been joined by Lord Herries and a few followers, at length halted, for the first time, at the Abbey of Dundrennan, nearly sixty miles distant from the field of battle. In this remote quarter of Galloway, the Reformation not having yet been strictly enforced against the monks, a few still lingered in their cells unmolested; and the prior, with tears and reverence, received the fugitive queen at the gate of his convent.

'I bring you ruin, my good father,' said the queen, as she was lifted from her palfrey.

'It is welcome,' said the prior, 'if it comes in the train of duty.'

Placed on the ground, and supported by her ladies, the queen looked for an instant at her palfrey, which, jaded and drooping its head, seemed as if it mourned the distresses of its mistress.

'Good Roland,' said the queen, whispering, 'let Rosabelle be cared for—ask thy heart, and it will tell thee why I make this trifling request even in this awful hour.'

She was conducted to her apartment, and in the hurried consultation of her attendants, the fatal resolution of the retreat to England was finally adopted. In the morning it received her approbation, and a messenger was despatched to the English warden, to pray him for safe-conduct and hospitality, on the part of the Queen of Scotland. On the next day the Abbot Ambrose walked in the garden of the Abbey with Roland, to whom he expressed his disapprobation of the course pursued. 'It is madness and ruin,' he said; 'better commit herself to the savage Highlanders or wild Bordermen, than to the faith of Elizabeth. A woman to a rival woman—a presumptive successor to the keeping of a jealous and childless queen!—Roland, Herries is true and loyal, but his counsel has ruined his mistress.

'Ay, ruin follows us everywhere,' said an old man with a spade in his hand, and dressed like a lay-brother, of whose presence, in the vehemence of his exclamation, the Abbot had not been aware.—'Gaze not on me with such wonder!—I am he who was the Abbot Boniface at Kennaquhair, who was the gardener Blinkhoolie at Lochleven, hunted round to the place in which I served my noviciate, and now ye are come to rouse me up again!—A weary life I have had, for one to whom peace was ever the dearest blessing!'

'We will soon rid you of our company, good father,' said the Abbot; 'and the Queen will, I fear, trouble your retreat no more.'

'Nay, you said as much before,' said the querulous old man, 'and yet I was put forth from Kinross, and pillaged by troopers on the road.—They took from me the certificate that you wot of—that of the baron—ay, he was a moss-trooper like themselves.—You asked me of it, and I could never find it, but they found it—it showed the marriage of—of—my memory fails me.—Now see how men differ! Father Nicolas would have told you an hundred tales of the Abbot Ingilram, on whose soul God have mercy!—He was, I warrant you, fourscore and six, and I am not more than—let me see'——

'Was not Avenel the name you seek, my good father?' said Roland impatiently, yet moderating his tone for fear of alarming or offending the infirm old man.

'Ay, right—Avenel, Julian Avenel—You are perfect in the name.—I kept all the special confessions, judging it held with my vow to do so—I could not find it when my successor, Ambrosius, spoke on't—but the troopers found it, and the knight who commanded the party struck his breast, till the target clattered like an empty watering-can.'

'Saint Mary!' said the Abbot, 'in whom could such a paper excite such interest? What was the appearance of the knight, his arms, his colours?'

'Ye distract me with your questions—I dared hardly look at him—they charged me with bearing letters for the Queen, and searched my mail—This was all along of your doings at Lochleven.'

'I trust in God,' said the Abbot to Roland, who stood beside him, shivering and trembling with impatience, 'the paper has fallen into the hands of my brother—I heard he had been with his followers on the scout betwixt Stirling and Glasgow.—Bore not the knight a holly-bough on his helmet?—Canst thou not remember?'

'O, remember—remember,' said the old man pettishly. 'Count as many years as I do, if your plots will let you, and see what and how much you remember—Why, I scarce remember the pear-mains which I graffed here with my own hands some fifty years since.'

At this moment a bugle sounded loudly from the beach.

'It is the death-blast to Queen Mary's royalty,' said Ambrosius; 'the English warden's answer has been received, favourable doubtless, for when was the door of the trap closed against the prey which it was set for?—Droop not, Roland—this matter shall be sifted to the bottom—but we must not now leave the Queen—Follow me—let us do our duty, and trust the issue with God.—Farewell, good father—I will visit thee again soon.'

He was about to leave the garden, followed by Roland, with half-reluctant steps. The ex-Abbot resumed his spade.

'I could be sorry for these men,' he said, 'ay, and for that poor Queen, but what avails earthly sorrows to a man of fourscore?—and it is a rare dropping morning for the early colewort.'

'He is stricken with age,' said Ambrosius, as he dragged Roland down to the sea-beach; 'we must let him take his time to collect himself—nothing now can be thought on but the fate of the Queen.'

They soon arrived where she stood, surrounded by her little train, and by her side the Sheriff of Cumberland, a gentleman of the house of Lowther, richly dressed, and accompanied by soldiers. The aspect of the queen exhibited a singular mixture of alacrity and reluctance to depart. Her language and gestures spoke hope and consolation to her attendants, and she seemed desirous to persuade even herself that the step she adopted was secure, and that the assurance she had received of kind reception was altogether satisfactory; but her quivering lip and unsettled eye betrayed at once her anguish at departing from Scotland, and her fears of confiding herself to the doubtful faith of England.

'Welcome, my Lord Abbot,' she said, speaking to Ambrosius, 'and you, Roland Avenel; we have joyful news for you—our loving sister's officer proffers us, in her name, a safe asylum from the rebels who have driven us from our home—only it grieves me we must here part from you for a short space.'

'Part from us, madam!' said the Abbot. 'Is your welcome in England, then, to commence with the abridgment of your train, and dismissal of your counsellors?'

'Take it not thus, good father,' said Mary: 'the warden and the sheriff, faithful servants of our royal sister, deem it necessary to obey her instructions in the present case, even to the letter, and can only take upon them to admit me with my female attendants. An express will instantly be despatched from London, assigning me a place of residence; and I will speedily send to all of you whenever my court shall be formed.'

'Your court formed in England! and while Elizabeth lives and reigns!' said the Abbot—'that will be when we shall see two suns in one heaven!'

'Do not think so,' replied the queen; 'we are well assured of our sister's good faith. Elizabeth loves fame—and not all that she has won by her power and her wisdom will equal that which she will acquire by extending her hospitality to a distressed sister!—not all that she may hereafter do of good, wise, and great, would blot out the reproach of abusing our confidence.—Farewell, my page—now my knight—farewell for a brief season. I will dry the tears of Catherine, or I will weep with her till neither of us can weep longer.' She held out her hand to Roland, who, flinging himself on his knees, kissed it with much emotion. He was about to render the same homage to Catherine, when the queen, assuming an air of sprightliness, said, 'Her lips, thou foolish boy! and, Catherine, coy it not—these English gentlemen should see that, even in our cold clime, Beauty knows how to reward Bravery and Fidelity!'

'We are not now to learn the force of Scottish beauty, or the mettle of Scottish valour,' said the Sheriff of Cumberland courteously.—'I would it were in my power to bid these attendants upon her who is herself the mistress of Scottish beauty, as welcome to England as my poor cares would make them. But our Queen's orders are positive in case of such an emergence, and they must not be disputed by her subject.—May I remind your Majesty that the tide ebbs fast?'

The sheriff took the queen's hand, and she had already placed her foot on the gangway, by which she was to enter the skiff, when the Abbot, starting from a trance of grief and astonishment at the words of the sheriff, rushed into the water, and seized upon her mantle.

'She foresaw it!—She foresaw it!'—he exclaimed—'she foresaw your flight into her realm; and, foreseeing it, gave orders you should be thus received. Blinded, deceived, doomed princess! your fate is sealed when you quit this strand.—Queen of Scotland, thou shalt not leave thine heritage!' he continued, holding a still firmer grasp upon her mantle; 'true men shall turn rebels to thy will, that they may save thee from captivity or death. Fear not the bills and bows whom that gay man has at his beck—we will withstand him by force. O for the arm of my warlike brother!—Roland Avenel, draw thy sword!'

The queen stood irresolute and frightened; one foot upon the plank, the other on the sand of her native shore, which she was quitting for ever.

'What needs this violence, Sir Priest?' said the Sheriff of Cumberland. 'I came hither at your Queen's command, to do her service; and I will depart at her least order, if she rejects such aid as I can offer. No marvel is it if our Queen's wisdom foresaw that such chance as this might happen amidst the turmoils of your unsettled state; and, while willing to afford fair hospitality to her royal sister, deemed it wise to prohibit the entrance of a broken army of her followers into the English frontier.'

'You hear,' said Queen Mary, gently unloosing her robe from the Abbot's grasp, 'that we exercise full liberty of choice in leaving this shore; and, questionless, the choice will remain free to us in going to France, or returning to our own dominions, as we shall determine—Besides, it is too late.—Your blessing, father, and God speed thee!'

'May He have mercy on thee, princess, and speed thee also!' said the Abbot, retreating. 'But my soul tells me I look on thee for the last time!'

The sails were hoisted, the oars were plied, the vessel went freshly on her way through the firth, which divides the shores of Cumberland from those of Galloway; but not till the vessel diminished to the size of a child's frigate, did the doubtful, and dejected, and dismissed followers of the queen cease to linger on the sands; and long, long could they discern the kerchief of Mary, as she waved the oft-repeated signal of adieu to her faithful adherents, and to the shores of Scotland.

If good tidings of a private nature could have consoled Roland for parting with his mistress,

and for the distresses of his sovereign, he received such comfort some days subsequent to the queen's leaving Dundrennan. A breathless post—no other than Adam Woodcock—brought despatches from Sir Halbert Glendinning to the Abbot, whom he found with Roland, still residing at Dundrennan, and in vain torturing Boniface with fresh interrogations. The packet bore an earnest invitation to his brother to make Avenel Castle for a time his residence. 'The clemency of the Regent,' said the writer, 'has extended pardon both to Roland and to you, upon condition of your remaining a time under my wardship. And I have that to communicate respecting the parentage of Roland, which not only you will willingly listen to, but which will be also found to afford me, as the husband of his nearest relative, some interest in the future course of his life.'

The Abbot read this letter, and paused as if considering what were best for him to do. Meanwhile, Woodcock took Roland aside, and addressed him as follows:—'Now look, Master Roland, that you do not let any papistric nonsense lure either the priest or you from the right quarry. See you, you ever bore yourself as a bit of a gentleman. Read that, and thank God that threw old Abbot Boniface in our way, as two of the Seyton's men were conveying him towards Dundrennan here.—We searched him for intelligence concerning that fair exploit of yours at Lochleven, that has cost many a man his life, and me a set of sore bones—and we found what is better for your purpose than ours.'

The paper which he gave, was, indeed, an attestation by Father Philip, subscribing himself unworthy sacristan, and brother of the house of Saint Mary's, stating 'that under a vow of secrecy he had united, in the holy sacrament of marriage, Julian Avenel and Catherine Græme; but that, Julian having repented of his union, he, Father Philip, had been sinfully prevailed on by him to conceal and disguise the same, according to a complot devised betwixt him and the said Julian Avenel, whereby the poor damsel was induced to believe that the ceremony had been performed by one not in holy Orders, and having no authority to that effect. Which sinful concealment the undersigned conceived to be the cause why he was abandoned to the misguiding of a water-fiend, whereby he had been under a spell, which obliged him to answer every question, even touching the most solemn matters, with idle snatches of old songs, besides being sorely afflicted with rheumatic pains ever after. Wherefore he had deposited this testificate and confession, with the day and date of the said marriage, with his lawful Superior, Boniface, Abbot of Saint Mary's, *sub sigillo confessionis*.'

It appeared by a letter from Julian, folded carefully up with the certificate, that the Abbot Boniface had, in effect, bestirred himself in the affair, and obtained from the baron a promise to avow his marriage; but the death of both Julian and his injured bride, together with the Abbot's resignation, his ignorance of the fate of their unhappy offspring, and, above all, the good father's listless and inactive disposition, had suffered the matter to become totally forgotten, until it was recalled by some accidental conversation with the Abbot Ambrosius concerning the fortunes of the Avenel family. At the request of his successor, the quondam Abbot made search for it; but, as he would receive no assistance in looking among the few records of spiritual experiences and important confessions which he had conscientiously treasured, it might have remained for ever hidden amongst them, but for the more active researches of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

'So that you are like to be heir of Avenel at last, Master Roland, after my lord and lady have gone to their place,' said Adam; 'and as I have but one boon to ask, I trust you will not nick me with nay.'

'Not if it be in my power to say yes, my trusty friend.'

'Why, then, I must needs, if I live to see that day, keep on feeding the eyases with unwashed flesh,' said Woodcock sturdily, yet as if doubting the reception that his request might meet with.

'Thou shalt feed them with what you list for me,' said Roland, laughing; 'I am not many months older than when I left the castle, but I trust I have gathered wit enough to cross no man of skill in his own vocation.'

'Then I would not change places with the King's falconer,' said Adam Woodcock, 'nor with the Queen's neither—but they say she will be mewed up and never need one.—I see it grieves you to think of it, and I could grieve for company; but what help for it?—Fortune will fly her own flight, let a man hollo himself hoarse.'

The Abbot and Roland journeyed to Avenel, where the former was tenderly received by his brother, while the lady wept for joy to find that in her favourite orphan she had protected the sole surviving branch of her own family. Sir Halbert Glendinning and his household were not a little surprised at the change which a brief acquaintance with the world had produced in their former inmate, and rejoiced to find, in the pettish, spoiled, and presuming page, a modest and unassuming young man, too much acquainted with his own expectations and character to be hot or petulant in demanding the consideration which was readily and voluntarily yielded to him. The old major-domo Wingate was the first to sing his praises, to which Mistress Lilias bore a loud echo, always hoping that God would teach him the true gospel.

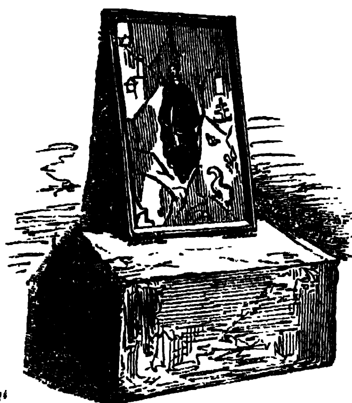
To the true gospel the heart of Roland had secretly long inclined, and the departure of the good Abbot for France, with the purpose of entering into some house of his Order in that kingdom, removed his chief objection to renouncing the Catholic faith. Another might have existed in the duty which he owed to Magdalen Græme, both by birth and from gratitude. But he learned, ere he had been long a resident in Avenel, that his grandmother had died at Cologne, in the performance of a penance too severe for her age, which she had taken upon herself in behalf of the Queen and Church of Scotland, so soon as she heard of the defeat at Langside. The zeal of the Abbot Ambrosius was more regulated; but he retired into the Scottish convent of ——, and so lived there that the fraternity were inclined to claim for him the honours of canonization. But he guessed their

purpose, and prayed them, on his death-bed, to do no honours to the body of one as sinful as themselves; but to send his body and his heart to be buried in Avenel burial-aisle, in the Monastery of Saint Mary's, that the last Abbot of that celebrated house of devotion might sleep among its ruins.*

Long before that period arrived, Roland Avenel was wedded to Catherine Seyton, who, after two years' residence with her unhappy mistress, was dismissed upon her being subjected to closer restraint than had been at first exercised. She returned to her father's house, and, as Roland was acknowledged for the successor and lawful heir of the ancient house of Avenel, greatly increased as the estate was by the providence of Sir Halbert Glendinning, there occurred no objections to the match on the part of her family. Her mother was recently dead when she first entered the convent; and her father, in the unsettled times which followed Queen Mary's flight to England, was not averse to an alliance with a youth who, himself loyal to Queen Mary, still held some influence, through means of Sir Halbert Glendinning, with the party in power.

Roland and Catherine, therefore, were united, spite of their differing faiths; and the White Lady, whose apparition had been infrequent when the house of Avenel seemed verging to extinction, was seen to sport by her haunted well, with a zone of gold around her bosom as broad as the baldrick of an earl.

* Note O. Burial of the Abbot's heart in the Avenel aisle.



QUEEN MARY'S ALTAR-PIECE. HOLYROOD.

NOTES TO THE ABBOT.

NOTE A, p. 15.—GLENDONWYNE OF GLENDONWYNE.

This was a house of ancient descent and superior consequence, including persons who fought at Bannockburn and Otterburn, and closely connected by alliance and friendship with the great Earls of Douglas. The knight in the story argues as most Scotsmen would do in his situation, for all of the same clan are popularly considered as descended from the same stock, and as having a right to the ancestral honour of the chief branch. This opinion, though sometimes ideal, is so strong even at this day of innovation, that it may be observed as a national difference between my countrymen and the English. If you ask an Englishman of good birth whether a person of the same name be connected with him, he answers (if *in dubio*), 'No—he is a mere namesake.' Ask a similar question of a Scot (I mean a Scotsman), he replies—'He is one of our clan; I daresay there is a relationship, though I do not know how distant.' The Englishman thinks of discountenancing a species of rivalry in society; the Scotsman's answer is grounded on the ancient idea of strengthening the clan.

NOTE B, p. 30.—CELL OF SAINT CUTHBERT.

I may here observe that this is entirely an ideal scene. Saint Cuthbert, a person of established sanctity, had, no doubt, several places of worship on the Borders, where he flourished whilst living; but Tillmouth Chapel is the only one which bears some resemblance to the hermitage described in the text. It has, indeed, a well, famous for gratifying three wishes for every worshipper who shall quaff the fountain with sufficient belief in its efficacy. At this spot the saint is said to have landed in his stone coffin, in which he sailed down the Tweed from Melrose, and here the stone coffin long lay in evidence of the fact. The late Sir Francis Blake Delaval is said to have taken the exact measure of the coffin, and to have ascertained by hydrostatic principles that it might have actually swum. A profane farmer in the neighbourhood announced his intention of converting this last bed of the saint into a trough for his swine; but the profanation was rendered impossible either by the saint or by some pious votary in his behalf, for on the following morning the stone sarcophagus was found broken in two fragments.

Tillmouth Chapel, with these points of resemblance, lies, however, in exactly the opposite direction, as regards Melrose, which the supposed cell of Saint Cuthbert is said to have borne towards Kennaquhair.

NOTE C, p. 35.—GOSS-HAWK.

The comparison is taken from some beautiful verses in an old ballad, entitled Fause Foodrage, published in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. A deposed queen, to preserve her infant son from the traitors who have slain his father, exchanges him with the female offspring of a faithful friend, and goes on to direct the education of the children, and the private signals by which the parents are to hear news each of her own offspring.

And you shall learn my gay goss-hawk
Right well to breast a steed;
And so will I your turtle-dow,
As well to write and read.

And ye shall learn my gay goss-hawk
To wield both bow and brand;
And so will I your turtle-dow
To lay gowd with her hand.

At kirk or market when we meet,
We'll dare make no avow,
But, 'Dame, how does my gay goss-hawk?
'Madame, how does my dow?'

NOTE D, p. 43.—CHAPEL OF SAINT BRIDGET.

This, like the cell of Saint Cuthbert, is an imaginary scene, but I took one or two ideas of the desolation of the interior from a story told me by my father. In his youth - it may be near eighty years since, as he was born in 1729 - he had occasion to visit an old lady who resided in a Border castle of considerable renown. Only one very limited portion of the extensive ruins sufficed for the accommodation of the inmates, and my father amused himself by wandering through the part that was untenanted. In a dining apartment, having a roof richly adorned with arches and drops, there was deposited a large stack of hay, to which calves were helping themselves from opposite sides. As my father was scaling a dark, ruinous turnpike staircase, his greyhound ran up before him, and probably was the means of saving his life, for the animal fell through a trap-door or aperture in the stair, thus warning the owner of the danger of the ascent. As the dog continued howling from a great depth, my father got the old butler, who alone knew most of the localities about the castle, to unlock a sort of stable, in which Kill-buck was found safe and sound, the place being filled with the same commodity which littered the stalls of Augeas, and which had rendered the dog's fall an easy one.

NOTE E, p. 49.—ABBOT OF UNREASON.

We learn from no less authority than that of Napoleon Bonaparte, that there is but a single step between the sublime and ridiculous; and it is a transition from one extreme to another, so very easy, that the vulgar of every degree are peculiarly captivated with it. Thus the inclination to laugh becomes uncontrollable, when the solemnity and gravity of time, place, and circumstances render it peculiarly improper. Some species of general licence, like that which inspired the ancient Saturnalia, or the modern Carnival, has been commonly indulged to the people at all times, and in almost all countries. But it was, I think, peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church, that while they studied how to render their church rites imposing and magnificent by all that pomp, music, architecture, and external display could add to them, they nevertheless connived, upon special occasions, at the frolics of the rude vulgar, who, in almost all Catholic countries, enjoyed, or at least assumed, the privilege of making some lord of the revels, who, under the name of the Abbot of Unreason, the Boy Bishop, or the President of Fools, occupied the churches, profaned the holy places by a mock imitation of the sacred rites, and sung indecent parodies on hymns of the Church. The indifference of the clergy, even when their power was greatest, to the indecent exhibitions which they always tolerated, and sometimes encouraged, forms a strong contrast to the sensitiveness with which they regarded any serious attempt, by preaching or writing, to impeach any of the doctrines of the Church. It could only be compared to the singular apathy with which they endured, and often admired, the gross novels which Chaucer, Dunbar, Boccaccio, Bandello, and others, composed upon the bad morals of the clergy. It seems as if the churchmen in both instances had endeavoured to compromise with the laity, and allowed them occasionally to gratify their coarse humour by indecent satire, provided they would abstain from any grave question concerning the foundation of the doctrines on which was erected such an immense fabric of ecclesiastical power.

But the sports thus licensed assumed a very different appearance so soon as the Protestant doctrines began to prevail; and the licence which their forefathers had exercised in mere gaiety of heart, and without the least intention of dishonouring religion by their frolics, were now

persevered in by the common people as a mode of testifying their utter disregard for the Roman priesthood and its ceremonies.

I may observe, for example, the case of an apparitor sent to Borthwick from the Primate of Saint Andrews to cite the lord of that castle, who was opposed by an Abbot of Unreason, at whose command the officer of the spiritual court was appointed to be ducked in a mill-dam, and obliged to eat up his parchment citation.

The reader may be amused with the following whimsical details of this incident, which took place in the Castle of Borthwick in the year 1547. It appears that, in consequence of a process betwixt Master George Hay de Minzeane and the Lord Borthwick, letters of excommunication had passed against the latter, on account of the contumacy of certain witnesses. William Langlands, an apparitor or macer (*bacularius*) of the See of Saint Andrews, presented these letters to the curate of the church of Borthwick, requiring him to publish the same at the service of high mass It seems that the inhabitants of the castle were at this time engaged in the favourite sport of enacting the Abbot of Unreason, a species of high jinks, in which a mimic prelate was elected, who, like the Lord of Misrule in England, turned all sort of lawful authority, and particularly the church ritual, into ridicule. This frolicsome person with his retinue, notwithstanding of the apparitor's character, entered the church, seized upon the primate's officer without hesitation, and, dragging him to the mill-dam on the south side of the castle, compelled him to leap into the water. Not contented with this partial immersion, the Abbot of Unreason pronounced that Mr. William Langlands was not yet sufficiently bathed, and therefore caused his assistants to lay him on his back in the stream, and duck him in the most satisfactory and perfect manner. The unfortunate apparitor was then conducted back to the church, where, for his refreshment after his bath, the letters of excommunication were torn to pieces, and steeped in a bowl of wine; the mock abbot being probably of opinion that a tough parchment was but dry eating, Langlands was compelled to eat the letters and swallow the wine, and dismissed by the Abbot of Unreason, with the comfortable assurance that if any more such letters should arrive during the continuance of his office, 'they should a' gang the same gate,' *i.e.* go the same road.

A similar scene occurs betwixt a sumner of the Bishop of Rochester and Harpool, the servant of Lord Cobham, in the old play of *Sir John Oldcastle*, when the former compels the church-officer to eat his citation. The dialogue, which may be found in the note, contains most of the jests which may be supposed appropriate to such an extraordinary occasion.*

NOTE F, p. 49.—THE HOBBY-HORSE.

This exhibition, the play-mare of Scotland, stood high among holiday gambols. It must be carefully separated from the wooden chargers which furnish out our nurseries. It gives rise to Hamlet's ejaculation—

But oh, but oh, the hobby-horse is forgot!

There is a very comic scene in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of *Women Pleased*, where Hope-on-high Bombye, a Puritan cobbler, refuses to dance with the hobby-horse. There was much difficulty and great variety in the motions which the hobby-horse was expected to exhibit.

The learned Mr. Douce, who has contributed so much to the illustration of our theatrical antiquities, has given us a full account of this pageant, and the burlesque horsemanship which it practised

'The hobby-horse,' says Mr. Douce, 'was represented by a man equipped with as much pasteboard as was sufficient to form the head and hinder parts of a horse, the quadrupedal defects being concealed by a long mantle or foot-cloth that nearly touched the ground. The performer, on this occasion, exerted all his skill in burlesque horsemanship. In Sympson's play of the *Bow-breaker*, 1636, a miller personates the hobby-horse, and, being angry that the mayor of the city is put in competition with him, exclaims, "Let the major play the hobby-horse among his brethren, an he will; I hope our town-lads cannot want a hobby-horse. Have I practised my reins, my careers, my prankers, my ambles, my false trots, my smooth ambles, and Canterbury paces, and shall master major put me beside the hobby-horse? Have I borrowed the fore-horse bells, his plumes, and braveries, nay, had his mane new shorn and frizzled, and shall the major put me beside the hobby-horse!"'—Douce's *Illustrations*, vol. ii. pp. 467–68.

NOTE G, p. 49.—ROBIN HOOD AND LITTLE JOHN.

The representation of Robin Hood was the darling May-game both in England and Scotland, and doubtless the favourite personification was often revived, when the Abbot of Unreason, or other pretences of frolic, gave an unusual degree of licence.

The Protestant clergy, who had formerly reaped advantage from the opportunities which these sports afforded them of directing their own satire and the ridicule of the lower orders against the Catholic Church, began to find that, when these purposes were served, their favourite pastimes deprived them of the wish to attend divine worship, and disturbed the frame of mind in which it can be attended to advantage. The celebrated Bishop Latimer gives a very *naïve* account of the manner in which, bishop as he was, he found himself compelled to give place to Robin Hood and his followers.

'I came once myselfe riding on a journey homeward from London, and I sent word over night into the towne that I would preach there in the morning, because it was holiday, and me thought it was a holydayes worke. The church stood in my way, and I took my horse and my company, and went thither (I thought I should have found a great company in the church), and when I came there the church doore was fast locked. I tarryed there halfe an houre and more. At last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me and said—"Sir, this is a busie day with us; we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day. The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood. I pray you let them not." I was faine there to give place to Robin Hood. I thought my rochet should have been regarded, though I were not: but it would not serve, it was faine to give place to Robin Hood's men. It is no laughing matter, my friends, it is a weeping matter, a heavie matter, a heavie matter. Under the pretence for gathering for Robin Hood, a traytour and a theif, to put out a preacher; to have his office lesse esteemed; to preferre Robin Hood before the ministration of God's word; and all this hath come of unpreaching prelates. This realme hath been ill-provided for, that it hath had such corrupt judgments in it, to prefer Robin Hood to God's word.' —*Bishop Latimer's Sixth Sermon before King Edward.*

While the English Protestants thus preferred the outlaw's pageant to the preaching of their excellent bishop, the Scottish Calvinistic clergy, with the celebrated John Knox at their head, and backed by the authority of the magistrates of Edinburgh, who had of late been chosen exclusively from this party, found it impossible to control the rage of the populace, when they attempted to deprive them of the privilege of presenting their pageant of Robin Hood.

(1561.) 'Vpon the xxi day of Junij, Archibalde Dowglas of Kilspindie, Provest of Edr., David Symmer, and Adame Fullartoun, baillies of the samyne, causit ane cordinare servant, callit James Gillion, takin of befoir for playing in Edr. with Robene Hude, to wnderly the law, and put him to the knawlege of ane assyize quhilk thaij haid electit of thair favoraris, quha with schort deliberatioun condemnit him to be hangit for the said cryme. And the

* *Harpool.* Marry, this, sir, is this process parchment?
Sumner. Yes, marry is it.
Harpool And this seal wax?
Sumner. It is so.
Harpool. If this be parchment, and this be wax, eat you this parchment and this wax, or I will make parchment of your skin, and beat your brains into wax. Sirrah Sumner, dispatch—devour, sirrah, devour.
Sumner. I am my Lord of Rochester's sumner; I came to do my office, and thou shalt answer it.
Harpool. Sirrah, no railing, but betake yourself to your teeth. Thou shalt eat no worse than thou bringest with thee. Thou bring'st it for my lord; and wilt thou bring my lord worse than thou wilt eat thyself.
Sumner. Sir, I brought it not my lord to eat.
Harpool. O, do you sir me now? All's one for that; I'll make you eat it for bringing it.
Sumner. I cannot eat it.
Harpool. Can you not? 'Sblood, I'll beat you till you have a stomach. [*Beats him*]
Sumner. Oh, hold, hold, good Mr. Serving-man; I will eat it.
Harpool. Be champing, be chewing, sir, or I will chew you, you rogue. Tough wax is the purest of the honey.
Sumner. The purest of the honey?—O Lord, sir, oh, oh!
Harpool Feed, feed; 'tis wholesome, rogue, wholesome. Cannot you, like an honest sumner, walk with the devil, your brother, to fetch in your bailiff's rents, but you must come to a nobleman's house with process? If thy seal were as broad as the lead that covers Rochester church, thou should'st eat it.
Sumner. Oh, I am almost choked—I am almost choked.
Harpool. Who's within there? Will you shame my lord? Is there no beer in the house? Butler, I say.

Enter BUTLER.

Butler. Here, here.
Harpool. Give him beer. There; tough old sheep-skin's bare dry meat.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, *Part I. Act II. Scene* 1.

deaconis of the craftismen fearing vproare, maid great solistatnis at the handis of the said provost and baillies, and als requirit John Knox, minister, for eschewing of tumult, to superceid the executioun of him, vnto the tyme thai suld adverteis my Lord Duke thairof. And than, if it wes his mynd and will that he should be disponit vpoun, the said deaconis and craftismen sould convey him thaire; quha answerit, that thai culd na way stope the executioun of justice. Quhan the tyme of the said pouer mans hanging approchit, and that the hangman wes cum to the jibbat with the ledder, vpoune the quhilk the said cordinare should have bene hangit, ane certaine and remanent craftischilder, quha wes put to the horne with the said Gillione, ffor the said Robene Hude's *playes*, and vtheris thair assistaris and favoraris, past to wappinis, and thai brak down the said jibbat, and than chacit the said provest, baillies, and Alexr. Guthrie, in the said Alexander's writing buith, and held thame thairin; and thairefter past to the tolbuyt, and becaus the samyne was steiket, and onnawayes culd get the keyes thairof, thai brake the said tolbuith dore with foure hammeris, per force (the said provest and baillies luckand thairon), and not onlie put thar the said Gillione to fredome and libertie, and brocht him furth of the said tolbuit, bot alsua the remanent personaris being thairintill; and this done, the said craftismen's servands, with the said condempnit cordonar, past doun to the Netherbow, to have past furth thairat; bot becaus the samyne on thair coming thairto wes closet, thai past vp agane the Hie streit of the said bourghe to the Castellhill, and in this menetyme the saidis provest and baillies, and thair assistaris, being in the writting buith of the said Alexr. Guthrie, past and enterit in the said tolbuyt, and in the said servandes passage vp the Hie streit, then schote furth thairof at thame ane dog, and hurt ane servand of the said childer. This being done, thair wes nathing vthir but the one partie schuteand out and castand stanes furth of the said tolbuyt, and the vther partie schuteand hagbuttis in the same agane. And sua the craftismen's servandis, aboue written, held and inclosit the said provest and baillies continewallie in the said tolbuyth, frae three houris efternone, quhill aught houris at even, and na man of the said town prensit to relieve thair said provest and baillies. And than thai send to the maisters of the Castell, to caus tham if thai mycht stay the said servandis, quha maid ane maner to do the same, bot thai could not bring the same to ane finall end, ffor the said servands wold on nowayes stay fra, quhill thai had revengit the hurting of ane of them; and thairefter the constable of the castell come down thairfra, and he with the said maisters treatet betwix the said pties in this manner:—That the said provost and baillies sall remit to the said craftischilder all actioun, cryme, and offens that thai had committit aganes thame in any tyme bygane: and band and oblast thame never to pursew them thairfor; and als commandit thair maisters to resaue them agane in their services, as thai did befoir. And this being proclaimit at the mercat cross, thai scalit, and the said provest and baillies come furth of the same tolbouyth,'

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John Knox, who writes at large upon this tumult, informs us it was inflamed by the deacons of craftes, who, resenting the superiority assumed over them by the magistrates, would yield no assistance to put down the tumult. 'They will be magistrates alone,' said the recusant deacons, 'e'en let them rule the populace alone;' and accordingly they passed quietly to take *their four-hours' penny*, and left the magistrates to help themselves as they could. Many persons were excommunicated for this outrage, and not admitted to church ordinances till they had made satisfaction.

NOTE H, p. 58.—INABILITY OF EVIL SPIRITS TO ENTER A HOUSE UNINVITED.

There is a popular belief respecting evil spirits, that they cannot enter an inhabited house unless invited, nay, dragged over the threshold. There is an instance of the same superstition in the Tales of the Genii, where an enchanter is supposed to have intruded himself into the divan of the sultan.

'"Thus," said the illustrious Misnar, "let the enemies of Mahomet be dismayed: but inform me, O ye sages! under the semblance of which of your brethren did that foul enchanter gain admittance here?"—"May the lord of my heart," answered Balihu, the hermit of the faithful from Queda, "triumph over all his foes! As I travelled on the mountains from Queda, and saw neither the footsteps of beasts, nor the flights of birds, behold, I chanced to pass through a cavern, in whose hollow sides I found this accursed sage, to whom I unfolded the invitation of the sultan of India, and we, joining, journeyed towards the divan; but ere we entered, he said unto me, "Put thy hand forth, and pull me toward thee into the divan, calling on the name of Mahomet, for the evil spirits are on me, and vex me."'

I have understood that many parts of these fine tales, and in particular that of the Sultan Misnar, were taken from genuine Oriental sources by the editor, Mr. James Ridley. [See Morell's (Ridley's) Tales of the Genii, Tale vi., in Bohn's Illustrated Library.]

But the most picturesque use of this popular belief occurs in Coleridge's beautiful and tantalising fragment of Christabel. Has not our own imaginative poet cause to fear that future ages will desire to summon him from his place of rest, as Milton longed

> To call him up, who left half told
> The story of Cambuscan bold?

The verses I refer to are when Christabel conducts into her father's castle a mysterious and malevolent being under the guise of a distressed female stranger.

> They cross'd the moat, and Christabel
> Took the key that fitted well;
> A little door she open'd straight,
> All in the middle of the gate;
> The gate that was iron'd within and without,
> Where an army in battle array had march'd out.
>
> The lady sank, belike thro' pain,
> And Christabel with might and main
> Lifted her up, a weary weight,
> Over the threshold of the gate;
> Then the lady rose again,
> And mov'd, as she were not in pain.
>
> So free from danger, free from fear,
> They cross'd the court; right glad they were,
> And Christabel devoutly cried
> To the lady by her side,
> 'Praise we the Virgin all divine
> Who hath rescued thee from thy distress.'
> 'Alas, alas!' said Geraldine,
> 'I cannot speak for weariness.'
> So free from danger, free from fear,
> They cross'd the court; right glad they were.

NOTE I, p. 66.—SEYTON OR SETON.

George, fifth Lord Seton, was immoveably faithful to Queen Mary during all the mutabilities of her fortune. He was grand master of the household, in which capacity he had a picture painted of himself, with his official baton, and the following motto:—

> *In adversitate, patiens;*
> *In prosperitate, benevolus.*
> *Hazard, yet forward.*

On various parts of his castle he inscribed, as expressing his religious and political creed, the legend,

UN DIEU, UN FOY, UN ROY, UN LOY.

He declined to be promoted to an earldom, which Queen Mary offered him at the same time when she advanced her natural brother to be Earl of Mar, and afterwards of Murray.

On his refusing this honour, Mary wrote, or caused to be written, the following lines in Latin and French:—

> Sunt comites, ducesque alii; sunt denique reges;
> Sethoni dominum sit satis esse mihi.
>
> Il y a des comptes, des roys, des ducs; ainsi
> C'est assez pour moy d'estre Seigneur de Seton.

Which may be thus rendered:—

> Earl, duke, or king, be thou that list to be:
> Seton, thy lordship is enough for me.

This distich reminds us of the 'pride which aped humility,' in the motto of the house of Couci:—

> Je suis ni roy, ni prince aussi;
> Je suis le Seigneur de Coucy.

After the battle of Langside, Lord Seton was obliged to retire abroad for safety, and was an exile for two years, during which he was reduced to the necessity of driving a waggon in Flanders for his subsistence. He rose to favour in James VI.'s reign, and, resuming his paternal property, had himself painted in his waggoner's dress, and in the act of driving a wain with four horses, on the north end of a stately gallery at Seton Castle. He appears to have been fond of the arts; for there exists a beautiful family-piece of him in the centre of his family. Mr. Pinkerton, in his *Scottish Iconographia*, published an engraving of this curious portrait. The original is the property of Lord

Somerville, nearly connected with the Seton family, and is at present at his lordship's fishing villa of the Pavilion, near Melrose.

NOTE J, p. 95.—RESIGNATION OF QUEEN MARY.

The details of this remarkable event are, as given in chapter xxi., imaginary; but the outline of the events is historical. Sir Robert Lindesay, brother to the author of the Memoirs, was at first entrusted with the delicate commission of persuading the imprisoned queen to resign her crown. As he flatly refused to interfere, they determined to send the Lord Lindesay, one of the rudest and most violent of their own faction, with instructions, first to use fair persuasions, and if these did not succeed, to enter into harder terms. Knox associates Lord Ruthven with Lindesay in this alarming commission. He was the son of that Lord Ruthven who was prime agent in the murder of Rizzio; and little mercy was to be expected from his conjunction with Lindesay.

The employment of such rude tools argued a resolution on the part of those who had the queen's person in their power, to proceed to the utmost extremities should they find Mary obstinate. To avoid this pressing danger, Sir Robert Melville was despatched by them to Lochleven, carrying with him, concealed in the scabbard of his sword, letters to the queen from the Earl of Athole, Maitland of Lethington, and even from Throgmorton, the English Ambassador, who was then favourable to the unfortunate Mary, conjuring her to yield to the necessity of the times, and to subscribe such deeds as Lindesay should lay before her, without being startled by their tenor, and assuring her that her doing so, in the state of captivity under which she was placed, would neither in law, honour, nor conscience, be binding upon her when she should obtain her liberty. Submitting by the advice of one part of her subjects to the menace of the others, and learning that Lindesay was arrived in a boasting, that is, threatening humour, the queen, 'with some reluctancy, and with tears,' saith Knox, subscribed one deed resigning her crown to her infant son, and another establishing the Earl of Murray Regent. It seems agreed by historians that Lindesay behaved with great brutality on the occasion. The deeds were signed 24th July 1567.

NOTE K, p. 140.—KIERY-CRAIGS.

[Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam, in the year 1817, formed what was called a Blair-Adam Club, consisting of Sir Walter Scott and a few other friends, who assembled once a year at Blair-Adam House, near the shores of Lochleven. In his Reminiscences, the Lord Chief-Commissioner, when referring to the anonymous publication of the Waverley Novels, records the following anecdote:—'What confirmed, and was certainly meant to disclose to me the author, was the mention of the *Kiery-craigs*, a picturesque piece of scenery in the grounds of Blair-Adam, as being in the vicinity of Kelty Bridge, the *howf* of Auchtermuchty, the Kinross carrier. It was only an intimate friend of the family who could know anything of the *Kiery-craigs* or its name; and both the scenery and the name had attractions for Sir Walter.

'At our first meeting after the publication of the Abbot, when the party were assembled on the top of the rock, the Chief-Baron Shepherd, looking Sir Walter full in the face, and stamping his staff on the ground, said, "Now, Sir Walter, I think we be upon the top of the *Kiery-craggs*." Sir Walter preserved profound silence; but there was a conscious looking down, and a considerable elongation of his upper lip.'—Blair-Adam *Tracts*, 1834, p. xxxv.]

NOTE L, p. 150.—QUEEN MARY'S DEMEANOUR.

In the dangerous expedition to Aberdeenshire, Randolph, the English Ambassador, gives Cecil the following account of Queen Mary's demeanour:—

'In all those garbulles, I assure your honour, I never saw the Queen merrier, never dismayed; nor never thought I that stomache to be in her that I find. She repented nothing but, when the Lords and others, at Inverness, came in the morning from the watches, that she was not a man, to know what life it was to lye all night in the fields, or to walk upon the causeway with a jack and a knapscap, a Glasgow buckler, and a broadsword.'—RANDOLPH TO CECIL, September 18, 1562.

The writer of the above letter seems to have felt the same impression which Catherine Seyton, in the text, considered as proper to the queen's presence among her armed subjects.

'Though we neither thought nor looked for other than on that day to have fought or never—what desperate blows would not have been given, when every man should have fought in the sight of so noble a queen, and so many fair ladies, our enemies to have taken them from us, and we to save our honours, not to be reft of them, your honour can easily judge!'—*The Same to the Same*, September 24, 1562.

NOTE M, p. 151.—ESCAPE OF QUEEN MARY.

It is well known that the escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven was effected by George Douglas, the youngest brother of Sir William Douglas, the lord of the castle; but the minute circumstances of the event have been a good deal confused, owing to two agents having been concerned in it who bore the same name. It has been always supposed that George Douglas was induced to abet Mary's escape by the ambitious hope that by such service he might merit her hand. But his purpose was discovered by his brother Sir William, and he was expelled from the castle. He continued, notwithstanding, to hover in the neighbourhood, and maintain a correspondence with the royal prisoner and others in the fortress.

If we believe the English Ambassador Drury, the queen was grateful to George Douglas, and even proposed a marriage with him; a scheme which could hardly be serious, since she was still the wife of Bothwell, but which, if suggested at all, might be with a purpose of gratifying the Regent Murray's ambition, and propitiating his favour; since he was, it must be remembered, the brother uterine of George Douglas, for whom such high honour was said to be designed.

The proposal, if seriously made, was treated as inadmissible, and Mary again resumed her purpose of escape. Her failure in her first attempt has some picturesque particulars, which might have been advantageously introduced in fictitious narrative. Drury sends Cecil the following account of the matter:—

'But after, upon the 25th of the last (April, 1567) she interprised an escape, and was the rather near effect, through her accustomed long lying in bed all the morning. The manner of it was thus: there cometh in to her the laundress early as other times before she was wanted, and the queen, according to such a secret practice, putteth on her the weed of the laundress, and so with the fardel of clothes and her muffler upon her face, passeth out and entreth the boat to pass the Loch; which, after some space, one of them that rowed said merrily, "Let us see what manner of dame this is," and therewith offered to pull down her muffler, which, to defend, she put up her hands, which they spied to be very fair and white; wherewith they entered into suspicion whom she was, beginning to wonder at her enterprise. Whereat she was little dismayed, but charged them, upon danger of their lives, to row her over to the shore, which they nothing regarded, but eftsoons rowed her back again, promising her it should be secreted, and especially from the lord of the house, under whose guard she lyeth. It seemeth she knew her refuge, and where to have found it if she had once landed; for there did, and yet do linger, at a little village called Kinross, hard at the Loch side, the same George Douglas, one Sempil, and one Beton, the which two were sometime her trusty servants, and, as yet appeareth, they mind her no less affection.'—Bishop Keith's *History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 470. Edin. 1734.

Notwithstanding this disappointment, little spoken of by historians, Mary renewed her attempts to escape. There was in the Castle of Lochleven a lad named William Douglas, some relation probably of the baron, and about eighteen years old. This youth proved as accessible to Queen Mary's prayers and promises as was the brother of his patron, George Douglas, from whom this William must be carefully kept distinct. It was young William who played the part commonly assigned to his superior George, stealing the keys of the castle from the table on which they lay while his lord was at supper. He let the queen and a waiting-woman out of the apartment where they were secured, and out of the tower itself, embarked with them in a small skiff, and rowed them to the shore. To prevent instant pursuit, he, for precaution's sake, locked the iron-gated door of the tower, and threw the keys into the lake. They found George Douglas, and the queen's servant Beton, waiting for them, and Lord Seyton and James Hamilton of Orbieston in attendance, at the head of a party of faithful followers, with whom they fled to Niddrie Castle, and from thence to Hamilton.

In narrating this romantic story, both history and tradition confuse the two Douglases together, and confer on George the successful execution of the escape from the castle, the merit of which belongs, in reality, to the boy called William, or, more frequently, the Little Douglas, either from his youth or his slight stature. The reader will observe that in the romance the part of the Little Douglas has been assigned to Roland Græme. In another case it would be tedious to point out in a work of amusement such minute points of historical fact; but the general interest taken in the fate of Queen Mary renders everything of consequence which connects itself with her misfortunes. [See also *Proceedings Scot. Antiq.* vol. iii. Feb. 13, 1860.]

NOTE N, p. 162—BATTLE OF LANGSIDE.

I am informed in the most polite manner, by Mr. D. MacVean of Glasgow, that I have been incorrect in my locality in giving an account of the battle of Langside. Crookstone Castle, he observes, lies four miles west from the field of battle, and rather in the rear of Murray's army. The real place from which Mary saw the rout of her last army was Cathcart Castle, which, being a mile and a half east from Langside, was situated in the rear of the queen's own army. I was led astray in the present case by the authority of my deceased friend, James Grahame, the excellent and amiable author of the *Sabbath*, in his drama on the subject of Queen Mary; and by a traditionary report of Mary having seen the battle from the Castle of Crookstone, which seemed so much to increase the interest of the scene, that I have been unwilling to make, in this particular instance, the fiction give way to the fact, which last is undoubtedly in favour of Mr. MacVean's system.

It is singular how tradition, which is sometimes a sure guide to truth, is, in other cases, prone to mislead us. In the celebrated field of battle at Killiecrankie, the traveller is struck with one of those rugged pillars of rough stone, which indicate the scenes of ancient conflict. A friend of the Author, well acquainted with the circumstances of the battle, was standing near this large stone, and looking on the scene around, when a Highland shepherd hurried down from the hill to offer his services as cicerone, and proceeded to inform him that Dundee was slain at that stone, which was raised to his memory. 'Fie, Donald,' answered my friend, 'how can you tell such a story to a stranger? I am sure you know well enough that Dundee was killed at a considerable distance from this place, near the house of Fascally, and that this stone was here long before the battle in 1688.'—'Oich! oich!' said Donald, no way abashed, 'and your honour's in the right, and I see you ken a' about it. And he wasna killed on the spot neither, but lived till the next morning; but a' the Saxon gentlemen like best to hear he was killed at the great stane.' It is on the same principle of pleasing my readers, that I retain Crookstone Castle instead of Cathcart.

If, however, the Author has taken a liberty in removing the actual field of battle somewhat to the eastward, he has been tolerably strict in adhering to the incidents of the engagement, as will appear from a comparison of events in the novel, with the following account from an old writer:—

'The Regent was out on foot and all his company, except the Laird of Grange, Alexander Hume of Manderston, and some Borderers, to the number of two hundred. The Laird of Grange had already viewed the ground, and with all imaginable diligence caused every horseman to take behind him a footman of the Regent's, to guard behind them, and rode with speed to the head of the Langside Hill, and set down the footmen with their culverings at the head of a straight lane, where there were some cottage houses and yards of great advantage. Which soldiers with their continual shot killed divers of the vaunt guard, led by the Hamiltons, who, courageously and fiercely ascending up the hill, were already out of breath, when the Regent's vaunt guard joined with them. Where the worthy Lord Hume fought on foot with his pike in his hand very manfully, assisted by the Laird of Cessford, his brother-in-law, who helped him up again when he was strucken to the ground by many strokes upon his face, through the throwing pistols at him after they had been discharged. He was also wounded with staves, and had many strokes of spears through his legs; for he and Grange, at the joining, cried to let their adversaries first lay down their spears to bear up theirs: which spears were so thick fixed in the others' jacks, that some of the pistols and great staves that were thrown by them which were behind, might be seen lying upon the spears.

'Upon the Queen's side the Earl of Argyle commanded the battle, and the Lord of Arbroath the vaunt guard. But the Regent committed to the Laird of Grange the special care, as being an experimented captain, to oversee every danger, and to ride to every wing, to encourage and make help where greatest need was. He perceived, at the first joining, the right wing of the Regent's vaunt guard put back, and like to fly, whereof the greatest part were commons of the barony of Renfrew; whereupon he rode to them, and told them that their enemy was already turning their backs, requesting them to stay and debate till he should bring them fresh men forth of the battle. Whither at full speed he did ride alone, and told the Regent that the enemy were shaken and flying away behind the little village, and desired a few number of fresh men to go with him. Where he found enough willing, as the Lord Lindesay, the Laird of Lochleven, Sir James Balfour, and all the Regent's servants, who followed him with diligence, and reinforced that wing which was beginning to fly; which fresh men with their loose weapons struck the enemies in their flank and faces, which forced them incontinent to give place and turn back, after long fighting and pushing others to and fro with their spears. There were not many horsemen to pursue after them, and the Regent cried to save and not to kill, and Grange was never cruel, so that there were few slain and taken. And the only slaughter was at the first rencounter by the shot of the soldiers, which Grange had planted at the lane-head behind some dikes.'

It is remarkable that, while passing through the small town of Rutherglen, some partisans, adherents of the House of Lennox, attempting to arrest Queen Mary and her attendants, were obliged to make way for her, not without slaughter.

[The Castle of Rutherglen was demolished immediately after the battle by the Regent's party.

The suburban district of Glasgow towards the south, named Cathcart, takes its name from the old castle, and, owing to the growth of the city in this direction, the site of the battle of Langside is brought contiguous to the south-east side of the Queen's Park. On the west of this park the site of the Regent Murray's camp is commemorated by the 'Camp Hill,' and at the village of Langside there is a cottage which goes by the name of 'Queen Mary's Cottage.' The Queen's Park is in a direct line with Glasgow Bridge, from which it is three miles distant in a straight line.]

NOTE O, p. 166.—BURIAL OF THE ABBOT'S HEART IN THE AVENEL AISLE.

This was not the explanation of the incident of searching for the heart, mentioned in the introduction to the tale, which the Author originally intended. It was designed to refer to the heart of Robert Bruce. It is generally known that that great monarch, being on his deathbed, bequeathed to the good Lord James of Douglas the task of carrying his heart to the Holy Land, to fulfil in a certain degree his own desire to perform a crusade. Upon Douglas's death, fighting against the Moors in Spain, a sort of military *hors d'œuvre* to which he could have pleaded no regular call of duty, his followers brought back the Bruce's heart, and deposited it in the Abbey Church of Melrose, the Kennaquhair of the tale.

This Abbey has been always particularly favoured by the Bruce. We have already seen his extreme anxiety that each of the reverend brethren should be daily supplied with a service of boiled almonds, rice and milk, pease, or the like, to be called the king's mess, and that without the ordinary service of their table being either disturbed in quantity or quality. But this was not the only mark of the benignity of good King Robert towards the monks of Melrose, since, by a charter of the date 29th May 1326, he conferred on the Abbot of Melrose the sum of two thousand pounds sterling, for rebuilding the Church of Saint Mary's, ruined by the English; and there is little or no doubt that the principal part of the remains which now display such exquisite specimens of Gothic architecture, at its very purest period, had their origin in this munificent donation. The money was to be paid out of crown lands, estates forfeited to the King, and other property or demesnes of the crown.

A very curious letter, written to his son about three weeks before his death, has been pointed out to me by my friend Mr. Thomas Thomson, Deputy-Register for Scotland. It enlarges so much on the love of the royal writer to the community of Melrose, that it is well worthy of being inserted in a work connected in some degree with Scottish history.

LITERA DOMINI REGIS ROBERTI AD FILIUM SUUM DAVID.

'Robertus Dei gratia Rex Scottorum, David precordialissimo filio suo, ac ceteris successoribus suis; Salutem, et sic ejus precepta tenere, ut cum sua benedictione possint regnare. Fili carissime, digne censeri videtur filius, qui, paternos in bonis mores imitans, piam ejus nititur exequi voluntatem; nec proprie sibi sumit nomen heredis, qui salubribus predecessoris affectibus non adheret: Cupientes igitur, ut piam affectionem et sinceram dilectionem, quam erga monasterium de Melros, ubi cor nostrum ex speciali devotione disposuimus tumulandum, et erga Religiosos ibidem Deo servientes, ipsorum vita sanctissima nos ad hoc excitante, concepimus; Tu ceterique successores nostri pia scinceritate prosequamini, ut, ex vestre dilectionis affectu dictis Religiosis nostri causa post mortem nostram ostenso, ipsi pro nobis ad orandum fervencius et forcius animentur: Vobis precipimus quantum possumus, instanter supplicamus, et ex toto corde injungimus, Quatinus assignacionibus quas eisdem viris Religiosis et fabrica Ecclesie sue de novo fecimus ac eciam omnibus aliis donacionibus nostris, ipsos libere gaudere permittentes, Easdem potius si necesse fuerit augmentantes quam diminuentes, ipsorum peticiones auribus benevolis admittentes, ac ipsos contra suos invasores et emulos pia defensione protegentes. Hanc autem exhortacionem supplicacionem et preceptum tu, fili ceterique successores nostri, prestanti animo complere curetis, si nostram benedictionem habere velitis, una cum benedictione filii summi Regis, qui filios docuit patrum voluntates in bono perficere, asserens in mundum se venisse non ut suam voluntatem faceret sed paternam. In testimonium autem nostre devotionis erga locum predictum sic a nobis dilectum et electum concepte, presentem literam Religiosis predictis dimittimus, nostris successoribus in posterum ostendendam. Data apud Cardros, undecimo die Maij, Anno Regni nostri vicesimo quarto.'

If this charter be altogether genuine, and there is no appearance of forgery, it gives rise to a curious doubt in Scottish history. The letter announces that the king had already destined his heart to be deposited at Melrose. The resolution to send it to Palestine, under the charge of Douglas, must have been adopted betwixt 11th May 1329, the date of the letter, and 7th June of the same year, when the Bruce died; or else we must suppose that the commission of Douglas extended not only to taking the Bruce's heart to Palestine, but to bring it safe back to its final place of deposit in the Abbey of Melrose.

It would not be worth inquiring by what caprice the Author was induced to throw the incident of the Bruce's heart entirely out of the story, save merely to say, that he found himself unable to fill up the canvas he had sketched, and indisposed to prosecute the management of the supernatural machinery with which his plan, when it was first rough-hewn, was connected and combined.



BANNER OF SAINT CUTHBERT.

GLOSSARY TO THE ABBOT.

Abbot of Unreason. See Note F.
Abigail, lady's maid.
Aby, Abye, to suffer, endure.
Acetum, vinegar.
Aconitum, aconite, monkshood.
Ado, to do.
Ad unguem, to a nail, exactly.
Adverteis, inform.
Agone, ago.
Alexipharmics, antidotes to poisons, etc.
Als, alsua, also.
Amadis of Gaul, hero of a romance.
A moi! mes Français! call my French guard.
An, if.
Anchoret, anchorite, a hermit.
Andrea Ferrara, a sword of finest steel, named after maker.
Anent, opposite, concerning.
Anilities, old women follies.
Anon of, in consequence of.
Apparitor, an officer of a spiritual court.
Aqua, etc. (p. 120), the wonderful water is proved.
Aqua cymbalariæ, water of cymbalaria, a species of antirrhinum.
Aqua vitæ, ardent spirits, whisky.
Argute, sharp, acute.
Aristarch, a severe critic.
Arles, earnest money.
Assoilzie, acquit.
Astuciously, cleverly, cunningly.
A-trowling, a-rolling.
Aught, anything.
Auld, old.
Ave, hail!
Aver, a draught horse.
Awmous, alms.
Ay, yes.

Back-sword, sword with one sharp edge.
Bacularius, a macer.
Baith, both.
Baldric, a richly ornamented girdle.
Ballatis, ballads.
Banders, persons banded together under oath.
Ban-dog, a large fierce dog, sometimes used for baiting.
Bane, to poison.
Bangsters, disorderly persons.
Barb, Arab horse.
Barret cap, a military cap.
Basnet, helmet.
Bauble, short carved-headed stick carried by fools.
Bear-ward, keeper of bears.
Beef-brewis, beef-broth.
Befoir, before.
Beldam, hag.
Ben, inner room of a cottage.
Benedicite, bless you!
Benedicti, etc. (p. 36), blessed are they who come in the name of the Lord.
Benedictus, etc. (p. 115), blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord, condemned, he who comes in the name of the enemy.
Benison, blessing.
Bergamot, a fine sort of pear.
Beshrew, to execrate
Be'st, art.
Bield, shelter.
Bilbo, a sword from Bilboa, where the best blades were made.
Birlit, drove steadily.
Black jack, black leather jerkin, also a drinking vessel, usually of leather.
Bode, forebode, portend.
Bodie, body.
Bodle, a small coin=⅙ of a penny English.
Body o' me! my body! an oath.
Bolt, arrow of cross-bow.
Bolt-head, a receiver.
Boor, countryman.
Border doom, death.
Bounden, bound, obliged.
Bow, boll, an old Scotch measure=6 bushels.
Brag, to defy.
Brancher, a young crow.
Brand, wood for burning, a sword.
Brandy-wine, brandy.
Branle, dance.
Bravado, boast.
Brawly, very well, bravely.
Brent brow, high forehead.
Brocht, brought.
Broidery, embroidery.
Broken clan, one that had no established chief or position.
Brook, bear, endure.
Brownie, a spirit.
Buckler, a small round shield.
Buff, made of leather.
Bugelet horn, bugle horn.
Buith, booth, shop.
Bumbast, bombast, a stuff used to swell garments.

Caitiff, a despicable fellow.
Caliburn, the sword of King Arthur.
Callipolis, a character in Peele's play of Battle of Alcazar.
Callit, called.
Canny, easy, careful.
Cantharides, Spanish flies, used to raise blisters.
Capriole, leap made by a horse without advancing.
Caracole, a half-round turn made by a horseman.
Cart-avers, cart horses.
Cast, a flight.
Cast (of hawks), number let go at once.
Cates, delicacies.
Catholicon, universal remedy.
Caudle, a warm drink.
Causit, caused.
Certes, by my, by my troth!
Chafe, passion.
Change-house, ale-house.
Chargeableness, costliness.
Chastise, to repress.
Chiragra, gout in the hand.
Chuff, a clown.
Churl, peasant, rustic.
Clink, a blow or stroke.
Close the house, close to the house.
Closet, closed.
Clout, a white cloth for archers to shoot at.
Clout, to mend.
Clove-gillyflower, carnation pink.
Cock of the North, Earl of Huntly.
Cockles of the heart, inmost recesses of the heart.
Cog, to deceive.
Cogging, drinking.
Coif, cap or covering for head.
Commendâter, holder of a benefice.
Common-weal, the common good.
Complot, a plotting together.
Condemnit, condempnit, condemned.
Congregation, Lords of the, leaders of the Scotch Reformation party.
Conies, rabbits.
Conjuraverunt, etc. (p. 37), the princes have conspired among themselves, saying, Let us cast his cords from us.
Corbie, raven.
Corbie-messenger, one that returns too late or not at all.
Cordinare, cordwainer, shoemaker.
Coronach, dirge.
Corpse-candle or *light*, a supernatural light said to presage death.
Corselet, armour covering the body.
Couranto, a kind of dance.
Court-cattle, courtiers.
Coxcomb, top of the head.
Cozenage, trickery.
Crack-hemp or *halter*, crack-rope, gallows-bird.
Crafteschilder fellow craftsmen.
Craftismen, craftsmen.
Credo, I believe, the creed.
Crinis canis rabidi, hair of a mad dog.
Crombie, Crummy, a crooked-horned cow.
Crown, French, a silver coin, value about 5s.
Crown of the causeway, the middle of the street.
Crown of the sun, old French gold coin of Louis XI. and Charles VIII.=14s.
Cruizuedor, small Italian coin.
Crush a pot, to carouse with.
Cryme, crime.

Cubicular, groom of bed-chamber.
Cuittle, to wheedle, tickle.
Culpas meas, my sins.
Culveri long light gun.
Cum, come.
Curch, cap.
Curfew, bell rung at nightfall.
Custodier, keeper.
Cutt, a fool.
Cyprus, thin black stuff.

Dalmatique, a white dress.
Danske, Danish.
Dayés, days.
Deaconis, presidents of incorporated trades.
De antidotis, of antidotes.
Debateable land, the border country.
Debit, misdemeanour.
Debonairly, civilly.
Déshabille, undress.
Des Rodomontades Espagnolles, of Spanish rhodomontades.
Devoir, duty, service.
Diagnostics, determining symptoms of a disease.
Diascordium, confection of scordium, the water germander.
Dibble, a pointed instrument to make holes.
Dight your gabs, wipe your mouths, be silent.
Dink, to deck.
Dirk, a dagger.
Discernit, etc. (p. 113), he wisely discriminates things which a fool confounds.
Dispart, to divide.
Disponit upoun, disposed of.
Distemperature, disturbed state.
Domum servavit, etc. (p. 5), she kept the house, and span wool.
Doom, condemn, judicial sentence.
Donjon keep, principal tower of a castle.
Dore, door.
Dorture, a dormitory.
Doublet, jacket or outer waistcoat.
Douce, sober, sedate.
Doughty, illustrious.
Do veniam, I give you leave.
Dow, dove.
Dramatis personæ, the characters of a drama.
Draw, to invite, call.
Dreadour, dread, fear.
Drift, a drove.
Ducat, a coin=4s.
Dudgeon, a small dagger.
Duenna, an old woman who guards a younger.
Duresse, constraint.

E la, the extreme.
E'en, even.
Eftsoons, in a short time.
Eke out, to add to, increase.
Electuary, a medical confection.
Elf, a puny creature.
Elixir, cordial, tincture.
Embonpoint, in good condition, plump.
Emprise, enterprise.
En champ clos, in an enclosed field.
End, at an, at a time.
Energumene, a demoniac.
Ensample, example.
Er, ere.
Erne, eagle.
Espial, a spy.
Evangel, the gospel.
Everiche, every.
Exheridated, disinherited.
Ex oribus parvulorum, from the mouths of babes.
Eyas, a young hawk.
Eyry, nest of eagle or other bird of prey.

Fa', fall.
Facies hippocratica, hippocratic face, sickly countenance.
Falchion, a short crooked sword.
Falconet, a small cannon.
Fanfarona. See p. 66, n.
Farthingale, a hoop-petticoat.
Fash, trouble.
Favoraris, favourers.
Fell, cruel, also skin.
Fiat experimentum, etc. (p. 137), let the experiment be made in a vile body.
Fiat mixtio, let it be a mixture.
First head, finest head of deer.
Flaunes, pancakes.
Flee, to fly.
Fleech, to flatter, cajole.
Fleured, flowered.
Forehand, part of horse before the rider.
Foughten, fought.
Foure-hammer, fore- or sledge-hammer.
Four hours' penny, four o'clock meal.
Fox, an old-fashioned broadsword.
Foy, faith.
Frack, bold.
Franklin, freeholder.
Friended, befriended.
Fro, from.
Frounce, a distemper.
Frustra, etc. (p. 139), in vain we ply the sick with remedies.

Gad-about, one who goes about idly.
Gae, go.
Gaillard, joyous, jolly, wanton.
Galliard, a lively dance, also a gay youth.
Galopin, inferior servant.
Gambade, gambol.
Gamester, concubine.
Ganelon. See p. 103, n.
Gang, go.
Garbulles, broils.
Garnish, an ornament.
Garnished, adorned.
Gat, got.
Gate, road, way.
Gauntlet, iron glove.
Gazehound, a hound that pursues by sight.
Gear, matter.
Gear-men, men in armour.
Gestic lore, knowledge of gestures, dancing
Ghostly, spiritual.
Gibe, taunt, scoff.
Glas, glass.
Gled, a kite.
Gleg, quick of perception.
God-a-mercy, have mercy.
Gode, good.
Gon, gone, past.
Gorget, armour protecting throat or neck.
Gospellers, reformers.
Govsty, ghostly.
Gowd, to lay, to embroider in gold.
Graithed, decked.
Gramercy, thanks.
Grey groat, a base coin representing a thing of little or no value.
Gude, good.
Guerdon, to reward.

Hackit, white-faced.
Hae, have.
Hagg, brushwood.
Haggard, a species of hawk.
Haid, had.
Halberdiers, soldiers armed with halberds or battle-axes.
Halidome, land held under a religious house.
Hallan, inner porch of a cottage.
Hangit, hanged.
Hap, chance, happen.
Hard money, cash.
Hare-brained, heedless.
Harquebuss, an ancient firelock.
Harried out, plundered of everything.
Harry groat, a groat of Henry VIII.
Have on thy coat, seize on thy coat.
Head-tire, attire for the head.
Hebe, goddess of youth.
Heresiarch, chief of heretics.
Herling, small sea-trout.
Hermaphrodite, belonging to both sexes.
Hic jacet, etc. (p. 47), Here lies Abbot Eustace.
Hiderward, hitherward.
Hie Streit, High Street.
Hobby-horse. See Note F., p. 168.
Hodden grey, rough cloth, the natural colour of the wool.
Holie, holy.
Honorarium, honorary fee.
Hood, covering for head.
Hoodie or *Hooded crow*, the carrion crow.
Horn, put to the, denounced as a rebel.
Hors d'œuvre, digression.
Hote, hot.
Hours, certain prayers in the Roman Church to be said at stated times.
Howff, a haunt.
Howlet, the owl.
Huguenot, belonging to the Reformed Church.
Huissier, usher.

Ilk, the same.
Ilka, every.
Imp, to graft,
In adversitate, etc. (p. 169), patient in adversity, benevolent in prosperity.
In dubio, in doubt.
Ingyre, to introduce by artful methods.
Intellects, parts, faculties.
Inter nos, between ourselves.
Intrate, mei filii, enter, my children.

Jack-a-lent visages, long visages.
Jackanape, a monkey.
Jackman, one with a short mail jacket.
Janitor, a door-keeper.
Jeddart, Jedburgh.
Jennet, a small Spanish horse.
Jerking, a beating.
Jesses, straps round the legs of a hawk.
Je suis, etc. (p. 169), I am neither king nor prince, I am the Lord of Coucy.
Jibbat, gibbet.
Jiggeting, shaking up and down.

Jouk and let the jaw gang by, stoop and let the wave pass.
Jour de jeûne, a day of fasting.
Jubilate Deo, sing to the Lord.
Juleps, sweet drinks, mixtures.
Junii, of June.
Junket, to feast.

Kail, colewort.
Kain-fowls, fowls paid as part of rent.
Keepit, kept.
Kelpie, an imaginary spirit of the waters.
Ken'd, known.
Kent, to propel a boat by a long pole.
Kerchief, handkerchief.
Kestril-kite, an inferior kind of hawk, mean fellow.
Kirn-milk, butter-milk.
Kirtle, gown.
Kith or kin, acquaintance or relation.
Kittle, difficult.
Knapskull, head-piece, helmet.
Knave, boy, rascal.
Knawlege, trial.
Knosps, knobs.

La Cronique d'Amour, the Chronicle of Love.
La Mer des Histoires, the Sea of Histories.
Landward, rural, inland.
Lang, long.
Lang-kale, long or unshorn colewort.
Langsyne, long since.
Lavolta, a dance with much motion.
Lawing, tavern-bill.
Least penny, the least piece of money, also a worthless person.
Ledder, ladder.
Leech, surgeon.
Leman, sweetheart, mistress.
Lenten-kail, broth made without beef.
Lepus marinus, lump-sucker fish.
Let, retard, hinder.
Licitum sit, it may be allowed.
Lick, a blow.
Lictors, binders, Roman officers.
Limbo-lake, an imagined region beyond this world.
Limn, to paint, plan.
Ling, thin long grass, also heather.
Linstock, staff with match for firing cannon.
Litera, etc. (p. 172), letter by King Robert to his son David.
Lither, lazy.
Loaning, greensward on which cows are grazed.
Lockeram, coarse linen.
Locksman, jailer.
Londe, land.
Lubbard, a clown.
Luckand, looking.
Lunga roba corta scienzia, long robe but little knowledge.
Lunt, lighted match.
Lurdane, worthless fellow.

Ma bonne, my maid.
Ma bonne amie, my good friend.
Ma mignonne, my darling.
Maiden. See p. 68, n.
Mail, bag with apparel.
Mail-gardener, one who cultivates for sale.
Mair, more.
Major-domo, steward.
Makebate, an exciter of contentions.
Make good, defend.
Malapert, impertinent.
Malison, curse.
Mark, a Scotch coin = 1s. 1⅓d.
Marplot, one who mars a plot.
Marry, indeed, forsooth.
Marry come up, indeed.
Marys, maids of honour.
Massy-more, the dungeon.
Mavis, thrush.
Maw, stomach.
Mazed, bewildered.
Mazzard, the jaw.
Measure, a dance.
Medicamentum, medicine.
Mediciner, doctor.
Men-quellers, murderers.
Menzie, the company.
Merk, a coin = 1s. 1⅓d.
Merlin, a species of hawk.
Messan, a small dog.
Messan-paye, cur of a page.
Metoposcopical, physiognomical.
Mew, to confine, also cage for hawks.
Mewed, enclosed.
Miasmata, infecting substances in the air.
Mickle, great.
Milan-armour, Milan, formerly famous for armoury.
Minion, a favourite.
Mint, to aim at.
Mithridate, an antidote to poison.
Modicum, small quantity.
Mony, many.
More Scotico, in Scotch fashion.
Morion, a kind of helmet.
Morisco bells, used in a morris dance.
Mumchance, an old game at cards.
Mutchkin, a liquid measure = 4 gills.
Mystagogue, interpreter of mysteries.

Nae, no.
Ne accesseris, etc. (p. 106), come not into counsel unless called.
Neighboured ill, agreed ill.
Nese, nose.
Nick, to defeat.
Nicknackets, trifles.
Nightês, nights.
Nonce, occasion.

O', of.
Omnis curatio, etc. (p. 108), all healing is either by rule or by constraint.
Onnawayes, in no way.
On't, of it.
Ony, any.
Orisons, prayers.
Ostler-wife, keeper of an hostelry.
Ousel, the dipper bird.
Ower, over, too.

Paip, the Pope.
Palinurus, a pilot.
Pallet-couch, small bed.
Pantler, keeper of pantry, also one in charge of provisions.
Pantoufle, slipper.
Papistrie, Popery.
Parcel poet, a bit of a poet.
Pardoner, seller of pardons.
Parr, small fish, the young of the salmon.
Parterre, flower-plot.
Partizan, halberd.
Partlet, band for neck.
Par voie du fait, by violence.
Pas, pass.
Pasche, Easter.
Pas-de-deux, dance of two persons.
Patch, paltry fellow.
Paternoster, the Lord's Prayer.
Paven, a stately dance.
Pearlin muffler, a lace veil.
Pear-mains, a fine kind of apple.
Pease-porridge, porridge made of pease-meal.
Peel-house, a small square tower of stone and lime, used for defence.
Pestis, a plague.
Petard, explosive engine for destroying gates, etc.
Petite flamberge à rien, your little sword at anything.
Petronel, horseman's pistol.
Pharmaceutics, drugs.
Phlebotomize, to bleed.
Phlebotomy, to suffer, to be wounded.
Phylacteries, slips of parchment bearing texts of Scripture.
Pickthank, a mischief-maker.
Pie, magpie.
Pike-staff, a long staff with pointed steel head.
Pilgrimer, pilgrim.
Pilniewinks, instruments for torturing the fingers.
Pinner, a female head-dress.
Pistolet, a little pistol.
Pith, power, strength.
Plack, a small coin = ⅓ of a penny English.
Pleach, to interweave.
Plump, a number standing together.
Poculum mane, etc. (p. 109), a cup drained in the morning restores exhausted nature.
Podagra, gout in the foot.
Points, tagged laces used in ancient dress.
Pomander box, a box of perfume.
Popinjay, parrot, fop.
Porringer, holy, a small vessel like a plate.
Portcullis, strong grating to protect entrance gate.
Porter's lodge discipline, dismissal.
Portioner, one possessing part of a property.
Postern-gate, small private gate.
Pothicar, apothecary.
Pottle, bottle.
Pottle-pot, a vessel holding 2 quarts.
Pouch, pocket.
Præmia cum, etc. (p. 109), the doctor is the devil when he seeks his fees.
Prætor, a Roman magistrate.
Prensit, sought.
Presonaris, prisoners.
Pricking, running.
Primæ viæ, chief ways, organs.
Proof, armed in, in proved armour.

Propale, to publish.
Proud peat, a proud person, used in contempt.
Puir, poor.
Pyet, magpie.
Pythoness, a witch.

Quacksalver, dealer in quack medicines.
Quarrel, arrow for cross-bow.
Quarrel pane, diamond-shaped.
Quarry, bird pursued by a hawk.
Quean, a young woman.
Quha, who.
Quhan, when.
Quhele, wheel.
Quhilk, which.
Quhill, till.
Quid dicis, mi fili, what sayest thou, my son.
Quit bridle, quit titt, leave bridle, lose horse.
Quondam, former.
Quousque Domine, how long, O Lord.

Raid, inroad, attack.
Rapier, a sword used only in thrusting.
Ratsbane, poison for rats.
Rattle-trap, a rattle, beads.
Rebeck, a three-stringed musical instrument.
Recipe, prescription.
Redder's lick, the blow that often falls on one who interferes in a quarrel.
Redd-up, to put in order.
Rede, to counsel.
Reek, smoke.
Reft, deprived, bereft, snatched.
Regality, lord of, one holding territorial jurisdiction conferred by the king.
Regnant, reigning.
Religioner, ecclesiastic.
Reliquary, casket with relics.
Renegado, an apostate.
Réveillez vous, etc. (p. 147), awake, fair sleeper.
Rive, to rend, tear.
Robin Hood and Little John. See Note G, p. 168.
Rochet, a sort of surplice worn by bishops.
Rock, distaff.
Roke, a rock.
Rood, the cross.
Ruff, a puckered linen ornament for neck.
Ruffle, a disturbance, also to cause a disturbance.
Runagate, fugitive.

Sae, so.
Saint Serf. See p. 133, n.
Salve in nomine sancto, hail in the holy name.
Salvete et vos, hail also to you.
Salvo, a salute, volley.
Samyne, same.
Sancte Benedicte, etc. (p. 161), Holy father, pray for me.
Sangs, songs.
Saucy, impudent, rude.
Saws, sayings, proverbs.
Saxpence, sixpence.
Scalit, dispersed.
Scaur, a precipitous bank or rock.
Schort, short.
Schuteand, shooting.
Scrip, to mock.
Scurril, scurrilous, vulgar.
Scutcheon, escutcheon, shield.
Sé, the sea.
Se, see.
Seignior, Seignor, lord.
Sel', self.
Seneschal, steward.
Settle, a seat or bench.
Sewer, server of a feast.
Sexton's pound, the grave.
Shame, am ashamed.
Shaveling, priest.
Shoon, shoes.
Sibyl, fortune-teller.
Sic, such.
Sirens, fabled beings of antiquity, who enticed men with their music.
Sith, seeing that, since.
Skeely, skilful.
Slashed, dress with cuts to show rich lining.
Sleeveless, unreasonable.
Slip, a leash or string by which a dog is held.
Slip tether, get away
Slogan, a war-cry.
Slut, an untidy woman.
Snese, sneeze.
Sniggling, smirking.
Snood, a fillet with which a woman binds her hair.
Snottreth, bubbles.
Solistatnis, solicitude.
Sonne, sun.
Sooth, true, truth.
Sough, sound of the wind; *calm sough*, a quiet tongue.
Spaewife, fortune-teller.
Spell, to tell.
Spernit dona fides, the faithful despises bribes.
Springald, a stripling.
Stammel, reddish.
Stark, wholly, entirely.
Staving and tailing, striking with a staff and running away.
Steiket, shut.

Sternutation, sneezing.
Stilet, stiletto, a small dagger.
Stone, a weight of 14 lbs.
Stoup, a vessel or measure for liquids.
Straike, a strike, bushel.
Strap, be hanged.
Streme, stream.
Stricken field, field of battle.
Sua, so.
Sub sigillo confessionis, under the seal of confession.
Subtriste, somewhat sad.
Sub umbra vitis sui, under the shadow of his own vine.
Succory, wild endive.
Sumner, summoner.
Sundrie, sundry.
Superceid, suspend.
Swart, black, tawny.
Swashbuckler, a swaggerer.
Sworder, soldier.
Sylphs, imaginary spirits of air.

Tabor, a small drum.
Tace is Latin for candle, silence is the word.
Ta'en, taken.
Tale-pyet, a tell-tale.
Tent, attend.
Tercel, the male falcon.
Testificate, certificate.
Testoon, old Italian silver coin=about 1s. 4d.
Tête-à-tête, private conversation.
Tether, rope by which a beast is tied to one spot.
Thairintill, therein.
Ther, there.
Thirled, tied, enthralled to a mill.
Thumbikins, thumb-screws, instrument of torture.
Tilbury, a gig.
Tillyvally, rejecting as impertinent.
Tire, a headdress.
Tolbuyt, tolbooth, jail.
Totus mundus, etc. (p. 111), the whole world acts the player.
Tour de jongleur, juggler's trick.
Trangam, a trinket.
Trencher, a wooden plate.
Tressure, in heraldry, a kind of border.
Troth, truth.
Trow, to think, believe.
Tussis, a cough.
Tuto, cito, jucunde, safely, quickly, pleasantly.
Two and plack, two bodles and a plack.

Un Dieu, etc. (p. 169) one God, one faith, one king, one law.
Unhelmed, unhelmeted.
Unreason, Abbot of. See note, p. 167.
Usquebaugh, whisky.

Vasquine, gown or petticoat.
Vaunt-guard, van-guard.
Vertugardin, a hoop petticoat.
Vin-de-pays, wine of the country.
Visor, moveable and perforated part of helmet guarding face.
Vivers, victuals.
Vix licitum, scarcely allowable.
Vizard, a mask.

Wains, waggons.
Wallop, quick motion.
Wanion, vengeance, the devil.
Wap, flap.
Warlock, a wizard.
Waur, worse.
Weal, welfare.
Weasand, throat.
Weel, well.
Wefts, waves
Weird, fate.
Weir-men, war men, soldiers.
Welted, furnished with a hem or border.
Wes, was.
Wha, who.
Whaup, curlew.
Whilly, to gull, wheedle.
Whilom, formerly.
Whinger, a short hanger or sword, sometimes used as a knife at meals.
Wimple, a veil.
Wit, intelligence, also to know.
Withdrawing-room, drawing-room.
Without my gown and band, not as a professional writer of fiction.
Wnderly, to undergo.
Wold she, nold she, would she, would she not.
Wolf-dog, large dog for guarding sheep, etc.
Wonot, will not.
Wool-gathering, wandering in imagination.
Wot, to know.
Wrang, wrong.
Wrath you not, do not get wroth.
Wylie-coat, under vest.

Yclept, called.
Yester-even, last night.
Yoldring or *yorlin*, a yellow-hammer, bird.

KENILWORTH

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.



THE DUEL, *page* 340.

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TRESSILIAN'S INTERVIEW WITH AMY, page 185.

INTRODUCTION

A certain degree of success, real or supposed, in the delineation of Queen Mary, naturally induced the Author to attempt something similar respecting 'her sister and her foe,' the celebrated Elizabeth. He will not, however, pretend to have approached the task with the same feelings; for the candid Robertson himself confesses having felt the prejudices with which a Scotsman is tempted to regard the subject; and what so liberal a historian avows, a poor romance-writer dares not disown. But he hopes the influence of a prejudice, almost as natural to him as his native air, will not be found to have greatly affected the sketch he has attempted of England's Elizabeth. I have endeavoured to describe her as at once a high-minded sovereign, and a female of passionate feelings, hesitating betwixt the sense of her rank and the duty she owed her subjects on the one hand, and, on the other, her attachment to a nobleman who, in external qualifications at least, amply merited her favour. The interest of the story is thrown upon that period when the sudden death of the first Countess of Leicester seemed to open to the ambition of her husband the opportunity of sharing the crown of his sovereign.

It is possible that slander, which very seldom favours the memories of persons in exalted stations, may have blackened the character of Leicester with darker shades than really belonged to it. But the almost general voice of the times attached the most foul suspicions to the death of the unfortunate countess, more especially as it took place so very opportunely for the indulgence of her lover's ambition. If we can trust Ashmole's Antiquities of Berkshire, *there was but too much ground for the traditions which charge Leicester with the murder of his wife. In the following extract of the passage the reader will find the authority I had for the story of romance:—*

'At the west end of the church is the ruins of a manor, anciently belonging (as a cell or place of removal, as some report) to the monks of Abington. At the Dissolution the said manor or lordship was conveyed to one —— Owen (I believe), the possessor of Godstow then.

'In the hall, over the chimney, I find Abington arms cut in stone, viz. a patonce between four martletts; and also another escutcheon, viz. a lion rampant, and several mitres cut in stone about the house. There is also in the said house a chamber called Dudley's chamber, where the Earl of Leicester's wife was murdered; of which this is the story following:—

'Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, a very goodly personage, and singularly well featured, being a great favourite to Queen Elizabeth, it was thought, and commonly reported, that had he been a bachelor or widower the queen would have made him her husband; to this end, to free himself of all obstacles, he commands, or perhaps, with fair flattering entreaties, desires his wife to repose herself here at his servant Anthony Forster's house, who then lived in the aforesaid manor-house; and also prescribed to Sir Richard Varney (a prompter to this design), at his coming hither, that he should first attempt to poison her, and if that did not take effect, then by any other way whatsoever to dispatch her. This, it seems, was proved by the report of Dr. Walter Bayly, sometime fellow of New College, then living in Oxford, and professor of physic in that university; who, because he would not consent to take away her life by poison, the earl endeavoured to displace him the court. This man, it seems, reported for most certain, that there was a practice in Cumnor among the conspirators to have poisoned this poor innocent lady a little before she was killed, which was attempted after this manner:—They seeing the good lady sad and heavy (as one that well knew by her other handling that her death was not far off), began to persuade her that her present disease was abundance of melancholy and other humours, etc., and therefore would needs

counsel her to take some potion, which she absolutely refusing to do, as still suspecting the worst; whereupon they sent a messenger on a day (unawares to her) for Dr. Bayly, and entreated him to persuade her to take some little potion by his direction, and they would fetch the same at Oxford; meaning to have added something of their own for her comfort, as the doctor upon just cause and consideration did suspect, seeing their great importunity, and the small need the lady had of physic, and therefore he peremptorily denied their request; misdoubting (as he afterwards reported), lest, if they had poisoned her under the name of his potion, he might after have been hanged for a colour of their sin, and the doctor remained still well assured that this way taking no effect, she would not long escape their violence, which afterwards happened thus. For Sir Richard Varney above said (the chief projector in this design), who, by the earl's order, remained that day of her death alone with her, with one man only and Forster, who had that day forcibly sent away all her servants from her to Abington market, about three miles distant from this place; they (I say, whether first stifling her, or else strangling her) afterwards flung her down a pair of stairs and broke her neck, using much violence upon her; but, however, though it was vulgarly reported that she by chance fell down-stairs (but yet without hurting her hood that was upon her head), yet the inhabitants will tell there, that she was conveyed from her usual chamber where she lay, to another where the bed's head of the chamber stood close to a privy postern door, where they in the night came and stifled her in her bed, bruised her head very much, broke her neck, and at length flung her down-stairs, thereby believing the world would have thought it a mischance, and so have blinded their villany. But behold the mercy and justice of God in revenging and discovering this lady's murder, for one of the persons that was a coadjutor in this murder was afterwards taken for a felony in the marches of Wales and, offering to publish the manner of the aforesaid murder, was privately made away in the prison by the earl's appointment; and Sir Richard Varney the other, dying about the same time in London, cried miserably, and blasphemed God, and said to a person of note (who hath related the same to others since), not long before his death, that all the devils in hell did tear him in pieces. Forster, likewise, after this fact, being a man formerly addicted to hospitality, company, mirth, and music, was afterwards observed to forsake all this, and with much melancholy and pensiveness (some say with madness) pined and drooped away. The wife also of Bald Butter, kinsman to the earl, gave out the whole fact a little before her death. Neither are these following passages to be forgotten, that as soon as ever she was murdered they made great haste to bury her before the coroner had given in his inquest (which the earl himself condemned as not done advisedly), which her father, or Sir John Robertsett (as I suppose), hearing of, came with all speed hither, caused her corpse to be taken up, the coroner to sit upon her, and further inquiry to be made concerning this business to the full; but it was generally thought that the earl stopped his mouth, and made up the business betwixt them; and the good earl, to make plain to the world the great love he bare to her while alive, and what a grief the loss of so virtuous a lady was to his tender heart, caused (though the thing, by these and other means, was beaten into the heads of the principal men of the university of Oxford) her body to be re-buried in St. Mary's church in Oxford with great pomp and solemnity. It is remarkable, when Dr. Babington, the earl's chaplain, did preach the funeral sermon, he tript once or twice in his speech, by recommending to their memories that virtuous lady so pitifully murdered, *instead of saying pitifully slain. This earl, after all his murders and poisonings, was himself poisoned by that which was prepared for others (some say by his wife at Cornbury Lodge before mentioned), though Baker in his Chronicle would have it at Killingworth, anno 1588.**

The same accusation has been adopted and circulated by the author of Leicester's Commonwealth, *a satire written directly against the Earl of Leicester, which loaded him with the most horrid crimes, and, among the rest, with the murder of his first wife.*† *It was alluded to in the* Yorkshire Tragedy,‡ *a play erroneously ascribed to Shakespeare, where a rake, who determines to destroy all his family, throws his wife down-stairs, with this allusion to the supposed murder of Leicester's lady—*

> *The surest way to charm a woman's tongue*
> *Is, break her neck—a politician did it.*

The reader will find I have borrowed several incidents as well as names from Ashmole, and the more early authorities; but my first acquaintance with the history was through the more pleasing medium of verse.§ *There is a period in youth when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination than in more advanced life. At this season of immature taste the Author was greatly delighted with the poems of Mickle and Langhorne, poets who, though by no means deficient in the higher branches of their art, were eminent for their powers of verbal melody above most who have practised this department of poetry. One of those pieces of Mickle, which the Author was particularly pleased with, is a ballad, or rather a species of elegy, on the subject of Cumnor Hall, which, with others by the same author, were to be found in Evans's* Ancient Ballads *(volume iv. page 130), to which work Mickle made liberal contributions. The first stanza especially had a peculiar species of enchantment for the youthful ear of the Author, the force of which is not even now entirely spent; some others are sufficiently prosaic.*

* Ashmole's *Antiquities of Berkshire*, London, 1719, vol. i. p. 149. The tradition as to Leicester's death was thus communicated by Ben Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden;—'The Earl of Leicester gave a bottle of liquor to his lady, which he willed her to use in any faintness; which she, after his returne from court, not knowing it was poison, gave him, and so he died.'

† [This satire was written by the notorious Jesuit, Robert Parsons, and was largely copied by Ashmole in his *Antiquities*. These authorities were perhaps too much relied upon by the Author.]

‡ [This piece was acted at the Globe Theatre, together with three other short plays, under the name of *All's One*, as appears from one of the titles of the quarto 1608, which runs thus:—'All's One, or one of the four plaies in one, called a Yorkshire tragedy—as it was plaied by the king's majestie's plaiers.' Shakespeare's name is affixed to this piece.—MALONE.]

§ Note A. Title of 'Kenilworth.'

CUMNOR HALL.

The dews of summer night did fall;
The moon (sweet regent of the sky)
Silvered the walls of Cumnor Hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby.

Now nought was heard beneath the skies
(The sounds of busy life were still),
Save an unhappy lady's sighs,
That issued from that lonely pile.

'Leicester,' she cried, 'is this thy love
That thou so oft hast sworn to me,
To leave me in this lonely grove,
Immured in shameful privity?

'No more thou comest with lover's speed,
Thy once beloved bride to see;
But be she alive, or be she dead,
I fear, stern earl, 's the same to thee.

'Not so the usage I received
When happy in my father's hall;
No faithless husband then me grieved,
No chilling fears did me appal.

'I rose up with the cheerful morn,
No lark more blithe, no flow'r more gay;
And, like the bird that haunts the thorn,
So merrily sung the live-long day.

'If that my beauty is but small,
Among court ladies all despised,
Why didst thou rend it from that hall,
Where (scornful earl) it well was prized?

'And when you first to me made suit,
How fair I was you oft would say!
And, proud of conquest - pluck'd the fruit,
Then left the blossom to decay.

'Yes! now neglected and despised,
The rose is pale,—the lily's dead;—
But he that once their charms so prized,
Is sure the cause those charms are fled.

'For know, when sick'ning grief doth prey,
And tender love's repaid with scorn,
The sweetest beauty will decay—
What flow'ret can endure the storm?

'At court, I'm told, is beauty's throne,
Where every lady's passing rare;
That eastern flow'rs, that shame the sun,
Are not so glowing, not so fair.

'Then, earl, why didst thou leave the beds
Where roses and where lilies vie,
To seek a primrose, whose pale shades
Must sicken—when those gaudes are by?

''Mong rural beauties I was one,
Among the fields wild flow'rs are fair;
Some country swain might me have won,
And thought my beauty passing rare.

'But, Leicester, (or I much am wrong),
Or 'tis not beauty lures thy vows;
Rather ambition's gilded crown
Makes thee forget thy humble spouse.

'Then, Leicester, why, again I plead
(The injured surely may repine),
Why didst thou wed a country maid,
When some fair princess might be thine?

'Why didst thou praise my humble charms,
And, oh! then leave them to decay?
Why didst thou win me to thy arms,
Then leave me to mourn the live-long day?

'The village maidens of the plain
Salute me lowly as they go;
Envious they mark my silken train,
Nor think a countess can have woe.

'The simple nymphs! they little know
How far more happy's their estate,—
—To smile for joy—than sigh for woe—
—To be content—than to be great.

'How far less blest am I than them,
Daily to pine and waste with care!
Like the poor plant that, from its stem
Divided,—feels the chilling air.

'Nor (cruel earl!) can I enjoy
The humble charms of solitude;
Your minions proud my peace destroy
By sullen frowns or pratings rude.

'Last night, as sad I chanced to stray,
The village death-bell smote my ear;
They wink'd aside, and seem'd to say,
"Countess, prepare—thy end is near!"

'And now, while happy peasants sleep,
Here I sit lonely and forlorn;
No one to soothe me as I weep,
Save Philomel on yonder thorn.

'My spirits flag—my hopes decay—
Still that dread death-bell smites my ear;
And many a boding seems to say,
"Countess, prepare—thy end is near!"

Thus sore and sad that lady griev'd
In Cumnor Hall so lone and drear,
And many a heartfelt sigh she heav'd,
And let fall many a bitter tear.

And ere the dawn of day appear'd,
In Cumnor Hall, so lone and drear,
Full many a piercing scream was heard,
And many a cry of mortal fear.

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
An aërial voice was heard to call,
And thrice the raven flapp'd its wing
Around the tow'rs of Cumnor Hall.

The mastiff howl'd at village door,
The oaks were shatter'd on the green;
Woe was the hour—for never more
That hapless countess e'er was seen!

And in that manor now no more
Is cheerful feast and sprightly ball;
For ever since that dreary hour
Have spirits haunted Cumnor Hall.

The village maids, with fearful glance,
Avoid the ancient moss-grown wall;
Nor ever lead the merry dance
Among the groves of Cumnor Hall.

Full many a traveller oft hath sigh'd,
And pensive wept the countess' fall,
As wand'ring onwards they've espied
The haunted towers of Cumnor Hall.

Abbotsford, 1st March 1831.

CUMNOR HALL OR PLACE.

[IN a valuable work, by Mr. Adlard, on *Amy Robsart, the Earl of Leicester, and Kenilworth*, 8vo, London 1870, the author says that Cumnor Place was originally one of the country seats of the Abbots of Abingdon, and that, on the dissolution of the monasteries, it was granted by Henry VIII. to his physician, George Owen. At Owen's death in 1561 it was bought by Anthony Foster, and was occupied by him for several years; and at his demise it passed into the hands of the Earl of Leicester. The Place ultimately became the property of Lord Abingdon.

'For a long period,' says Mr. Adlard, 'Cumnor was deserted; the recollection of Amy Dudley's melancholy end was revived amongst the ignorant villagers, whose imaginations conjured up forms and horrors before unheard of, and hence arose the legendary tales that have descended to the present time. Decay followed fast on desertion, and, with the aid of the wanton and mischievous, before a century had rolled away it had become almost a ruin.'

'A few fine elms scattered here and there are all that is left to aid in realising the former picturesque appearance of this retreat, where we are privileged to sympathise with suffering innocence and blighted affection.'*]

* [The ballad of Cumnor Hall, as stated in the Introduction, appeared, 'now first printed,' in Evans's collection of old ballads, vol. iv. p. 130, 1784, and in the new edition (the editor discarding the antique mode of spelling), vol. iv. p. 94, 1810. In this form it is given above. The author, William Julius Mickle, was a son of the minister of Langholm, in Dumfriesshire, where he was born in 1734, and died at London in 1778. He is now chiefly known by his translation from Camoens of the *Lusiad*.]


THE FLIGHT FROM CUMNOR, page 283

CHAPTER I.

> I am an innkeeper, and know my grounds,
> And study them; Brain o' man, I study them.
> I must have jovial guests to drive my ploughs,
> And whistling boys to bring my harvests home,
> Or I shall hear no flails thwack.
>
> THE NEW INN.

It is the privilege of tale-tellers to open their story in an inn, the free rendezvous of all travellers, and where the humour of each displays itself without ceremony or restraint. This is especially suitable when the scene is laid during the old days of merry England, when the guests were in some sort not merely the inmates, but the messmates and temporary companions of mine host, who was usually a personage of privileged freedom, comely presence, and good humour. Patronized by him, the characters of the company were placed in ready contrast; and they seldom failed, during the emptying of a six-hooped pot, to throw off reserve, and present themselves to each other, and to their landlord, with the freedom of old acquaintance.

The village of Cumnor, within three or four miles of Oxford, boasted, during the eighteenth year of Queen Elizabeth, an excellent inn of the old stamp, conducted, or rather ruled, by Giles Gosling, a man of goodly person, and of somewhat round belly; fifty years of age and upwards, moderate in his reckonings, prompt in his payments, having a cellar of sound liquor, a ready wit, and a pretty daughter. Since the days of old Harry Baillie of the Tabbard in Southwark, no one had excelled Giles Gosling in the power of pleasing his guests of every description; and so great was his fame, that to have been in Cumnor, without wetting a cup at the bonnie Black Bear, would have been to avouch one's self utterly indifferent to reputation as a traveller. A country fellow might as well return from London without looking in the face of majesty. The men of Cumnor were proud of their host, and their host was proud of his house, his liquor, his daughter, and himself.

It was in the court-yard of the inn which called this honest fellow landlord, that a traveller alighted in the close of the evening, gave his horse, which seemed to have made a long journey, to the hostler, and made some inquiry, which produced the following dialogue betwixt the myrmidons of the bonnie Black Bear.

'What ho! John Tapster.'

'At hand, Will Hostler,' replied the man of the spigot, showing himself in his costume of loose jacket, linen breeches, and green apron, half within and half without a door, which appeared to descend to an outer cellar.

'Here is a gentleman asks if you draw good ale,' continued the hostler.

'Beshrew my heart else,' answered the tapster, 'since there are but four miles betwixt us and Oxford.—Marry, if my ale did not convince the heads of the scholars, they would soon convince my pate with the pewter flagon.'

'Call you that Oxford logic?' said the stranger, who had now quitted the rein of his horse, and was advancing towards the inn door, when he was encountered by the goodly form of Giles Gosling himself.

'Is it logic you talk of, Sir Guest?' said the host; 'why, then, have at you with a downright consequence—

> "The horse to the rack,
> And to fire with the sack."'

'Amen! with all my heart, my good host,' said the stranger; 'let it be a quart of your

best Canaries, and give me your good help to drink it.'

'Nay, you are but in your accidence yet, Sir Traveller, if you call on your host for help for such a sipping matter as a quart of sack—were it a gallon, you might lack some neighbourly aid at my hand, and yet call yourself a toper.'

'Fear me not,' said the guest; 'I will do my devoir as becomes a man who finds himself within five miles of Oxford; for I am not come from the field of Mars to discredit myself amongst the followers of Minerva.'

As he spoke thus, the landlord, with much semblance of hearty welcome, ushered his guest into a large low chamber, where several persons were seated together in different parties; some drinking, some playing at cards, some conversing, and some, whose business called them to be early risers on the morning, concluding their evening meal, and conferring with the chamberlain about their night's quarters.

The entrance of a stranger procured him that general and careless sort of attention which is usually paid on such occasions, from which the following results were deduced:—The guest was one of those who, with a well-made person, and features not in themselves unpleasing, are nevertheless so far from handsome, that, whether from the expression of their features, or the tone of their voice, or from their gait and manner, there arises, on the whole, a disinclination to their society. The stranger's address was bold, without being frank, and seemed eagerly and hastily to claim for him a degree of attention and deference, which he feared would be refused, if not instantly vindicated as his right. His attire was a riding-cloak, which, when open, displayed a handsome jerkin overlaid with lace, and belted with a buff girdle, which sustained a broadsword and a pair of pistols.

'You ride well provided, sir,' said the host, looking at the weapons as he placed on the table the mulled sack which the traveller had ordered.

'Yes, mine host; I have found the use on't in dangerous times, and I do not, like your modern grandees, turn off my followers the instant they are useless.'

'Ay, sir?' said Giles Gosling; 'then you are from the Low Countries, the land of pike and caliver?'

'I have been high and low, my friend, broad and wide, far and near: but here is to thee in a cup of thy sack—fill thyself another to pledge me; and if it is less than superlative, e'en drink as you have brewed.'

'Less than superlative?' said Giles Gosling, drinking off the cup, and smacking his lips with an air of ineffable relish—'I know nothing of superlative, nor is there such a wine at the Three Cranes, in the Vintry, to my knowledge; but if you find better sack than that in the Sheres, or in the Canaries either, I would I may never touch either pot or penny more. Why, hold it up betwixt you and the light, you shall see the little motes dance in the golden liquor like dust in the sunbeam. But I would rather draw wine for ten clowns than one traveller.—I trust your honour likes the wine?'

'It is neat and comfortable, mine host; but to know good liquor, you should drink where the vine grows. Trust me, your Spaniard is too wise a man to send you the very soul of the grape. Why, this now, which you account so choice, were counted but as a cup of bastard at the Groyne, or at Port Saint Mary's. You should travel, mine host, if you would be deep in the mysteries of the butt and pottle-pot.'

'In troth, Signior Guest,' said Giles Gosling, 'if I were to travel only that I might be discontented with that which I can get at home, methinks I should go but on a fool's errand. Besides, I warrant you, there is many a fool can turn his nose up at good drink without ever having been out of the smoke of Old England; and so ever gramercy mine own fireside.'

'This is but a mean mind of yours, mine host,' said the stranger; 'I warrant me, all your town's folk do not think so basely. You have gallants among you, I dare undertake, that have made the Virginia voyage, or taken a turn in the Low Countries at least. Come, cudgel your memory. Have you no friends in foreign parts that you would gladly have tidings of?'

'Troth, sir, not I,' answered the host, 'since ranting Robin of Drysandford was shot at the siege of the Brill. The devil take the caliver that fired the ball, for a blither lad never filled a cup at midnight. But he is dead and gone, and I know not a soldier, or a traveller, who is a soldier's mate, that I would give a peeled codling for.'

'By the mass, that is strange. What! so many of our brave English hearts are abroad, and you, who seem to be a man of mark, have no friend, no kinsman, among them!'

'Nay, if you speak of kinsmen,' answered Gosling, 'I have one wild slip of a kinsman, who left us in the last year of Queen Mary; but he is better lost than found.'

'Do not say so, friend, unless you have heard ill of him lately. Many a wild colt has turned out a noble steed.—His name, I pray you?'

'Michael Lambourne,' answered the landlord of the Black Bear; 'a son of my sister's—there is little pleasure in recollecting either the name or the connection.'

'Michael Lambourne!' said the stranger, as if endeavouring to recollect himself—'what, no relation to Michael Lambourne, the gallant cavalier who behaved so bravely at the siege of Venlo, that Grave Maurice thanked him at the head of the army! Men said he was an English cavalier, and of no high extraction.'

'It could scarcely be my nephew,' said Giles Gosling, 'for he had not the courage of a hen-partridge for aught but mischief.'

'O, many a man finds courage in the wars,' replied the stranger.

'It may be,' said the landlord; 'but I would have thought our Mike more likely to lose the little he had.'

'The Michael Lambourne whom I knew,' continued the traveller, 'was a likely fellow—went always gay and well attired, and had a hawk's eye after a pretty wench.'

'Our Michael,' replied the host, 'had the look of a dog with a bottle at its tail, and wore a coat, every rag of which was bidding good day to the rest.'

'O, men pick up good apparel in the wars,' replied the guest.

'Our Mike,' answered the landlord, 'was more like to pick it up in a frippery warehouse, while the broker was looking another way; and, for the hawk's eye you talk of, his was always after my stray spoons. He was tapster's boy here in this blessed house for a quarter of a year; and between misreckonings, miscarriages, mistakes, and misdemeanours, had he dwelt with me for three months longer, I might have pulled down sign, shut up house, and given the devil the key to keep.'

'You would be sorry, after all,' continued the traveller, 'were I to tell you poor Mike Lambourne was shot at the head of his regiment at the taking of a sconce near Maestricht?'

'Sorry!—it would be the blithest news I ever heard of him, since it would insure me he was not hanged. But let him pass—I doubt his end will never do such credit to his friends: were it so, I should say'—(taking another cup of sack)—'Here's God rest him, with all my heart.'

'Tush, man,' replied the traveller, 'never fear but you will have credit by your nephew yet, especially if he be the Michael Lambourne whom I knew, and loved very nearly or altogether, as well as myself. Can you tell me no mark by which I could judge whether they be the same?'

'Faith, none that I can think of,' answered Giles Gosling, 'unless that our Mike had the gallows branded on his left shoulder for stealing a silver caudle-cup from Dame Snort of Hogsditch.'

'Nay, there you lie like a knave, uncle,' said the stranger, slipping aside his ruff, and turning down the sleeve of his doublet from his neck and shoulder; 'by this good day, my shoulder is as unscarred as thine own.'

'What, Mike, boy—Mike!'—exclaimed the host;—'and is it thou in good earnest? Nay, I have judged so for this half-hour; for I knew no other person would have ta'en half the interest in thee. But, Mike, an thy shoulder be unscathed as thou sayest, thou must own that Goodman Thong, the hangman, was merciful in his office, and stamped thee with a cold iron.'

'Tush, uncle—truce with your jests. Keep them to season your sour ale, and let us see what hearty welcome thou wilt give a kinsman who has rolled the world around for eighteen years; who has seen the sun set where it rises, and has travelled till the west has become the east.'

'Thou hast brought back one traveller's gift with thee, Mike, as I well see; and that was what thou least didst need to travel for. I remember well, among thine other qualities, there was no crediting a word which came from thy mouth.'

'Here's an unbelieving pagan for you, gentlemen!' said Michael Lambourne, turning to those who witnessed this strange interview betwixt uncle and nephew, some of whom, being natives of the village, were no strangers to his juvenile wildness. 'This may be called slaying a Cumnor fatted calf for me with a vengeance.—But, uncle, I come not from the husks and the swine-trough, and I care not for thy welcome or no welcome; I carry that with me will make me welcome, wend where I will.'

So saying, he pulled out a purse of gold, indifferently well filled, the sight of which produced a visible effect upon the company. Some shook their heads, and whispered to each other, while one or two of the less scrupulous speedily began to recollect him as a school-companion, a townsman, or so forth. On the other hand, two or three grave, sedate-looking persons shook their heads, and left the inn, hinting that, if Giles Gosling wished to continue to thrive, he should turn his thriftless, godless nephew adrift again as soon as he could. Gosling demeaned himself as if he were much of the same opinion; for even the sight of the gold made less impression on the honest gentleman than it usually doth upon one of his calling.

'Kinsman Michael,' he said, 'put up thy purse. My sister's son shall be called to no reckoning in my house for supper or lodging; and I reckon thou wilt hardly wish to stay longer where thou art e'en but too well known.'

'For that matter, uncle,' replied the traveller, 'I shall consult my own needs and conveniences. Meantime, I wish to give the supper and sleeping cup to those good townsmen, who are not too proud to remember Mike Lambourne, the tapster's boy. If you will let me have entertainment for my money, so—if not, it is but a short two minutes' walk to the Hare and Tabor, and I trust our neighbours will not grudge going thus far with me.'

'Nay, Mike,' replied his uncle, 'as eighteen years have gone over thy head, and I trust thou art somewhat amended in thy conditions, thou shalt not leave my house at this hour, and shalt e'en have whatever in reason you list to call for. But I would I knew that that purse of thine, which thou vapourest of, were as well come by as it seems well filled.'

'Here is an infidel for you, my good neighbours,' said Lambourne, again appealing to the audience. 'Here's a fellow will rip up his kinsman's follies of a good score of years' standing—And for the gold, why, sirs, I have been where it grew, and was to be had for the gathering. In the New World have I been, man—in the Eldorado, where urchins play at cherry-pit with diamonds, and country wenches thread rubies for necklaces, instead of rowan-tree berries; where the pantiles are made of pure gold, and the paving-stones of virgin silver.'

'By my credit, friend Mike,' said young Laurence Goldthred, the cutting mercer of Abingdon, 'that were a likely coast to trade to. And what may lawns, cypresses, and ribands fetch, where gold is so plenty?'

'O, the profit were unutterable,' replied Lambourne, 'especially when a handsome young merchant bears the pack himself; for the ladies of that clime are bona-robas, and, being themselves somewhat sunburnt, they catch fire like tinder at a fresh complexion like thine, with a head of hair inclined to be red.'

'I would I might trade thither,' said the mercer, chuckling.

'Why, and so thou mayest,' said Michael; 'that is, if thou art the same brisk boy who was partner with me at robbing the Abbot's orchard—'tis but a little touch of alchemy to decoct thy house and land into ready money, and that ready money into a tall ship, with sails, anchors,

cordage, and all things conforming; then clap thy warehouse of goods under hatches, put fifty good fellows on deck, with myself to command them, and so hoise topsails, and hey for the New World!'

'Thou hast taught him a secret, kinsman,' said Giles Gosling, 'to decoct, an that be the word, his pound into a penny, and his webs into a thread.—Take a fool's advice, neighbour Goldthred. Tempt not the sea, for she is a devourer. Let cards and cockatrices do their worst, thy father's bales may bide a banging for a year or two, ere thou comest to the Spital; but the sea hath a bottomless appetite,—she would swallow the wealth of Lombard Street in a morning, as easily as I would a poached egg and a cup of clary;—and for my kinsman's Eldorado, never trust me if I do not believe he has found it in the pouches of some such gulls as thyself.—But take no snuff in the nose about it; fall to and welcome, for here comes the supper, and I heartily bestow it on all that will take share, in honour of my hopeful nephew's return, always trusting that he has come home another man.—In faith, kinsman, thou art as like my poor sister as ever was son to mother.'

'Not quite so like old Benedict Lambourne, her husband, though,' said the mercer, nodding and winking. 'Dost thou remember, Mike, what thou saidst when the schoolmaster's ferule was over thee for striking up thy father's crutches?—it is a wise child, saidst thou, that knows its own father. Dr. Bircham laughed till he cried again, and his crying saved yours.'

'Well, he made it up to me many a day after,' said Lambourne; 'and how is the worthy pedagogue?'

'Dead,' said Giles Gosling, 'this many a day since.'

'That he is,' said the clerk of the parish; 'I sat by his bed the whilst.—He passed away in a blessed frame, "*Morior—mortuus sum vel fui—mori*"—These were his latest words, and he just added, "my last verb is conjugated."'

'Well, peace be with him,' said Mike; 'he owes me nothing.'

'No, truly,' replied Goldthred; 'and every lash which he laid on thee, he always was wont to say, he spared the hangman a labour.'

'One would have thought he left him little to do then,' said the clerk; 'and yet Goodman Thong had no sinecure of it with our friend, after all.'

'*Voto a Dios!*' exclaimed Lambourne, his patience appearing to fail him, as he snatched his broad-slouched hat from the table and placed it on his head, so that the shadow gave the sinister expression of a Spanish bravo to eyes and features which naturally boded nothing pleasant. 'Harkee, my masters—all is fair among friends, and under the rose; and I have already permitted my worthy uncle here, and all of you, to use your pleasure with the frolics of my nonage. But I carry sword and dagger, my good friends, and can use them lightly too upon occasion—I have learned to be dangerous upon points of honour ever since I served the Spaniard, and I would not have you provoke me to the degree of falling foul.'

'Why, what would you do?' said the clerk.

'Ay, sir, what would you do?' said the mercer, bustling up on the other side of the table.

'Slit your throat, and spoil your Sunday's quavering, Sir Clerk,' said Lambourne fiercely; 'cudgel you, my worshipful dealer in flimsy sarsenets, into one of your own bales.'

'Come, come,' said the host, interposing, 'I will have no swaggering here.—Nephew, it will become you best to show no haste to take offence; and you, gentlemen, will do well to remember that, if you are in an inn, still you are the innkeeper's guests, and should spare the honour of his family.—I protest your silly broils make me as oblivious as yourself; for yonder sits my silent guest, as I call him, who hath been my two days' inmate, and hath never spoken a word, save to ask for his food and his reckoning—gives no more trouble than a very peasant—pays his shot like a prince royal—looks but at the sum-total of the reckoning, and does not know what day he shall go away. O, 'tis a jewel of a guest! and yet, hang-dog that I am, I have suffered him to sit by himself like a castaway in yonder obscure nook, without so much as asking him to take bite or sup along with us. It were but the right guerdon of my incivility, were he to set off to the Hare and Tabor before the night grows older.'

With his white napkin gracefully arranged over his left arm, his velvet cap laid aside for the moment, and his best silver flagon in his right hand, mine host walked up to the solitary guest whom he mentioned, and thereby turned upon him the eyes of the assembled company.

He was a man aged between twenty-five and thirty, rather above the middle size, dressed with plainness and decency, yet bearing an air of ease, which almost amounted to dignity, and which seemed to infer that his habit was rather beneath his rank. His countenance was reserved and thoughtful, with dark hair and dark eyes—the last, upon any momentary excitement, sparkled with uncommon lustre, but on other occasions had the same meditative and tranquil cast which was exhibited by his features. The busy curiosity of the little village had been employed to discover his name and quality, as well as his business at Cumnor; but nothing had transpired on either subject which could lead to its gratification. Giles Gosling, head-borough of the place, and a steady friend to Queen Elizabeth and the Protestant religion, was at one time inclined to suspect his guest of being a Jesuit, or seminary priest, of whom Rome and Spain sent at this time so many to grace the gallows in England. But it was scarce possible to retain such a prepossession against a guest who gave so little trouble, paid his reckoning so regularly, and who proposed, as it seemed, to make a considerable stay at the bonnie Black Bear.

'Papists,' argued Giles Gosling, 'are a pinching, close-fisted race, and this man would have found a lodging with the wealthy squire at Bessellsey, or with the old knight at Wootton, or in some other of their Roman dens, instead of living in a house of public entertainment, as every honest man and good Christian should. Besides, on Fridays, he stuck by the salt beef

and carrot, though there were as good spitch-cocked eels on the board as ever were ta'en out of the Isis.'

Honest Giles, therefore, satisfied himself that his guest was no Roman, and with all comely courtesy besought the stranger to pledge him in a draught of the cool tankard, and honour with his attention a small collation which he was giving to his nephew, in honour of his return, and, as he verily hoped, of his reformation. The stranger at first shook his head, as if declining the courtesy; but mine host proceeded t urge him with arguments founded on the credit of his house, and the construction which the good people of Cumnor might put upon such an unsocial humour.

'By my faith, sir,' he said, 'it touches my reputation that men should be merry in my house, and we have ill tongues amongst us at Cumnor (as where be there not?) who put an evil mark on men who pull their hat over their brows as if they were looking back to the days that are gone, instead of enjoying the blithe sunshiny weather which God hath sent us in the sweet looks of our sovereign mistress, Queen Elizabeth, whom Heaven long bless and preserve!'

'Why, mine host,' answered the stranger, 'there is no treason, sure, in a man's enjoying his own thoughts, under the shadow of his own bonnet? You have lived in the world twice as long as I have, and you must know there are thoughts that will haunt us in spite of ourselves, and to which it is in vain to say, begone, and let me be merry.'

'By my sooth,' answered Giles Gosling, 'if such troublesome thoughts haunt your mind, and will not get them gone for plain English, we will have one of Father Bacon's pupils from Oxford, to conjure them away with logic and with Hebrew—Or, what say you to laying them in a glorious red sea of claret, my noble guest? Come, sir, excuse my freedom. I am an old host, and must have my talk. This peevish humour of melancholy sits ill upon you—it suits not with a sleek boot, a hat of a trim block, a fresh cloak, and a full purse - A pize on it, send it off to those who have their legs swathed with a hay-wisp, their heads thatched with a felt bonnet, their jerkin as thin as a cobweb, and their pouch without ever a cross to keep the fiend Melancholy from dancing in it. Cheer up, sir! or by this good liquor we will banish thee from the joys of blithesome company into the mists of melancholy and the land of little-ease. Here be a set of good fellows willing to be merry, do not scowl on them like the devil looking over Lincoln.'

'You say well, my worthy host,' said the guest, with a melancholy smile, which, melancholy as it was, gave a very pleasant expression to his countenance—'You say well, my jovial friend; and they that are moody like myself, should not disturb the mirth of those who are happy—I will drink a round with your guests with all my heart, rather than be termed a mar-feast.'

So saying, he arose and joined the company, who, encouraged by the precept and example of Michael Lambourne, and consisting chiefly of persons much disposed to profit by the opportunity of a merry meal at the expense of their landlord, had already made some inroads upon the limits of temperance, as was evident from the tone in which Michael inquired after his old acquaintances in the town, and the bursts of laughter with which each answer was received. Giles Gosling himself was somewhat scandalised at the obstreperous nature of their mirth, especially as he involuntarily felt some respect for his unknown guest. He paused, therefore, at some distance from the table occupied by these noisy revellers, and began to make a sort of apology for their licence.

'You would think,' he said, 'to hear these fellows talk, that there was not one of them who had not been bred to live by Stand and Deliver; and yet to-morrow you will find them a set of as painstaking mechanics, and so forth, as ever cut an inch short of measure, or paid a letter of change in light crowns over a counter. The mercer there wears his hat awry, over a shagged head of hair, that looks like a curly water-dog's back, goes unbraced, wears his cloak on one side, and affects a ruffianly vapouring humour—when in his shop at Abingdon, he is, from his flat cap to his glistening shoes, as precise in his apparel as if he was named for mayor. He talks of breaking parks, and taking the highway, in such fashion that you would think he haunted every night betwixt Hounslow and London; when in fact he may be found sound asleep on his feather-bed, with a candle placed beside him on one side, and a Bible on the other, to fright away the goblins.'

'And your nephew, mine host, this same Michael Lambourne, who is lord of the feast—is he, too, such a would-be ruffler as the rest of them?'

'Why, there you push me hard,' said the host; 'my nephew is my nephew, and though he was a desperate Dick of yore, yet Mike may have mended like other folks, you wot—And I would not have you think all I said of him, even now, was strict gospel—I knew the wag all the while, and wished to pluck his plumes from him —And now, sir, by what name shall I present my worshipful guest to these gallants?'

'Marry, mine host,' replied the stranger, 'you may call me Tressilian.'

'Tressilian?' answered my host of the Bear; 'a worthy name; and, as I think, of Cornish lineage; for what says the south proverb—

"By Pol, Tre, and Pen,
You may know the Cornish men."

Shall I say the worthy Master Tressilian of Cornwall?'

'Say no more than I have given you warrant for, mine host, and so shall you be sure you speak no more than is true. A man may have one of those honourable prefixes to his name, yet be born far from Saint Michael's Mount.'

Mine host pushed his curiosity no further, but presented Master Tressilian to his nephew's company, who, after exchange of salutations, and drinking to the health of their new companion, pursued the conversation in which he found them engaged, seasoning it with many an intervening pledge.

CHAPTER II.

Talk you of young Master Lancelot?
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

AFTER some brief interval, Master Goldthred, at the earnest instigation of mine host, and the joyous concurrence of his guests, indulged the company with the following morsel of melody:—

Of all the birds on bush or tree,
Commend me to the owl,
Since he may best ensample be
To those the cup that trowl.
For when the sun hath left the west,
He chooses the tree that he loves the best,
And he whoops out his song, and he laughs at his jest;
Then though hours be late, and weather foul,
We'll drink to the health of the bonnie, bonnie owl.

The lark is but a bumpkin fowl,
He sleeps in his nest till morn;
But my blessing upon the jolly owl,
That all night blows his horn.
Then up with your cup though you stagger in speech,
And match me this catch till you swagger and screech,
And drink till you wink, my merry men each;
For though hours be late, and weather be foul,
We'll drink to the health of the bonnie, bonnie owl.

'There is savour in this, my hearts,' said Michael, when the mercer had finished his song, 'and some goodness seems left among you yet—but what a bead-roll you have read me of old comrades, and to every man's name tacked some ill-omened motto! And so Swashing Will of Wallingford hath bid us good-night?'

'He died the death of a fat buck,' said one of the party, 'being shot with a crossbow bolt, by old Thatcham, the duke's stout park-keeper at Donington Castle.'

'Ay, ay, he always loved venison well,' replied Michael, 'and a cup of claret to boot—and so here's one to his memory. Do me right, my masters.'

When the health of this departed worthy had been duly honoured, Lambourne proceeded to inquire after Prance of Padworth.

'Pranced off—made immortal ten years since,' said the mercer; 'marry, sir, Oxford Castle and Goodman Thong, and a tenpenny-worth of cord, best know how.'

'What, so they hung poor Prance high and dry? so much for loving to walk by moonlight—a cup to his memory, my masters—all merry fellows like moonlight. What has become of Hal with the plume?—he who lived near Yattenden, and wore the long feather—I forget his name.'

'What, Hal Hempseed?' replied the mercer. 'Why, you may remember, he was a sort of a gentleman, and would meddle in State matters, and so he got into the mire about the Duke of Norfolk's matter these two or three years since, fled the country with a pursuivant's warrant at his heels, and has never since been heard of.'

'Nay, after these baulks,' said Michael Lambourne, 'I need hardly inquire after Tony Foster; for when ropes, and crossbow shafts, and pursuivants' warrants, and such-like gear, were so rife, Tony could hardly 'scape them.'

'Which Tony Foster mean you?' said the innkeeper.

'Why, he they called Tony Fire-the-Fagot, because he brought a light to kindle the pile round Latimer and Ridley, when the wind blew out Jack Thong's torch, and no man else would give him light for love or money.'

'Tony Foster lives and thrives,' said the host.—'But, kinsman, I would not have you call him Tony Fire-the-Fagot, if you would not brook the stab.'

'How! is he grown ashamed on't?' said Lambourne; 'why, he was wont to boast of it, and say he liked as well to see a roasted heretic as a roasted ox.'

'Ay, but, kinsman, that was in Mary's time,' replied the landlord, 'when Tony's father was reeve here to the Abbot of Abingdon. But since that, Tony married a pure precisian, and is as good a Protestant, I warrant you, as the best.'

'And looks grave, and holds his head high, and scorns his old companions,' said the mercer.

'Then he hath prospered, I warrant him,' said Lambourne; 'for ever when a man hath got nobles of his own, he keeps out of the way of those whose exchequers lie in other men's purchase.'

'Prospered, quotha!' said the mercer; 'why, you remember Cumnor Place, the old mansion-house beside the churchyard?'

'By the same token, I robbed the orchard three times—what of that?—It was the old abbot's residence when there was plague or sickness at Abingdon.'

'Ay,' said the host, 'but that has been long over; and Anthony Foster hath a right in it, and lives there by some grant from a great courtier, who had the church-lands from the crown; and there he dwells, and has as little to do with any poor wight in Cumnor, as if he were himself a belted knight.'

'Nay,' said the mercer, 'it is not altogether pride in Tony neither—there is a fair lady in the case, and Tony will scarce let the light of day look on her.'

'How!' said Tressilian, who now for the first time interfered in their conversation; 'did ye not say this Foster was married, and to a precisian?'

'Married he was, and to as bitter a precisian as ever ate flesh in Lent; and a cat-and-dog life she led with Tony, as men said. But she is dead, rest be with her, and Tony hath but a slip of a daughter; so it is thought he means to wed this stranger, that men keep such a coil about.'

'And why so?—I mean, why do they keep a coil about her?' said Tressilian.

'Why, I wot not,' answered the host, 'except that men say she is as beautiful as an angel, and no one knows whence she comes, and every one wishes to know why she is kept so closely mewed up. For my part, I never saw her—you have, I think, Master Goldthred?'

'That I have, old boy,' said the mercer. 'Look you, I was riding hither from Abingdon—I passed under the east oriel window of the old mansion, where all the old saints and histories and such-like are painted—It was not the common path I took, but one through the park; for the postern-door was upon the latch, and I thought I might take the privilege of an old comrade to ride across through the trees, both

for shading, as the day was somewhat hot, and for avoiding of dust, because I had on my peach-coloured doublet, pinked out with cloth of gold.'

'Which garment,' said Michael Lambourne, 'thou wouldst willingly make twinkle in the eyes of a fair dame. Ah, villain, thou wilt never leave thy old tricks.'

'Not so—not so,' said the mercer, with a smirking laugh; 'not altogether so—but curiosity, thou knowest, and a strain of compassion withal, —for the poor young lady sees nothing from morn to even but Tony Foster, with his scowling black brows, his bull's head, and his bandy legs.'

'And thou wouldst willingly show her a dapper body, in a silken jerkin—a limb like a short-legged hen's, in a cordovan boot, and a round, simpering, what-d'ye-lack sort of a countenance, set off with a velvet bonnet, a Turkey feather, and a gilded brooch? Ah, jolly mercer, they who have good wares are fond to show them! Come, gentles, let not the cup stand—here's to long spurs, short boots, full bonnets, and empty skulls!'

'Nay, now you are jealous of me, Mike,' said Goldthred; 'and yet my luck was but what might have happened to thee, or any man.'

'Marry, confound thine impudence!' retorted Lambourne; 'thou wouldst not compare thy pudding face and sarsenet manners to a gentleman and a soldier?'

'Nay, my good sir,' said Tressilian, 'let me beseech you will not interrupt the gallant citizen; methinks he tells his tale so well, I could hearken to him till midnight.'

'It's more of your favour than of my desert,' answered Master Goldthred; 'but since I give you pleasure, worthy Master Tressilian, I shall proceed, maugre all the gibes and quips of this valiant soldier, who, peradventure, hath had more cuffs than crowns in the Low Countries.—And so, sir, as I passed under the great painted window, leaving my rein loose on my ambling palfrey's neck, partly for mine ease, and partly that I might have the more leisure to peer about, I hears me the lattice open; and never credit me, sir, if there did not stand there the person of as fair a woman as ever crossed mine eyes; and I think I have looked on as many pretty wenches, and with as much judgment, as other folks.'

'May I ask her appearance, sir?' said Tressilian.

'O, sir,' replied Master Goldthred, 'I promise you, she was in gentlewoman's attire—a very quaint and pleasing dress, that might have served the queen herself; for she had a forepart with body and sleeves, of ginger-coloured satin, which, in my judgment, must have cost by the yard some thirty shillings, lined with murrey taffeta, and laid down and guarded with two broad laces of gold and silver. And her hat, sir, was truly the best-fashioned thing that I have seen in these parts, being of tawny taffeta, embroidered with scorpions of Venice gold, and having a border garnished with gold fringe;—I promise you, sir, an absolute and all-surpassing device. Touching her skirts, they were in the old pass-devant fashion.'

'I did not ask you of her attire, sir,' said Tressilian, who had shown some impatience during their conversation, 'but of her complexion—the colour of her hair, her features.'

'Touching her complexion,' answered the mercer, 'I am not so special certain; but I marked that her fan had an ivory handle curiously inlaid;—and then again, as to the colour of her hair, why, I can warrant, be its hue what it might, that she wore above it a net of green silk, parcel twisted with gold.'

'A most mercer-like memory,' said Lambourne; 'the gentleman asks him of the lady's beauty, and he talks of her fine clothes.'

'I tell thee,' said the mercer, somewhat disconcerted, 'I had little time to look at her; for just as I was about to give her the good time of day, and for that purpose had puckered my features with a smile'——

'Like those of a jackanape simpering at a chestnut,' said Michael Lambourne.

—'Up started of a sudden,' continued Goldthred, without heeding the interruption, 'Tony Foster himself, with a cudgel in his hand'——

'And broke thy head across, I hope, for thine impertinence,' said his entertainer.

'That were more easily said than done,' answered Goldthred indignantly; 'no, no—there was no breaking of heads—it's true, he advanced his cudgel, and spoke of laying on, and asked why I did not keep the public road, and suchlike; and I would have knocked him over the pate handsomely for his pains, only for the lady's presence, who might have swooned, for what I know.'

'Now, out upon thee for a faint-spirited slave!' said Lambourne; 'what adventurous knight ever thought of the lady's terror, when he went to thwack giant, dragon, or magician, in her presence, and for her deliverance? But why talk to thee of dragons, who would be driven back by a dragon-fly? There thou hast missed the rarest opportunity!'

'Take it thyself, then, bully Mike,' answered Goldthred.—'Yonder is the enchanted manor, and the dragon, and the lady, all at thy service, if thou darest venture on them.'

'Why, so I would for a quartern of sack,' said the soldier—'Or stay—I am foully out of linen—wilt thou bet a piece of Hollands against these five angels, that I go not up to the Hall to-morrow, and force Tony Foster to introduce me to his fair guest?'

'I accept your wager,' said the mercer; 'and I think, though thou hadst even the impudence of the devil, I shall gain on thee this bout. Our landlord here shall hold stakes, and I will stake down gold till I send the linen.'

'I will hold stakes on no such matter,' said Gosling. 'Good now, my kinsman, drink your wine in quiet, and let such ventures alone. I promise you, Master Foster hath interest enough to lay you up in lavender at the Castle of Oxford, or to get your legs made acquainted with the town-stocks.'

'That would be but renewing an old intimacy; for Mike's shins and the town's wooden pinfold have been well known to each other ere now,' said the mercer; 'but he shall not budge from his wager, unless he means to pay forfeit.'

'Forfeit?' said Lambourne; 'I scorn it. I value Tony Foster's wrath no more than a shelled

pea-cod; and I will visit his Lindabrides,* by Saint George, be he willing or no!'

'I would gladly pay your halves of the risk, sir,' said Tressilian, 'to be permitted to accompany you on the adventure.'

'In what would that advantage you, sir?' answered Lambourne.

'In nothing, sir,' said Tressilian, 'unless to mark the skill and valour with which you conduct yourself. I am a traveller, who seeks for strange rencounters and uncommon passages, as the knights of yore did after adventures and feats of arms.'

'Nay, if it pleasures you to see a trout tickled,' answered Lambourne, 'I care not how many witness my skill. And so here I drink success to my enterprise; and he that will not pledge me on his knees is a rascal, and I will cut his legs off by the garters!'

The draught which Michael Lambourne took upon this occasion had been preceded by so many others, that reason tottered on her throne. He swore one or two incoherent oaths at the mercer, who refused, reasonably enough, to pledge him to a sentiment which inferred the loss of his own wager.

'Wilt thou chop logic with me,' said Lambourne, 'thou knave, with no more brains than a skein of ravelled silk? By Heaven, I will cut thee into fifty yards of galloon lace!'

But, as he attempted to draw his sword for this doughty purpose, Michael Lambourne was seized upon by the tapster and the chamberlain, and conveyed to his own apartment, there to sleep himself sober at his leisure.

The party then broke up, and the guests took their leave; much more to the contentment of mine host than of some of the company, who were unwilling to quit good liquor, when it was to be had for free cost, so long as they were able to sit by it. They were, however, compelled to remove; and go at length they did, leaving Gosling and Tressilian in the empty apartment.

'By my faith,' said the former, 'I wonder where our great folks find pleasure, when they spend their means in entertainments, and in playing mine host without sending in a reckoning. It is what I but rarely practise; and whenever I do, by Saint Julian, it grieves me beyond measure. Each of these empty stoups, now, which my nephew and his drunken comrades have swilled off, should have been a matter of profit to one in my line, and I must set them down a dead loss. I cannot, for my heart, conceive the pleasure of noise, and nonsense, and drunken freaks, and drunken quarrels, and smut, and blasphemy, and so forth, when a man loses money instead of gaining by it. And yet many a fair estate is lost in upholding such a useless course, and that greatly contributes to the decay of publicans; for who the devil do you think would pay for drink at the Black Bear, when he can have it for nothing at my lord's or the squire's?'

Tressilian perceived that the wine had made some impression even on the seasoned brain of mine host, which was chiefly to be inferred from his declaiming against drunkenness. As he himself had carefully avoided the bowl, he would have availed himself of the frankness of the moment, to extract from Gosling some further information upon the subject of Anthony Foster, and the lady whom the mercer had seen in the mansion-house; but his inquiries only set the host upon a new theme of declamation against the wiles of the fair sex, in which he brought at full length the whole wisdom of Solomon to reinforce his own. Finally, he turned his admonitions, mixed with much objurgation, upon his tapsters and drawers, who were employed in removing the relics of the entertainment, and restoring order to the apartment; and at length, joining example to precept, though with no good success, he demolished a salver with half a score of glasses, in attempting to show how such service was done at the Three Cranes in Vintry, then the most topping tavern in London. This last accident so far recalled him to his better self, that he retired to his bed, slept sound, and awoke a new man in the morning.

* [*Lindabrides*, a female of doubtful reputation.]

CHAPTER III.

Nay, I'll hold touch - the game shall be play'd out
It ne'er shall stop for me, this merry wager,
That which I say when gamesome, I'll avouch
In my most sober mood, ne'er trust me else.
THE HAZARD-TABLE.

'AND how doth your kinsman, good mine host?' said Tressilian, when Giles Gosling first appeared in the public room on the morning following the revel which we described in the last chapter. 'Is he well, and will he abide by his wager?'

'For well, sir, he started two hours since, and has visited I know not what purlieus of his old companions; hath but now returned, and is at this instant breakfasting on new-laid eggs and muscadine; and for his wager, I caution you as a friend to have little to do with that, or indeed aught that Mike proposes. Wherefore, I counsel you to a warm breakfast upon a culiss, which shall restore the tone of the stomach; and let my nephew and Master Goldthred swagger about their wager as they list.'

'It seems to me, mine host,' said Tressilian, 'that you know not well what to say about this kinsman of yours; and that you can neither blame nor commend him without some twinge of conscience.'

'You have spoken truly, Master Tressilian,' replied Giles Gosling. 'There is natural affection whimpering into one ear, "Giles, Giles, why wilt thou take away the good name of thy own nephew? Wilt thou defame thy sister's son, Giles Gosling? wilt thou defoul thine own nest, dishonour thine own blood?" And then, again, comes Justice, and says, "Here is a worthy guest as ever came to the bonnie Black Bear; one who never challenged a reckoning" (as I say to your face you never did, Master Tressilian—not that you have had cause), "one who knows not why he came, so far as I can see, or when he is going away; and wilt thou, being a publican, having paid scot and lot these thirty years in the town of Cumnor, and being at this instant head:

borough, wilt thou suffer this guest of guests, this man of men, this six-hooped pot (as I may say) of a traveller, to fall into the meshes of thy nephew, who is known for a swasher and a desperate Dick, a carder and a dicer, a professor of the seven damnable sciences, if ever man took degrees in them?" No, by Heaven! I might wink, and let him catch such a small butterfly as Goldthred; but thou, my guest, shalt be forewarned, forearmed, so thou wilt but listen to thy trusty host.'

'Why, mine host, thy counsel shall not be cast away,' replied Tressilian; 'however, I must uphold my share in this wager, having once passed my word to that effect. But lend me, I pray, some of thy counsel—This Foster, who or what is he, and why makes he such mystery of his female inmate?'

'Troth,' replied Gosling, 'I can add but little to what you heard last night. He was one of Queen Mary's Papists, and now he is one of Queen Elizabeth's Protestants; he was an onhanger of the Abbot of Abingdon, and now he lives as master of the manor-house. Above all, he was poor and is rich. Folk talk of private apartments in his old waste mansion-house, bedizened fine enough to serve the queen, God bless her. Some men think he found a treasure in the orchard, some that he sold himself to the devil for treasure, and some say that he cheated the abbot out of the church plate, which was hidden in the old manor-house at the Reformation. Rich, however, he is, and God and his conscience, with the devil perhaps besides, only know how he came by it. He has sulky ways, too, breaking off intercourse with all that are of the place, as if he had either some strange secret to keep, or held himself to be made of another clay than we are. I think it likely my kinsman and he will quarrel, if Mike thrust his acquaintance on him; and I am sorry that you, my worthy Master Tressilian, will still think of going in my nephew's company.'

Tressilian again answered him that he would proceed with great caution, and that he should have no fears on his account; in short, he bestowed on him all the customary assurances with which those who are determined on a rash action are wont to parry the advice of their friends.

Meantime, the traveller accepted the landlord's invitation, and had just finished the excellent breakfast which was served to him and Gosling by pretty Cicely, the beauty of the bar, when the hero of the preceding night, Michael Lambourne, entered the apartment. His toilet had apparently cost him some labour, for his clothes, which differed from those he wore on his journey, were of the newest fashion, and put on with great attention to the display of his person.

'By my faith, uncle,' said the gallant, 'you made a wet night of it, and I feel it followed by a dry morning. I will pledge you willingly in a cup of bastard.—How, my pretty coz, Cicely! why, I left you but a child in the cradle, and there thou stand'st in thy velvet waistcoat, as tight a girl as England's sun shines on. Know thy friends and kindred, Cicely, and come hither, child, that I may kiss thee, and give thee my blessing.'

'Concern not yourself about Cicely, kinsman,' said Giles Gosling, 'but e'en let her go her way, o' God's name; for although your mother were her father's sister, yet that shall not make you and her cater-cousins.'

'Why, uncle,' replied Lambourne, 'think'st thou I am an infidel, and would harm those of mine own house?'

'It is for no harm that I speak, Mike,' answered his uncle, 'but a simple humour of precaution which I have. True, thou art as well gilded as a snake when he casts his old slough in the spring-time, but, for all that, thou creepest not into my Eden. I will look after mine Eve, Mike, and so content thee.—But how brave thou be'st, lad! To look on thee now, and compare thee with Master Tressilian here, in his sad-coloured riding-suit, who would not say that thou wert the real gentleman, and he the tapster's boy?'

'Troth, uncle,' replied Lambourne, 'no one would say so but one of your country breeding, that knows no better. I will say, and I care not who hears me, there is something about the real gentry that few men come up to that are not born and bred to the mystery. I wot not where the trick lies; but although I can enter an ordinary with as much audacity, rebuke the waiters and drawers as loudly, drink as deep a health, swear as round an oath, and fling my gold as freely about, as any of the jingling spurs and white feathers that are around me,—yet, hang me if I can ever catch the true grace of it, though I have practised an hundred times. The man of the house sets me lowest at the board, and carves to me the last; and the drawer says,—"Coming, friend," without any more reverence or regardful addition. But hang it, let it pass; care killed a cat. I have gentry enough to pass the trick on Tony Fire-the-Fagot, and that will do for the matter in hand.'

'You hold your purpose, then, of visiting your old acquaintance?' said Tressilian to the adventurer.

'Ay, sir,' replied Lambourne; 'when stakes are made, the game must be played; that is gamester's law, all over the world. You, sir, unless my memory fails me (for I did steep it somewhat too deeply in the sack-butt), took some share in my hazard.'

'I propose to accompany you in your adventure,' said Tressilian, 'if you will do me so much grace as to permit me; and I have staked my share of the forfeit in the hands of our worthy host.'

'That he hath,' answered Giles Gosling, 'in as fair Harry-nobles as ever were melted into sack by a good fellow. So, luck to your enterprise, since you will needs venture on Tony Foster; but, by my credit, you had better take another draught before you depart, for your welcome at the Hall yonder will be somewhat of the driest. And if you do get into peril, beware of taking to cold steel; but send for me, Giles Gosling the head-borough, and I may be able to make something out of Tony yet, for as proud as he is.'

The nephew dutifully obeyed his uncle's hint, by taking a second powerful pull at the tankard, observing that his wit never served him so well as when he had washed his temples with a deep

morning's draught;—and they set forth together for the habitation of Anthony Foster.

The village of Cumnor is pleasantly built on a hill, and in a wooded park closely adjacent was situated the ancient mansion occupied at this time by Anthony Foster, of which the ruins may be still extant. The park was then full of large trees, and, in particular, of ancient and mighty oaks, which stretched their giant arms over the high walls surrounding the demesne, thus giving it a melancholy, secluded, and monastic appearance. The entrance to the park lay through an old-fashioned gateway in the outer wall, the door of which was formed of two huge oaken leaves, thickly studded with nails, like the gate of an old town.

'We shall be finely holped up here,' said Michael Lambourne, looking at the gateway and gate, 'if this fellow's suspicious humour should refuse us admission altogether, as it is like he may, in case this linsey-wolsey fellow of a mercer's visit to his premises has disquieted him. But no,' he added, pushing the huge gate, which gave way, 'the door stands invitingly open, and here we are within the forbidden ground, without other impediment than the passive resistance of a heavy oak door, moving on rusty hinges.'

They stood now in an avenue overshadowed by such old trees as we have described, and which had been bordered at one time by high hedges of yew and holly. But these, having been untrimmed for many years, had run up into great bushes, or rather dwarf-trees, and now encroached with their dark and melancholy boughs upon the road which they once had screened. The avenue itself was grown up with grass, and, in one or two places, interrupted by piles of withered brushwood, which had been lopped from the trees cut down in the neighbouring park, and was here stacked for drying. Formal walks and avenues, which, at different points, crossed this principal approach, were, in like manner, choked up and interrupted by piles of brushwood and billets, and in other places by underwood and brambles. Besides the general effect of desolation which is so strongly impressed, whenever we behold the contrivances of man wasted and obliterated by neglect, and witness the marks of social life effaced gradually by the influence of vegetation, the size of the trees, and the outspreading extent of their boughs, diffused a gloom over the scene, even when the sun was at the highest, and made a proportional impression on the mind of those who visited it. This was felt even by Michael Lambourne, however alien his habits were to receiving any impressions, excepting from things which addressed themselves immediately to his passions.

'This wood is as dark as a wolf's mouth,' said he to Tressilian, as they walked together slowly along the solitary and broken approach, and had just come in sight of the monastic front of the old mansion, with its shafted windows, brick walls overgrown with ivy and creeping shrubs, and twisted stalks of chimneys of heavy stonework. 'And yet,' continued Lambourne, 'it is fairly done on the part of Foster too; for since he chooses not visitors, it is right to keep his place in a fashion that will invite few to trespass upon his privacy. But had he been the Anthony I once knew him, these sturdy oaks had long since become the property of some honest woodmonger, and the manor-close here had looked lighter at midnight than it now does at noon, while Foster played fast and loose with the price, in some cunning corner in the purlieus of Whitefriars.'

'Was he then such an unthrift?' asked Tressilian.

'He was,' answered Lambourne, 'like the rest of us, no saint, and no saver. But what I liked worst of Tony was, that he loved to take his pleasure by himself, and grudged, as men say, every drop of water that went past his own mill. I have known him deal with such measures of wine when he was alone, as I would not have ventured on with aid of the best toper in Berkshire;—that, and some sway towards superstition, which he had by temperament, rendered him unworthy the company of a good fellow. And now he has earthed himself here, in a den just befitting such a sly fox as himself.'

'May I ask you, Master Lambourne,' said Tressilian, 'since your old companion's humour jumps so little with your own, wherefore you are so desirous to renew acquaintance with him?'

'And may I ask you, in return, Master Tressilian,' answered Lambourne, 'wherefore you have shown yourself so desirous to accompany me on this party?'

'I told you my motive,' said Tressilian, 'when I took share in your wager,—it was simple curiosity.'

'La you there now!' answered Lambourne; 'see how you civil and discreet gentlemen think to use us who live by the free exercise of our wits! Had I answered your question by saying that it was simple curiosity which led me to visit my old comrade Anthony Foster, I warrant you had set it down for an evasion, and a turn of my trade. But any answer, I suppose, must serve my turn.'

'And wherefore should not bare curiosity,' said Tressilian, 'be a sufficient reason for my taking this walk with you?'

'O, content yourself, sir,' replied Lambourne; 'you cannot put the change on me so easy as you think, for I have lived among the quick-stirring spirits of the age too long, to swallow chaff for grain. You are a gentleman of birth and breeding—your bearing makes it good; of civil habits and fair reputation—your manners declare it, and my uncle avouches it; and yet you associate yourself with a sort of scant-of-grace, as men call me; and, knowing me to be such, you make yourself my companion in a visit to a man whom you are a stranger to,—and all out of mere curiosity, forsooth!—The excuse, if curiously balanced, would be found to want some scruples of just weight, or so.'

'If your suspicions were just,' said Tressilian, 'you have shown no confidence in me to invite or deserve mine.'

'O, if that be all,' said Lambourne, 'my motives lie above water. While this gold of mine lasts,'—taking out his purse, chucking it into the air, and catching it as it fell,—'I will make it buy pleasure, and when it is out, I must have more. Now, if this mysterious Lady of the

Manor—this fair Lindabrides of Tony Fire-the-Fagot, be so admirable a piece as men say, why, there's chance that she may aid me to melt my nobles into groats; and, again, if Anthony be so wealthy a chuff as report speaks him, he may prove the philosopher's stone to me, and convert my groats into fair rose-nobles again.'

'A comfortable proposal, truly,' said Tressilian; 'but I see not what chance there is of accomplishing it.'

'Not to-day or perchance to-morrow,' answered Lambourne; 'I expect not to catch the old jack till I have disposed my ground baits handsomely. But I know something more of his affairs this morning than I did last night, and I will so use my knowledge that he shall think it more perfect than it is.—Nay, without expecting either pleasure or profit, or both, I had not stepped a stride within this manor, I can tell you; for I promise you I hold our visit not altogether without risk. But here we are, and we must make the best on't.'

While he thus spoke, they had entered a large orchard which surrounded the house on two sides, though the trees, abandoned by the care of man, were overgrown and mossy, and seemed to bear little fruit. Those which had been formerly trained as espaliers, had now resumed their natural mode of growing, and exhibited grotesque forms, partaking of the original training which they had received. The greater part of the ground, which had once been parterres and flower-gardens, was suffered in like manner to run to waste, excepting a few patches which had been dug up, and planted with ordinary potherbs. Some statues, which had ornamented the garden in its days of splendour, were now thrown down from their pedestals and broken in pieces; and a large summer-house, having a heavy stone front, decorated with carving, representing the life and actions of Samson, was in the same dilapidated condition.

They had just traversed this garden of the sluggard, and were within a few steps of the door of the mansion, when Lambourne had ceased speaking; a circumstance very agreeable to Tressilian, as it saved him the embarrassment of either commenting upon or replying to the frank avowal which his companion had just made of the sentiments and views which induced him to come hither. Lambourne knocked roundly and boldly at the huge door of the mansion, observing, at the same time, he had seen a less strong one upon a county jail. It was not until they had knocked more than once, that an aged, sour-visaged domestic reconnoitred them through a small square hole in the door, well secured with bars of iron, and demanded what they wanted.

'To speak with Master Foster instantly, on pressing business of the State,' was the ready reply of Michael Lambourne.

'Methinks you will find difficulty to make that good,' said Tressilian in a whisper to his companion, while the servant went to carry the message to his master.

'Tush!' replied the adventurer; 'no soldier would go on were he always to consider when and how he should come off. Let us once obtain entrance, and all will go well enough.'

In a short time the servant returned, and, drawing with a careful hand both bolt and bar, opened the gate, which admitted them through an archway into a square court, surrounded by buildings. Opposite to the arch was another door, which the serving-man in like manner unlocked, and thus introduced them into a stone-paved parlour, where there was but little furniture, and that of the rudest and most ancient fashion. The windows were tall and ample, reaching almost to the roof of the room, which was composed of black oak; those opening to the quadrangle were obscured by the height of the surrounding buildings, and, as they were traversed with massive shafts of solid stonework, and thickly painted with religious devices and scenes taken from Scripture history, by no means admitted light in proportion to their size; and what did penetrate through them, partook of the dark and gloomy tinge of the stained glass.

Tressilian and his guide had time enough to observe all these particulars, for they waited some space in the apartment ere the present master of the mansion at length made his appearance. Prepared as he was to see an inauspicious and ill-looking person, the ugliness of Anthony Foster considerably exceeded what Tressilian had anticipated. He was of middle stature, built strongly, but so clumsily as to border on deformity, and to give all his motions the ungainly awkwardness of a left-legged and left-handed man. His hair, in arranging which men at that time, as at present, were very nice and curious, instead of being carefully cleaned and disposed into short curls, or else set up on end, as is represented in old paintings, in a manner resembling that used by fine gentlemen of our own day, escaped in sable negligence from under a furred bonnet, and hung in elf-locks, which seemed strangers to the comb, over his rugged brows, and around his very singular and unprepossessing countenance. His keen dark eyes were deep set beneath broad and shaggy eyebrows, and, as they were usually bent on the ground, seemed as if they were themselves ashamed of the expression natural to them, and were desirous to conceal it from the observation of men. At times, however, when, more intent on observing others, he suddenly raised them, and fixed them keenly on those with whom he conversed, they seemed to express both the fiercer passions, and the power of mind which could at will suppress or disguise the intensity of inward feeling. The features which corresponded with these eyes and this form were irregular, and marked so as to be indelibly fixed on the mind of him who had once seen them. Upon the whole, as Tressilian could not help acknowledging to himself, the Anthony Foster who now stood before them was the last person, judging from personal appearance, upon whom one would have chosen to intrude an unexpected and undesired visit. His attire was a doublet of russet leather, like those worn by the better sort of country folk, girt with a buff belt, in which was stuck on the right side a long knife or dudgeon dagger, and on the other a cutlass. He raised his eyes as he entered the room, and fixed a keenly penetrating glance upon his two visitors, then cast them down as if counting his steps, while he advanced slowly

into the middle of the room, and said, in a low and smothered tone of voice, 'Let me pray you, gentlemen, to tell me the cause of this visit.'

He looked as if he expected the answer from Tressilian; so true was Lambourne's observation, that the superior air of breeding and dignity shone through the disguise of an inferior dress. But it was Michael who replied to him, with the easy familiarity of an old friend, and a tone which seemed unembarrassed by any doubt of the most cordial reception.

'Ha! my dear friend and ingle, Tony Foster!' he exclaimed, seizing upon the unwilling hand, and shaking it with such emphasis as almost to stagger the sturdy frame of the person whom he addressed; 'how fares it with you for many a long year?—What! have you altogether forgotten your friend, gossip, and playfellow, Michael Lambourne?'

'Michael Lambourne!' said Foster, looking at him a moment; then dropping his eyes, and with little ceremony extricating his hand from the friendly grasp of the person by whom he was addressed, 'are you Michael Lambourne?'

'Ay; sure as you are Anthony Foster,' replied Lambourne.

''Tis well,' answered his sullen host; 'and what may Michael Lambourne expect from his visit hither?'

'*Voto a Dios!*' answered Lambourne; 'I expected a better welcome than I am like to meet, I think.'

'Why, thou gallows-bird—thou jail-rat—thou friend of the hangman and his customers,' replied Foster, 'hast thou the assurance to expect countenance from any one whose neck is beyond the compass of a Tyburn tippet?'

'It may be with me as you say,' replied Lambourne; 'and suppose I grant it to be so for argument's sake, I were still good enough society for mine ancient friend Anthony Fire-the-Fagot, though he be, for the present, by some indescribable title, the master of Cumnor Place.'

'Hark you, Michael Lambourne,' said Foster; 'you are a gambler now, and live by the counting of chances—Compute me the odds that I do not, on this instant, throw you out of that window into the ditch there.'

'Twenty to one that you do not,' answered the sturdy visitor.

'And wherefore, I pray you?' demanded Anthony Foster, setting his teeth, and compressing his lips, like one who endeavours to suppress some violent internal emotion.

'Because,' said Lambourne coolly, 'you dare not for your life lay a finger on me. I am younger and stronger than you, and have in me a double portion of the fighting devil, though not, it may be, quite so much of the undermining fiend, that finds an underground way to his purpose—who hides halters under folk's pillows, and who puts ratsbane into their porridge, as the stage-play says.'

Foster looked at him earnestly, then turned away, and paced the room twice, with the same steady and considerate pace with which he had entered it; then suddenly came back, and extended his hand to Michael Lambourne, saying, 'Be not wroth with me, good Mike; I did but try whether thou hadst parted with aught of thine old and honourable frankness, which your enviers and backbiters called saucy impudence.'

'Let them call it what they will,' said Michael Lambourne, 'it is the commodity we must carry through the world with us.—Uds daggers! I tell thee, man, mine own stock of assurance was too small to trade upon; I was fain to take in a ton or two more of brass at every port where I touched in the voyage of life; and I started overboard what modesty and scruples I had remaining, in order to make room for the stowage.'

'Nay, nay,' replied Foster, 'touching scruples and modesty, you sailed hence in ballast.—But who is this gallant, honest Mike?—is he a Corinthian—a cutter like thyself?'

'I prithee, know Master Tressilian, bully Foster,' replied Lambourne, presenting his friend in answer to his friend's question; 'know him and honour him, for he is a gentleman of many admirable qualities; and though he traffics not in my line of business, at least so far as I know, he has, nevertheless, a just respect and admiration for artists of our class. He will come to in time, as seldom fails; but as yet he is only a neophyte, only a proselyte, and frequents the company of cocks of the game, as a puny fencer does the schools of the masters, to see how a foil is handled by the teachers of defence.'

'If such be his quality, I will pray your company in another chamber, honest Mike, for what I have to say to thee is for thy private ear.—Meanwhile, I pray you, sir, to abide us in this apartment, and without leaving it—there be those in this house who would be alarmed by the sight of a stranger.'

Tressilian acquiesced, and the two worthies left the apartment together, in which he remained alone to await their return.*

CHAPTER IV.

Not serve two masters?—Here's a youth will try it—
Would fain serve God, yet give the devil his due:
Says grace before he doth a deed of villany,
And returns his thanks devoutly when 'tis acted.

OLD PLAY.

THE room into which the master of Cumnor Place conducted his worthy visitant, was of greater extent than that in which they had at first conversed, and had yet more the appearance of dilapidation. Large oaken presses, filled with shelves of the same wood, surrounded the room, and had, at one time, served for the arrangement of a numerous collection of books, many of which yet remained, but torn and defaced, covered with dust, deprived of their costly clasps and bindings, and tossed together in heaps upon the shelves, as things altogether disregarded, and abandoned to the pleasure of every spoiler. The very presses themselves seemed to have incurred the hostility of those enemies of learning, who had destroyed the volumes with which they had been heretofore filled. They were in several places dismantled of their shelves, and otherwise broken and damaged, and were, moreover, mantled with cobwebs, and covered with dust.

* Note B. Foster, Lambourne, and the Black Bear.

'The men who wrote these books,' said Lambourne, looking round him, 'little thought whose keeping they were to fall into.'

'Nor what yeoman's service they were to do me,' quoth Anthony Foster—'the cook hath used them for scouring his pewter, and the groom hath had nought else to clean my boots with this many a month past.'

'And yet,' said Lambourne, 'I have been in cities where such learned commodities would have been deemed too good for such offices.'

'Pshaw, pshaw!' answered Foster; 'they are popish trash, every one of them,—private studies of the mumping old Abbot of Abingdon. The nineteenthly of a pure gospel sermon were worth a cart-load of such rakings of the kennel of Rome.'

'Gad-a-mercy, Master Tony Fire-the-Fagot!' said Lambourne, by way of reply.

Foster scowled darkly at him, as he replied, 'Hark ye, friend Mike; forget that name, and the passage which it relates to, if you would not have our newly-revived comradeship die a sudden and a violent death.'

'Why,' said Michael Lambourne, 'you were wont to glory in the share you had in the death of the two old heretical bishops.'

'That,' said his comrade, 'was while I was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and applies not to my walk or my ways, now that I am called forth into the lists. Mr. Melchisedek Maultext compared my misfortune in that matter to that of the Apostle Paul, who kept the clothes of the witnesses who stoned Saint Stephen. He held forth on the matter three Sabbaths past, and illustrated the same by the conduct of an honourable person present, meaning me.'

'I prithee peace, Foster,' said Lambourne, 'for I know not how it is, I have a sort of creeping comes over my skin when I hear the devil quote Scripture; and besides, man, how couldst thou have the heart to quit that convenient old religion, which you could so slip off or on as easily as your glove? Do I not remember how you were wont to carry your conscience to confession, as duly as the month came round? and when thou hadst it scoured, and burnished, and whitewashed by the priest, thou wert ever ready for the worst villany which could be devised, like a child who is always readiest to rush into the mire when he has got his Sunday's clean jerkin on.'

'Trouble not thyself about my conscience,' said Foster, 'it is a thing thou canst not understand, having never had one of thine own; but let us rather to the point, and say to me in one word, what is thy business with me, and what hopes have drawn thee hither?'

'The hope of bettering myself, to be sure,' answered Lambourne, 'as the old woman said, when she leapt over the bridge at Kingston. Look you, this purse has all that is left of as round a sum as a man would wish to carry in his slop-pouch. You are here well established, it would seem, and, as I think, well befriended, for men talk of your being under some special protection—nay, stare not like a pig that is stuck, man, thou canst not dance in a net and they not is not I services to render for it, and in these I propose to help thee.'

'But how if I lack no assistance from thee, Mike? I think thy modesty might suppose that were a case possible.'

'That is to say,' retorted Lambourne, 'that you would engross the whole work, rather than divide the reward—but be not over-greedy, Anthony. Covetousness bursts the sack, and spills the grain. Look you, when the huntsman goes to kill a stag, he takes with him more dogs than one.—He has the staunch lyme-hound to track the wounded buck over hill and dale, but he hath also the fleet gaze-hound to kill him at view. Thou art the lyme-hound, I am the gaze-hound, and thy patron will need the aid of both, and can well afford to requite it. Thou hast deep sagacity—an unrelenting purpose—a steady long-breathed malignity of nature, that surpasses mine. But then, I am the bolder, the more ready, both at action and expedient. Separate, our properties are not so perfect; but unite them, and we drive the world before us. How sayest thou—shall we hunt in couples?'

'It is a currish proposal—thus to thrust thyself upon my private matters,' replied Foster; 'but thou wert ever an ill-nurtured whelp.'

'You shall have no cause to say so, unless you spurn my courtesy,' said Michael Lambourne; 'but if so, keep thee well from me, Sir Knight, as the romance has it. I will either share your counsels or traverse them; for I have come here to be busy, either with thee or against thee.'

'Well,' said Anthony Foster, 'since thou dost leave me so fair a choice, I will rather be thy friend than thine enemy. Thou art right; I *can* prefer thee to the service of a patron, who has enough of means to make us both, and an hundred more. And, to say truth, thou art well qualified for his service. Boldness and dexterity he demands—the justice-books bear witness in thy favour; no starting at scruples in his service—why, who ever suspected thee of a conscience? an assurance he must have, who would follow a courtier—and thy brow is as impenetrable as a Milan visor. There is but one thing I would fain see amended in thee.'

'And what is that, my most precious friend Anthony?' replied Lambourne; 'for I swear by the pillow of the Seven Sleepers, I will not be slothful in amending it.'

'Why, you gave a sample of it even now,' said Foster. 'Your speech twangs too much of the old stamp, and you garnish it ever and anon with singular oaths that savour of Papistrie. Besides, your exterior man is altogether too deboshed and irregular to become one of his lordship's followers, since he has a reputation to keep up in the eye of the world. You must somewhat reform your dress, upon a more grave and composed fashion; wear your cloak on both shoulders, and your falling band unrumpled and well starched—You must enlarge the brim of your beaver, and diminish the superfluity of your trunk-hose—go to church, or, which will be better, to meeting, at least once a month—protest only upon your faith and conscience—lay aside your swashing look, and never touch

'By this light, Anthony, thou art mad,' answered Lambourne, 'and hast described rather the gentleman-usher to a puritan's wife, than the follower of an ambitious courtier! Yes, such a thing as thou wouldst make of me, should wear a book at his girdle, instead of a poniard, and might just be suspected of manhood enough to squire a proud dame-citizen to the lecture at Saint Antholin's, and quarrel in her cause with any flat-capped thread-maker that would take the wall of her. He must ruffle it in another sort that would walk to court in a nobleman's train.'

'O, content you, sir,' replied Foster, 'there is a change since you knew the English world; and there are those who can hold their way through the boldest courses, and the most secret, and yet never a swaggering word, or an oath, or a profane word in their conversation.'

'That is to say,' replied Lambourne, 'they are in a trading copartnery, to do the devil's business without mentioning his name in the firm?—Well, I will do my best to counterfeit rather than lose ground in this new world, since thou sayest it is grown so precise. But, Anthony, what is the name of this nobleman, in whose service I am to turn hypocrite?'

'Aha! Master Michael, are you there with your bears?' said Foster, with a grim smile; 'and this is the knowledge you pretend of my concernments?—How know you now there is such a person *in rerum natura*, and that I have not been putting a jape upon you all this time?'

'Thou put a jape upon me, thou sodden-brained gull?' answered Lambourne, nothing daunted; 'why, dark and muddy as thou think'st thyself, I would engage in a day's space to see as clear through thee and thy concernments, as thou call'st them, as through the filthy horn of an old stable lantern.'

At this moment their conversation was interrupted by a scream from the next apartment.

'By the holy Cross of Abingdon,' exclaimed Anthony Foster, forgetting his Protestantism in his alarm, 'I am a ruined man!'

So saying, he rushed into the apartment whence the scream issued, followed by Michael Lambourne. But to account for the sounds which interrupted their conversation, it is necessary to recede a little way in our narrative.

It has been already observed, that when Lambourne accompanied Foster into the library, they left Tressilian alone in the ancient parlour. His dark eye followed them forth of the apartment with a glance of contempt, a part of which his mind instantly transferred to himself for having stooped to be even for a moment their familiar companion. 'These are the associates, Amy,'—it was thus he communed with himself,—'to which thy cruel levity—thine unthinking and most unmerited falsehood, has condemned him of whom his friends once hoped for other things, and who now scorns himself, as he will be scorned by others, for the baseness he stoops to for the love of thee! But I will not leave the pursuit of thee, once the object of my purest and most devoted affection, though to me thou canst henceforth be nothing but a thing to weep over—I will save thee from thy betrayer, and from thyself—I will restore thee to thy parents—to thy God. I cannot bid the bright star again sparkle in the sphere it has shot from, but'——

A slight noise in the apartment interrupted his reverie; he looked round, and in the beautiful and richly-attired female who entered at that instant by a side-door, he recognised the object of his search. The first impulse arising from this discovery urged him to conceal his face with the collar of his cloak, until he should find a favourable moment of making himself known. But his purpose was disconcerted by the young lady (she was not above eighteen years old), who ran joyfully towards him, and, pulling him by the cloak, said playfully, 'Nay, my sweet friend, after I have waited for you so long, you come not to my bower to play the masquer—You are arraigned of treason to true love and fond affection; and you must stand up at the bar, and answer it with face uncovered—how say you, guilty or not?'

'Alas, Amy!' said Tressilian, in a low and melancholy tone, as he suffered her to draw the mantle from his face. The sound of his voice, and still more the unexpected sight of his face, changed in an instant the lady's playful mood—She staggered back, turned as pale as death, and put her hands before her face. Tressilian was himself for a moment much overcome, but seeming suddenly to remember the necessity of using an opportunity which might not again occur, he said in a low tone, 'Amy, fear me not.'

'Why should I fear you?' said the lady, withdrawing her hands from her beautiful face, which was now covered with crimson,—'why should I fear you, Mr. Tressilian?—or wherefore have you intruded yourself into my dwelling, uninvited, sir, and unwished for?'

'Your dwelling, Amy?' said Tressilian. 'Alas! is a prison your dwelling?—a prison guarded by one of the most sordid of men, but not a greater wretch than his employer!'

'This house is mine,' said Amy, 'mine while I choose to inhabit it—If it is my pleasure to live in seclusion, who shall gainsay me?'

'Your father, maiden,' answered Tressilian, 'your broken-hearted father; who despatched me in quest of you with that authority which he cannot exert in person. Here is his letter, written while he blessed his pain of body, which somewhat stunned the agony of his mind.'

'The pain!—is my father then ill?' said the lady.

'So ill,' answered Tressilian, 'that even your utmost haste may not restore him to health, but all shall be instantly prepared for your departure the instant you yourself will give consent.'

'Tressilian,' answered the lady, 'I cannot, I must not, I dare not leave this place. Go back to my father—tell him I will obtain leave to see him within twelve hours from hence. Go back, Tressilian—tell him I am well, I am happy—happy could I think he was so—tell him not to fear that I will come, and in such a manner that all the grief Amy has given him shall be forgotten—the poor Amy is now greater than she dare name.—Go, good Tressilian—I have injured thee too, but believe me I have power to heal the wounds I have caused—I robbed you of a childish heart, which was not worthy of you, and I can repay the loss with honours and advancement.'

'Do you say this to me, Amy?—Do you offer me pageants of idle ambition, for the quiet peace you have robbed me of?—But be it so—I came not to upbraid, but to serve and to free you.—You cannot disguise it from me; you are a prisoner. Otherwise your kind heart—for it was once a kind heart—would have been already at your father's bedside.—Come—poor, deceived, unhappy maiden!—all shall be forgot—all shall be forgiven. Fear not my importunity for what regarded our contract—It was a dream, and I have awaked.—But come—your father yet lives—Come, and one word of affection—one tear of penitence, will efface the memory of all that has passed.'

'Have I not already said, Tressilian,' replied she, 'that I will surely come to my father, and that without further delay than is necessary to discharge other and equally binding duties?—Go, carry him the news—I come as sure as there is light in heaven—that is, when I obtain permission.'

'Permission!—permission to visit your father on his sick-bed, perhaps on his death-bed!' repeated Tressilian impatiently; 'and permission from whom?—From the villain who, under disguise of friendship, abused every duty of hospitality, and stole thee from thy father's roof!'

'Do him no slander, Tressilian!—He whom thou speakest of wears a sword as sharp as thine—sharper, vain man—for the best deeds thou hast ever done in peace or war, were as unworthy to be named with his, as thy obscure rank to match itself with the sphere he moves in.—Leave me! Go, do mine errand to my father, and when he next sends to me, let him choose a more welcome messenger.'

'Amy,' replied Tressilian calmly, 'thou canst not move me by thy reproaches.—Tell me one thing, that I may bear at least one ray of comfort to my aged friend—This rank of his which thou dost boast—dost thou share it with him, Amy?—Does he claim a husband's right to control thy motions?'

'Stop thy base, unmannered tongue!' said the lady; 'to no question that derogates from my honour do I deign to answer.'

'You have said enough in refusing to reply,' answered Tressilian; 'and mark me, unhappy as thou art, I am armed with thy father's full authority to command thy obedience, and I will save thee from the slavery of sin and of sorrow, even despite of thyself, Amy.'

'Menace no violence here!' exclaimed the lady, drawing back from him, and alarmed at the determination expressed in his look and manner; 'threaten me not, Tressilian, for I have means to repel force.'

'But not, I trust, the wish to use them in so evil a cause?' said Tressilian. 'With thy will—thine uninfluenced, free, and natural will, Amy, thou canst not choose this state of slavery and dishonour—thou hast been bound by some spell—entrapped by some deceit—art now detained by some compelled vow.—But thus I break the charm—Amy, in the name of thine excellent, thy broken-hearted father, I command thee to follow me!'

As he spoke, he advanced and extended his arm, as with the purpose of laying hold upon her. But she shrunk back from his grasp and uttered the scream which, as we before noticed, brought into the apartment Lambourne and Foster.

The latter exclaimed, as soon as he entered, 'Fire and fagot! what have we here?' Then, addressing the lady in a tone betwixt entreaty and command, he added, 'Uds precious! madam, what make you here out of bounds?—Retire—retire—there is life and death in this matter.—And you, friend, whoever you may be, leave this house—out with you, before my dagger's hilt and your costard become acquainted.—Draw, Mike, and rid us of the knave!'

'Not I, on my soul,' replied Lambourne; 'he came hither in my company, and he is safe from me by cutter's law, at least till we meet again.—But hark ye, my Cornish comrade, you have brought a Cornish flaw of wind with you hither, a hurricanoe, as they call it in the Indies. Make yourself scarce—depart—vanish—or we'll have you summoned before the Mayor of Halgaver, and that before Dudman and Ramhead meet.' *

'Away, base groom!' said Tressilian.—'And you, madam, fare you well—what life lingers in your father's bosom will leave him at the news I have to tell.'

He departed, the lady saying faintly as he left the room, 'Tressilian, be not rash—say no scandal of me.'

'Here is proper gear,' said Foster. 'I pray you go to your chamber, my lady, and let us consider how this is to be answered—nay, tarry not.'

'I move not at your command, sir,' answered the lady.

'Nay, but you must, fair lady,' replied Foster; 'excuse my freedom, but, by blood and nails, this is no time to strain courtesies—you *must* go to your chamber.—Mike, follow that meddling coxcomb, and, as you desire to thrive, see him safely clear of the premises, while I bring this headstrong lady to reason.—Draw thy tool, man, and after him.'

'I'll follow him,' said Michael Lambourne, 'and see him fairly out of Flanders—But for hurting a man I have drunk my morning's draught withal, 'tis clean against my conscience.' So saying, he left the apartment.

Tressilian, meanwhile, with hasty steps, pursued the first path which promised to conduct him through the wild and overgrown part in which the mansion of Foster was situated. Haste and distress of mind led his steps astray, and instead of taking the avenue which led towards the village, he chose another, which, after he had pursued it for some time with a hasty and reckless step, conducted him to the other side of the demesne, where a postern-door opened through the wall, and led into the open country.

Tressilian paused an instant. It was indifferent to him by what road he left a spot now so odious to his recollections; but it was probable that the postern-door was locked, and his retreat by that pass rendered impossible.

'I must make the attempt, however,' he said to himself; 'the only means of reclaiming this lost—this miserable—this still most lovely and most

* Two headlands on the Cornish coast. The expressions are proverbial.

unhappy girl—must rest in her father's appeal to the broken laws of his country—I must haste to apprise him of this heartrending intelligence.'

As Tressilian, thus conversing with himself, approached to try some means of opening the door, or climbing over it, he perceived there was a key put into the lock from the outside. It turned round, the bolt revolved, and a cavalier who entered, muffled in his riding cloak, and wearing a slouched hat, with a drooping feather, stood at once within four yards of him who was desirous of going out. They exclaimed at once, in tones of resentment and surprise, the one 'Varney!' the other 'Tressilian!'

'What make you here?' was the stern question put by the stranger to Tressilian, when the moment of surprise was passed,—'What make you here, where your presence is neither expected nor desired?'

'Nay, Varney,' replied Tressilian, 'what make *you* here? Are you come to triumph over the innocence you have destroyed, as the vulture or carrion-crow comes to batten on the lamb, whose eyes it has first plucked out?—Or are you come to encounter the merited vengeance of an honest man?—Draw, dog, and defend thyself!'

Tressilian drew his sword as he spoke, but Varney only laid his hand on the hilt of his own, as he replied, 'Thou art mad, Tressilian—I own appearances are against me, but by every oath a priest can make, or a man can swear, Mistress Amy Robsart hath had no injury from me; and in truth I were somewhat loath to hurt you in this cause—Thou know'st I can fight.'

'I have heard thee say so, Varney,' replied Tressilian; 'but now, methinks, I would fain have some better evidence than thine own word.'

'That shall not be lacking, if blade and hilt be but true to me,' answered Varney; and, drawing his sword with the right hand, he threw his cloak around his left, and attacked Tressilian with a vigour which for a moment seemed to give him the advantage of the combat. But this advantage lasted not long. Tressilian added to a spirit determined on revenge, a hand and eye admirably well adapted to the use of the rapier; so that Varney, finding himself hard pressed in his turn, endeavoured to avail himself of his superior strength, by closing with his adversary. For this purpose he hazarded the receiving one of Tressilian's passes in his cloak, wrapped as it was around his arm, and ere his adversary could extricate his rapier thus entangled, he closed with him, shortening his own sword at the same time, with the purpose of despatching him. But Tressilian was on his guard, and, unsheathing his poniard, parried with the blade of that weapon the home-thrust which would otherwise have finished the combat, and, in the struggle which followed, displayed so much address, as might have confirmed the opinion that he drew his origin from Cornwall, whose natives are such masters in the art of wrestling, as, were the games of antiquity revived, might enable them to challenge all Europe to the ring. Varney, in his ill-advised attempt, received a fall so sudden and violent, that his sword flew several paces from his hand, and, ere he could recover his feet, that of his antagonist was pointed to his throat.

'Give me the instant means of relieving the victim of thy treachery,' said Tressilian, 'or take the last look of your Creator's blessed sun!'

And while Varney, too confused or too sullen to reply, made a sudden effort to arise, his adversary drew back his arm, and would have executed his threat, but that the blow was arrested by the grasp of Michael Lambourne, who, directed by the clashing of swords, had come up just in time to save the life of Varney.

'Come, come, comrade,' said Lambourne, 'here is enough done and more than enough—put up your fox, and let us be jogging—The Black Bear growls for us.'

'Off, abject!' said Tressilian, striking himself free of Lambourne's grasp; 'darest thou come betwixt me and mine enemy?'

'Abject! abject!' repeated Lambourne; 'that shall be answered with cold steel whenever a bowl of sack has washed out memory of the morning's draught that we had together. In the meanwhile, do you see, shog—tramp—begone—we are two to one.'

He spoke truth, for Varney had taken the opportunity to regain his weapon, and Tressilian perceived it was madness to press the quarrel further against such odds. He took his purse from his side, and, taking out two gold nobles, flung them to Lambourne: 'There, caitiff, is thy morning wage—thou shalt not say thou hast been my guide unhired.—Varney, farewell—we shall meet where there are none to come betwixt us.' So saying, he turned round and departed through the postern-door.

Varney seemed to want the inclination, or perhaps the power (for his fall had been a severe one), to follow his retreating enemy. But he glared darkly as he disappeared, and then addressed Lambourne: 'Art thou a comrade of Foster's, good fellow?'

'Sworn friends, as the haft is to the knife,' replied Michael Lambourne.

'Here is a broad piece for thee—follow yonder fellow, and see where he takes earth, and bring me word up to the mansion-house here. Cautious and silent, thou knave, as thou valuest thy throat.'

'Enough said,' replied Lambourne; 'I can draw on a scent as well as a sleuth-hound.'

'Begone then,' said Varney, sheathing his rapier; and, turning his back on Michael Lambourne, he walked slowly towards the house. Lambourne stopped but an instant to gather the nobles which his late companion had flung towards him so unceremoniously, and muttered to himself, while he put them up in his purse along with the gratuity of Varney, 'I spoke to yonder gulls of Eldorado—By Saint Anthony, there is no Eldorado for men of our stamp equal to bonnie Old England! It rains nobles, by Heaven!—they lie on the grass as thick as dewdrops—you may have them for gathering. And if I have not my share of such glittering dewdrops, may my sword melt like an icicle!'

CHAPTER V.

—He was a man
Versed in the world as pilot in his compass;
The needle pointed ever to that interest
Which was his loadstar, and he spread his sails
With vantage to the gale of others' passion.
THE DECEIVER—A TRAGEDY.

ANTHONY FOSTER was still engaged in debate with his fair guest, who treated with scorn every entreaty and request that she would retire to her own apartment, when a whistle was heard at the entrance-door of the mansion.

'We are fairly sped now,' said Foster; 'yonder is thy lord's signal, and what to say about the disorder which has happened in this household, by my conscience, I know not. Some evil fortune dogs the heels of that unhanged rogue Lambourne, and he has 'scaped the gallows against every chance, to come back and be the ruin of me!'

'Peace, sir,' said the lady, 'and undo the gate to your master.—My lord! my dear lord!' she then exclaimed, hastening to the entrance of the apartment; then added, with a voice expressive of disappointment,—'Pooh! it is but Richard Varney!'

'Ay, madam,' said Varney, entering and saluting the lady with a respectful obeisance, which she returned with a careless mixture of negligence and of displeasure. 'It is but Richard Varney; but even the first grey cloud should be acceptable, when it lightens in the east, because it announces the approach of the blessed sun.'

'How? comes my lord hither to-night?' said the lady, in joyful, yet startled agitation; and Anthony Foster caught up the word, and echoed the question. Varney replied to the lady, that his lord proposed to attend her, and would have proceeded with some compliment, when, running to the door of the parlour, she called aloud, 'Janet—Janet—come to my tiring-room instantly.' Then turning to Varney, she asked if her lord sent any further commendations to her.

'This letter, honoured madam,' said he, taking from his bosom a small parcel wrapped in scarlet silk, 'and with it a token to the queen of his affections.' With eager speed the lady hastened to undo the silken string which surrounded the little packet, and, failing to unloose readily the knot with which it was secured, she again called loudly on Janet, 'Bring me a knife—scissors—aught that may undo this envious knot!'

'May not my poor poniard serve, honoured madam?' said Varney, presenting a small dagger of exquisite workmanship, which hung in his turkey-leather sword-belt.

'No, sir,' replied the lady, rejecting the instrument which he offered—'Steel poniard shall cut no true-love knot of mine.'

'It has cut many, however,' said Anthony Foster, half aside, and looking at Varney. By this time the knot was disentangled without any other help than the neat and nimble fingers of Janet, a simply-attired, pretty maiden, the daughter of Anthony Foster, who came running at the repeated call of her mistress. A necklace of orient pearl, the companion of a perfumed billet, was now hastily produced from the packet. The lady gave the one, after a slight glance, to the charge of her attendant, while she read, or rather devoured, the contents of the other.

'Surely, lady,' said Janet, gazing with admiration at the neck-string of pearls, 'the daughters of Tyre wore no fairer neck-jewels than those—And then the posy, "For a neck is fairer,"—each pearl is worth a freehold.'

'Each word in this dear paper is worth the whole string, my girl—But come to my tiring-room, girl; we must be brave, my lord comes hither to-night.—He bids me grace you, Master Varney, and to me his wish is a law—I bid you to a collation in my bower this afternoon, and you too, Master Foster. Give orders that all is fitting, and that suitable preparations be made for my lord's reception to-night.' With these words she left the apartment.

'She takes state on her already,' said Varney, 'and distributes the favour of her presence, as if she were already the partner of his dignity.—Well—it is wise to practise beforehand the part which fortune prepares us to play—the young eagle must gaze at the sun, ere he soars on strong wing to meet it.'

'If holding her head aloft,' said Foster, 'will keep her eyes from dazzling, I warrant you the dame will not stoop her crest. She will presently soar beyond reach of my whistle, Master Varney. I promise you, she holds me already in slight regard.'

'It is thine own fault, thou sullen uninventive companion,' answered Varney, 'who know'st no mode of control, save downright brute force.—Canst thou not make home pleasant to her, with music and toys? Canst thou not make the out-of-doors frightful to her, with tales of goblins? Thou livest here by the churchyard, and hast not even wit enough to raise a ghost, to scare thy females into good discipline.'

'Speak not thus, Master Varney,' said Foster; 'the living I fear not, but I trifle not nor toy with my dead neighbours of the churchyard. I promise you, it requires a good heart to live so near it: worthy Master Holdforth, the afternoon's lecturer of Saint Antholin's, had a sore fright there the last time he came to visit me.'

'Hold thy superstitious tongue!' answered Varney; 'and whilst thou talk'st of visiting, answer me, thou paltering knave, how came Tressilian to be at the postern-door?'

'Tressilian!' answered Foster; 'what know I of Tressilian?—I never heard his name.'

'Why, villain, it was the very Cornish chough to whom old Sir Hugh Robsart destined his pretty Amy, and hither the hot-brained fool has come to look after his fair runaway: there must be some order taken with him, for he thinks he hath wrong, and is not the mean hind that will sit down with it. Luckily he knows not of my lord, but thinks he has only me to deal with. But how, in the fiend's name, came he hither?'

'Why, with Mike Lambourne, an you must know,' answered Foster.

'And who is Mike Lambourne?' demanded Varney. 'By Heaven! thou wert best set up a bush over thy door, and invite every stroller

who passes by, to see what thou shouldst keep secret even from the sun and air.'

'Ay! ay! this is a court-like requital of my service to you, Master Richard Varney,' replied Foster. 'Didst thou not charge me to seek out for thee a fellow who had a good sword, and an unscrupulous conscience? and was I not busying myself to find a fit man—for, thank Heaven, my acquaintance lies not amongst such companions—when, as Heaven would have it, this tall fellow, who is in all his qualities the very flashing knave thou didst wish, came hither to fix acquaintance upon me in the plenitude of his impudence, and I admitted his claim, thinking to do you a pleasure—and now see what thanks I get for disgracing myself by converse with him!'

'And did he,' said Varney, 'being such a fellow as thyself, only lacking, I suppose, thy present humour of hypocrisy, which lies as thin over thy hard ruffianly heart as gold lacquer upon rusty iron—did he, I say, bring the saintly, sighing Tressilian in his train?'

'They came together, by Heaven!' said Foster; 'and Tressilian—to speak Heaven's truth—obtained a moment's interview with our pretty moppet, while I was talking apart with Lambourne.'

'Improvident villain! we are both undone,' said Varney. 'She has of late been casting many a backward look to her father's halls, whenever her lordly lover leaves her alone. Should this preaching fool whistle her back to her old perch, we were but lost men.'

'No fear of that, my master,' replied Anthony Foster; 'she is in no mood to stoop to his lure, for she yelled out on seeing him as if an adder had stung her.'

'That is good.—Canst thou not get from thy daughter an inkling of what passed between them, good Foster?'

'I tell you plain, Master Varney,' said Foster, 'my daughter shall not enter our purposes, or walk in our paths. They may suit me well enough, who know how to repent of my misdoings; but I will not have my child's soul committed to peril either for your pleasure or my lord's. I may walk among snares and pitfalls myself, because I have discretion, but I will not trust the poor lamb among them.'

'Why, thou suspicious fool, I were as averse as thou art that thy baby-faced girl should enter into my plans, or walk to hell at her father's elbow. But indirectly thou mightst gain some intelligence of her.'

'And so I did, Master Varney,' answered Foster; 'and she said her lady called out upon the sickness of her father.'

'Good!' replied Varney; 'that is a hint worth catching, and I will work upon it. But the country must be rid of this Tressilian—I would have cumbered no man about the matter, for I hate him like strong poison—his presence is hemlock to me—and this day I had been rid of him, but that my foot slipped, when, to speak truth, had not thy comrade yonder come to my aid, and held his hand, I should have known by this time whether you and I have been treading the path to heaven or hell.'

'And you can speak thus of such a risk!' said Foster. 'You keep a stout heart, Master Varney—for me, if I did not hope to live many years, and to have time for the great work of repentance, I would not go forward with you.'

'O, thou shalt live as long as Methuselah,' said Varney, 'and amass as much wealth as Solomon; and thou shalt repent so devoutly, that thy repentance shall be more famous than thy villany,—and that is a bold word. But for all this, Tressilian must be looked after. Thy ruffian yonder is gone to dog him. It concerns our fortunes, Anthony.'

'Ay, ay,' said Foster sullenly, 'this it is to be leagued with one who knows not even so much of Scripture, as that the labourer is worthy of his hire. I must, as usual, take all the trouble and risk.'

'Risk! and what is the mighty risk, I pray you?' answered Varney. 'This fellow will come prowling again about your demesne or into your house, and if you take him for a house-breaker, or a park-breaker, is it not most natural you should welcome him with cold steel or hot lead? Even a mastiff will pull down those who come near his kennel; and who will blame him?'

'Ay, I have mastiff's work and mastiff's wage among you,' said Foster. 'Here have you, Master Varney, secured a good freehold estate out of this old superstitious foundation; and I have but a poor lease of this mansion under you, voidable at your honour's pleasure.'

'Ay, and thou wouldst fain convert thy leasehold into a copyhold—the thing may chance to happen, Anthony Foster, if thou dost good service for it. But softly, good Anthony—it is not the lending a room or two of this old house for keeping my lord's pretty paroquet—nay, it is not the shutting thy doors and windows to keep her from flying off, that may deserve it. Remember, the manor and tithes are rated at the clear annual value of seventy-nine pounds five shillings and fivepence halfpenny, besides the value of the wood. Come, come, thou must be conscionable; great and secret service may deserve both this and a better thing.—And now let thy knave come and pluck off my boots.—Get us some dinner and a cup of thy best wine. I must visit this mavis, brave in apparel, unruffled in aspect, and gay in temper.'

They parted, and at the hour of noon, which was then that of dinner, they again met at their meal, Varney gaily dressed like a courtier of the time, and even Anthony Foster improved in appearance as far as dress could amend an exterior so unfavourable.

This alteration did not escape Varney. When the meal was finished, the cloth removed, and they were left to their private discourse—'Thou art gay as a goldfinch, Anthony,' said Varney, looking at his host; 'methinks, thou wilt whistle a jig anon—but I crave your pardon, that would secure your ejection from the congregation of the zealous botchers, the pure-hearted weavers, and the sanctified bakers of Abingdon, who let their ovens cool while their brains get heated.'

'To answer you in the spirit, Master Varney,' which he who is King of the World hath

taught thee to understand, and to profit by in no common measure.'

'Say what thou wilt, honest Tony,' replied Varney; 'for be it according to thine absurd faith, or according to thy most villanous practice, it cannot choose but be rare matter to qualify this cup of Alicant. Thy conversation is relishing and poignant, and beats caviare, dried neat's tongue, and all other provocatives that give savour to good liquor.'

'Well, then, tell me,' said Anthony Foster, 'is not our good lord and master's turn better served, and his antechamber more suitably filled with decent, God-fearing men, who will work his will and their own profit quietly, and without worldly scandal, than that he should be manned, and attended, and followed by such open debauchers and ruffianly swordsmen as Tidesly, Killigrew, this fellow Lambourne, whom you have put me to seek out for you, and other such who bear the gallows in their face and murder in their right hand—who are a terror to peaceable men, and a scandal to my lord's service?'

'O, content you, good Master Anthony Foster,' answered Varney; 'he that flies at all manner of game must keep all kinds of hawks, both short and long winged. The course my lord holds is no easy one, and he must stand provided at all points with trusty retainers to meet each sort of service. He must have his gay courtier, like myself, to ruffle it in the presence-chamber, and to lay hand on hilt when any speaks in disparagement of my lord's honour'—

'Ay,' said Foster, 'and to whisper a word for him into a fair lady's ear, when he may not approach her himself.'

'Then,' said Varney, going on without appearing to notice the interruption, 'he must have his lawyers—deep subtle pioneers—to draw his contracts, his pre-contracts, and his post-contracts, and to find the way to make the most of grants of church-lands and commons, and licences for monopoly—And he must have physicians who can spice a cup or a caudle—And he must have his cabalists, like Dee and Allan, for conjuring up the devil—And he must have ruffling swordsmen, who would fight the devil when he is raised and at the wildest—And, above all, without prejudice to others, he must have such godly, innocent, puritanic souls as thou, honest Anthony, who defy Satan, and do his work at the same time.'

'You would not say, Master Varney,' said Foster, 'that our good lord and master, whom I hold to be fulfilled in all nobleness, would use such base and sinful means to rise, as thy speech points at?'

'Tush, man,' said Varney, 'never look at me with so sad a brow—you trap me not—nor am I in your power, as your weak brain may imagine, because I name to you freely the engines, the springs, the screws, the tackle and braces, by which great men rise in stirring times.—Sayest thou our good lord is fulfilled of all nobleness? —Amen, and so be it—he has the more need to have those about him who are unscrupulous in his service, and who, because they know that his fall will overwhelm and crush them, must wager both blood and brain, soul and body, in order to keep him aloft; and this I tell thee, because I care not who knows it.'

'You speak truth, Master Varney,' said Anthony Foster; 'he that is head of a party, is but a boat on a wave, that raises not itself, but is moved upward by the billow which it floats upon.'

'Thou art metaphorical, honest Anthony,' replied Varney; 'that velvet doublet hath made an oracle of thee—we will have thee to Oxford to take the degrees in the arts.—And, in the mean time, hast thou arranged all the matters which were sent from London, and put the western chambers into such fashion as may answer my lord's humour?'

'They may serve a king on his bridal-day,' said Anthony; 'and I promise you that Dame Amy sits in them yonder, as proud and gay as if she were the Queen of Sheba.'

''Tis the better, good Anthony,' answered Varney. 'We must found our future fortunes on her good liking.'

'We build on sand, then,' said Anthony Foster; 'for supposing that she sails away to court in all her lord's dignity and authority, how is she to look back upon me, who am her jailor as it were, to detain her here against her will, keeping her a caterpillar on an old wall, when she would fain be a painted butterfly in a court garden?'

'Fear not her displeasure, man,' said Varney. 'I will show her that all thou hast done in this matter was good service, both to my lord and her; and when she chips the egg-shell and walks alone, she shall own we have hatched her greatness.'

'Look to yourself, Master Varney,' said Foster, 'you may misreckon foully in this matter—She gave you but a frosty reception this morning, and, I think, looks on you, as well as me, with an evil eye.'

'You mistake her, Foster—you mistake her utterly—To me she is bound by all the ties which can secure her to one who has been the means of gratifying both her love and ambition. Who was it that took the obscure Amy Robsart, the daughter of an impoverished and dotard knight—the destined bride of a moon-struck, moping enthusiast like Edmund Tressilian, from her lowly fates, and held out to her in prospect the brightest fortune in England, or perchance in Europe? Why, man, it was I, as I have often told thee, that found opportunity for their secret meeting—It was I who watched the wood while he beat for the deer—It was I who, to this day, am blamed by her family as the companion of her flight, and, were I in their neighbourhood, would be fain to wear a shirt of better stuff than Holland linen, lest my ribs should be acquainted with Spanish steel. Who carried their letters? —I. Who amused the old knight and Tressilian? —I. Who planned her escape?—it was I. It was I, in short, Dick Varney, who pulled this pretty little daisy from its lowly nook, and placed it in the proudest bonnet in Britain.'

'Ay, Master Varney,' said Foster; 'but it may be she thinks that, had the matter remained with you, the flower had been stuck so slightly into the cap, that the first breath of a changeable breeze of passion had blown the poor daisy to the common.'

'She should consider,' said Varney, smiling, 'the true faith I owed my lord and master prevented me at first from counselling marriage—and yet I did counsel marriage when I saw she would not be satisfied without the—the sacrament, or the ceremony—which callest thou it, Anthony?'

'Still she has you at feud on another score,' said Foster; 'and I tell it you that you may look to yourself in time—She would not hide her splendour in this dark lantern of an old monastic house, but would fain shine a countess amongst countesses.'

'Very natural, very right,' answered Varney; 'but what have I to do with that?—she may shine through horn or through crystal at my lord's pleasure, I have nought to say against it.'

'She deems that you have an oar upon that side of the boat, Master Varney,' replied Foster, 'and that you can pull it or no, at your good pleasure. In a word, she ascribes the secrecy and obscurity in which she is kept, to your secret counsel to my lord, and to my strict agency; and so she loves us both as a sentenced man loves his judge and his jailor.'

'She must love us better ere she leave this place, Anthony,' answered Varney. 'If I have counselled for weighty reasons that she remain here for a season, I can also advise her being brought forth in the full blow of her dignity. But I were mad to do so, holding so near a place to my lord's person, were she mine enemy. Bear this truth in upon her as occasion offers, Anthony, and let me alone for extolling you in her ear, and exalting you in her opinion—*Ka me, ka thee*—it is a proverb all over the world—The lady must know her friends, and be made to judge of the power they have of being her enemies—meanwhile, watch her strictly, but with all the outward observance that thy rough nature will permit. 'Tis an excellent thing that sullen look and bull-dog humour of thine; thou shouldst thank God for it, and so should my lord; for when there is aught harsh or hard-natured to be done, thou dost it as if it flowed from thine own natural doggedness, and not from orders, and so my lord escapes the scandal.—But hark—some one knocks at the gate—Look out of the window—let no one enter—this were an ill night to be interrupted.'

'It is he whom we spoke of before dinner,' said Foster, as he looked through the casement; 'it is Michael Lambourne.'

'O, admit him, by all means,' said the courtier; 'he comes to give some account of his guest—it imports us much to know the movements of Edmund Tressilian—Admit him, I say, but bring him not hither—I will come to you presently in the Abbot's library.'

Foster left the room, and the courtier, who remained behind, paced the parlour more than once in deep thought, his arms folded on his bosom, until at length he gave way to his meditations in broken words, which we have somewhat enlarged and connected, that his soliloquy may be intelligible to the reader.

''Tis true,' he said, suddenly stopping, and resting his right hand on the table at which they had been sitting, 'this base churl hath fathomed the very depth of my fear, and I have been unable to disguise it from him.—She loves me not—I would it were as true that I loved not her!—Idiot that I was, to move her in my own behalf, when wisdom bade me be a true broker to my lord!—And this fatal error has placed me more at her discretion than a wise man would willingly be at that of the best piece of painted Eve's flesh of them all. Since the hour that my policy made so perilous a slip, I cannot look at her without fear, and hate, and fondness, so strangely mingled, that I know not whether, were it at my choice, I would rather possess or ruin her. But she must not leave this retreat until I am assured on what terms we are to stand. My lord's interest—and so far it is mine own—for if he sinks, I fall in his train—demands concealment of this obscure marriage—and besides, I will not lend her my arm to climb to her chair of state, that she may set her foot on my neck when she is fairly seated. I must work an interest in her, either through love or through fear—and who knows but I may yet reap the sweetest and best revenge for her former scorn?—that were indeed a masterpiece of court-like art!—Let me but once be her counsel-keeper—let her confide to me a secret, did it but concern the robbery of a linnet's nest, and, fair countess, thou art mine own!' He again paced the room in silence, stopped, filled and drank a cup of wine, as if to compose the agitation of his mind; and muttering, 'Now for a close heart, and an open and unruffled brow,' he left the apartment.

CHAPTER VI.

The dews of summer night did fall,
  The moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silver'd the walls of Cumnor Hall,
  And many an oak that grew thereby.*
MICKLE.

FOUR apartments, which occupied the western side of the old quadrangle at Cumnor Place, had been fitted up with extraordinary splendour. This had been the work of several days prior to that on which our story opened. Workmen sent from London, and not permitted to leave the premises until the work was finished, had converted the apartments in that side of the building, from the dilapidated appearance of a dissolved monastic house, into the semblance of a royal palace. A mystery was observed in all these arrangements: the workmen came thither and returned by night, and all measures were taken to prevent the prying curiosity of the villagers from observing or speculating upon the changes which were taking place in the mansion of their once indigent, but now wealthy neighbour, Anthony Foster. Accordingly, the secrecy desired was so far preserved, that nothing got abroad but vague and uncertain reports, which were received and repeated, but without much credit being attached to them.

On the evening of which we treat, the new and highly decorated suite of rooms were, for the first time, illuminated, and that with a brilliancy

* This verse is the commencement of the ballad already quoted, as what suggested the novel.

which might have been visible half a dozen miles off, had not oaken shutters, carefully secured with bolt and padlock, and mantled with long curtains of silk and of velvet, deeply fringed with gold, prevented the slightest gleam of radiance from being seen without.

The principal apartments, as we have seen, were four in number, each opening into the other. Access was given to them by a large scale staircase, as they were then called, of unusual length and height, which had its landing-place at the door of an antechamber, shaped somewhat like a gallery. This apartment the abbot had used as an occasional council room, but it was now beautifully wainscoted with dark foreign wood of a brown colour, and bearing a high polish, said to have been brought from the Western Indies, and to have been wrought in London with infinite difficulty, and much damage to the tools of the workmen. The dark colour of this finishing was relieved by the number of lights in silver sconces, which hung against the walls, and by six large and richly-framed pictures, by the first masters of the age. A massy oaken table, placed at the lower end of the apartment, served to accommodate such as chose to play at the then fashionable game of shovel-board; and there was at the other end an elevated gallery for the musicians or minstrels, who might be summoned to increase the festivity of the evening.

From this antechamber opened a banqueting-room of moderate size, but brilliant enough to dazzle the eyes of the spectator with the richness of its furniture. The walls, lately so bare and ghastly, were now clothed with hangings of sky-blue velvet and silver; the chairs were of ebony, richly carved, with cushions corresponding to the hangings; and the place of the silver sconces which enlightened the antechamber was supplied by a huge chandelier of the same precious metal. The floor was covered with a Spanish foot-cloth, or carpet, on which flowers and fruits were represented in such glowing and natural colours, that you hesitated to place the foot on such exquisite workmanship. The table, of old English oak, stood ready covered with the finest linen, and a large portable court cupboard was placed with the leaves of its embossed folding-doors displayed, showing the shelves within, decorated with a full display of plate and porcelain. In the midst of the table stood a salt-cellar of Italian workmanship—a beautiful and splendid piece of plate about two feet high, moulded into a representation of the giant Briareus, whose hundred hands of silver presented to the guests various sorts of spices, or condiments, to season their food withal.

The third apartment was called the withdrawing-room. It was hung with the finest tapestry, representing the fall of Phaeton; for the looms of Flanders were now much occupied on classical subjects. The principal seat of this apartment was a chair of state, raised a step or two from the floor, and large enough to contain two persons. It was surmounted by a canopy, which, as well as the cushions, side-curtains, and the very foot-cloth, was composed of crimson velvet, embroidered with seed-pearl. On the top of the canopy were two coronets, resembling those of an earl and countess. Stools covered with velvet, and some cushions disposed in the Moorish fashion, and ornamented with Arabesque needlework, supplied the place of chairs in this apartment, which contained musical instruments, embroidery frames, and other articles for ladies' pastime. Besides lesser lights, the withdrawing-room was illuminated by four tall torches of virgin wax, each of which was placed in the grasp of a statue, representing an armed Moor, who held in his left arm a round buckler of silver, highly polished, interposed betwixt his breast and the light, which was thus brilliantly reflected as from a crystal mirror.

The sleeping chamber belonging to this splendid suite of apartments was decorated in a taste less showy, but not less rich, than had been displayed in the others. Two silver lamps, fed with perfumed oil, diffused at once a delicious odour and a trembling twilight-seeming shimmer through the quiet apartment. It was carpeted so thick, that the heaviest step could not have been heard; and the bed, richly heaped with down, was spread with an ample coverlet of silk and gold; from under which peeped forth cambric sheets, and blankets as white as the lambs which yielded the fleece that made them. The curtains were of blue velvet, lined with crimson silk, deeply festooned with gold, and embroidered with the loves of Cupid and Psyche. On the toilet was a beautiful Venetian mirror, in a frame of silver filigree, and beside it stood a gold posset-dish to contain the night-draught. A pair of pistols and a dagger, mounted with gold, were displayed near the head of the bed, being the arms for the night, which were presented to honoured guests, rather, it may be supposed, in the way of ceremony, than from any apprehension of danger. We must not omit to mention, what was more to the credit of the manners of the time, that, in a small recess, illuminated by a taper, were disposed two cassocks of velvet and gold, corresponding with the bed furniture, before a desk of carved ebony. This recess had formerly been the private oratory of the abbot, but the crucifix was removed, and instead, there were placed on the desk two Books of Common Prayer, richly bound and embossed with silver. With this enviable sleeping apartment, which was so far removed from every sound, save that of the wind sighing among the oaks of the park, that Morpheus might have coveted it for his own proper repose, corresponded two wardrobes, or dressing-rooms, as they are now termed, suitably furnished, and in a style of the same magnificence which we have already described. It ought to be added, that a part of the building in the adjoining wing was occupied by the kitchen and its offices, and served to accommodate the personal attendants of the great and wealthy nobleman, for whose use these magnificent preparations had been made.

The divinity for whose sake this temple had been decorated, was well worthy the cost and pains which had been bestowed. She was seated in the withdrawing-room which we have described, surveying with the pleased eye of natural and innocent vanity the splendour which had been so suddenly created, as it were, in her honour. For, as her own residence at Cumnor Place formed the cause of the mystery observed in all the preparations for opening these apart-

ments, it was sedulously arranged that, until she took possession of them, she should have no means of knowing what was going forward in that part of the ancient building, or of exposing herself to be seen by the workmen engaged in the decorations. She had been, therefore, introduced on that evening to a part of the mansion which she had never yet seen, so different from all the rest, that it appeared, in comparison, like an enchanted palace. And when she first examined and occupied these splendid rooms, it was with the wild and unrestrained joy of a rustic beauty, who finds herself suddenly invested with a splendour which her most extravagant wishes had never imagined, and at the same time with the keen feeling of an affectionate heart, which knows that all the enchantment that surrounds her is the work of the great magician Love.

The Countess Amy, therefore,—for to that rank she was exalted by her private but solemn union with England's proudest earl,—had for a time flitted hastily from room to room, admiring each new proof of her lover and her bridegroom's taste, and feeling that admiration enhanced, as she recollected that all she gazed upon was one continued proof of his ardent and devoted affection.—'How beautiful are these hangings!—How natural these paintings, which seem to contend with life! — How richly wrought is that plate, which looks as if all the galleons of Spain had been intercepted on the broad seas to furnish it forth! — And O, Janet!' she exclaimed repeatedly to the daughter of Anthony Foster, the close attendant, who, with equal curiosity, but somewhat less ecstatic joy, followed on her mistress's footsteps—'O, Janet! how much more delightful to think that all these fair things have been assembled by his love, for the love of me! and that this evening —this very evening, which grows darker every instant, I shall thank him more for the love that has created such an unimaginable paradise, than for all the wonders it contains!'

'The Lord is to be thanked first,' said the pretty puritan, 'who gave thee, lady, the kind and courteous husband, whose love has done so much for thee. I, too, have done my poor share. But if you thus run wildly from room to room, the toil of my crisping and my curling pins will vanish like the frost-work on the window when the sun is high.'

'Thou sayest true, Janet,' said the young and beautiful countess, stopping suddenly from her tripping race of enraptured delight, and looking at herself from head to foot in a large mirror, such as she had never before seen, and which, indeed, had few to match it even in the queen's palace—'Thou sayest true, Janet!' she answered, as she saw, with pardonable self-applause, the noble mirror reflect such charms as were seldom presented to its fair and polished surface; 'I have more of the milkmaid than the countess, with these cheeks flushed with haste, and all these brown curls, which you laboured to bring to order, straying as wild as the tendrils of an unpruned vine—My falling ruff is chafed too, and shows the neck and bosom more than is modest and seemly — Come, Janet — we will practise state—we will go to the withdrawing-room, my good girl, and thou shalt put these rebel locks in order, and imprison within lace and cambric the bosom that beats too high.'

They went to the withdrawing apartment accordingly, where the countess playfully stretched herself upon the pile of Moorish cushions, half sitting, half reclining, half rapt in her own thoughts, half listening to the prattle of her attendant.

While she was in this attitude, and with a corresponding expression betwixt listlessness and expectation on her fine and expressive features, you might have searched sea and land without finding anything half so expressive, or half so lovely. The wreath of brilliants, which mixed with her dark brown hair, did not match in lustre the hazel eye which a light brown eyebrow, pencilled with exquisite delicacy, and long eyelashes of the same colour, relieved and shaded. The exercise she had just taken, her excited expectation and gratified vanity, spread a glow over her fine features, which had been sometimes censured (as beauty as well as art has her minute critics) for being rather too pale. The milk-white pearls of the necklace which she wore, the same which she had just received as a true-love token from her husband, were excelled in purity by her teeth, and by the colour of her skin, saving where the blush of pleasure and self-satisfaction had somewhat stained the neck with a shade of light crimson.—'Now, have done with these busy fingers, Janet,' she said to her handmaiden, who was still officiously employed in bringing her hair and her dress into order—'Have done, I say—I must see your father ere my lord arrives, and also Master Richard Varney, whom my lord has highly in his esteem—but I could tell that of him would lose him favour.'

'O, do not do so, good my lady!' replied Janet; 'leave him to God, who punishes the wicked in his own time; but do not you cross Varney's path, for so thoroughly hath he my lord's ear, that few have thriven who have thwarted his courses.'

'And from whom had you this, my most righteous Janet?' said the countess; 'or why should I keep terms with so mean a gentleman as Varney, being, as I am, wife to his master and patron?'

'Nay, madam,' replied Janet Foster, 'your ladyship knows better than I—But I have heard my father say, he would rather cross a hungry wolf, than thwart Richard Varney in his projects—And he has often charged me to have a care of holding commerce with him.'

'Thy father said well, girl, for thee,' replied the lady, 'and I dare swear meant well. It is a pity, though, his face and manner do little match his true purpose—for I think his purpose may be true.'

'Doubt it not, my lady,' answered Janet,—'Doubt not that my father purposes well, though he is a plain man, and his blunt looks may belie his heart.'

'I will not doubt it, girl, were it only for thy sake; and yet he has one of those faces which men tremble when they look on—I think even thy mother, Janet—nay, have done with that poking-iron—could hardly look upon him without quaking.'

'If it were so, madam,' answered Jane Foster, 'my mother had those who could keep her in honourable countenance. Why, even you, my lady, both trembled and blushed when Varney brought the letter from my lord.'

'You are bold, damsel,' said the countess, rising from the cushions on which she sat half-reclined in the arms of her attendant—'Know that there are causes of trembling which have nothing to do with fear.—But, Janet,' she added, immediately relapsing into the good-natured and familiar tone which was natural to her, 'believe me, I will do what credit I can to your father, and the rather that you, sweetheart, are his child.—Alas! alas!' she added, a sudden sadness passing over her fine features, and her eyes filling with tears, 'I ought the rather to hold sympathy with thy kind heart, that my own poor father is uncertain of my fate, and they say lies sick and sorrowful for my worthless sake!—But I will soon cheer him—the news of my happiness and advancement will make him young again.—And that I may cheer him the sooner'—she wiped her eyes as she spoke—'I must be cheerful myself—My lord must not find me insensible to his kindness, or sorrowful when he snatches a visit to his recluse, after so long an absence. Be merry, Janet—the night wears on, and my lord must soon arrive.—Call thy father hither, and call Varney also—I cherish resentment against neither; and though I may have some room to be displeased with both, it shall be their own fault if ever a complaint against them reaches the earl through my means.—Call them hither, Janet.'

Janet Foster obeyed her mistress; and in a few minutes after, Varney entered the withdrawing-room with the graceful ease and unclouded front of an accomplished courtier, skilled, under the veil of external politeness, to disguise his own feelings, and to penetrate those of others. Anthony Foster plodded into the apartment after him, his natural gloomy vulgarity of aspect seeming to become yet more remarkable, from his clumsy attempt to conceal the mixture of anxiety and dislike with which he looked on her, over whom he had hitherto exercised so severe a control, now so splendidly attired, and decked with so many pledges of the interest which she possessed in her husband's affections. The blundering reverence which he made, rather *at* than *to* the countess, had confession in it—It was like the reverence which the criminal makes to the judge, when he at once owns his guilt and implores mercy,—which is at the same time an impudent and embarrassed attempt at defence or extenuation, a confession of a fault, and an entreaty for lenity.

Varney, who, in right of his gentle blood, had pressed into the room before Anthony Foster, knew better what to say than he, and said it with more assurance and a better grace.

The countess greeted him indeed with an appearance of cordiality, which seemed a complete amnesty for whatever she might have to complain of. She rose from her seat, and advanced two steps towards him, holding forth her hand as she said, 'Master Richard Varney, you brought me this morning such welcome tidings, that I fear surprise and joy made me neglect my lord and husband's charge to receive you with distinction. We offer you our hand, sir, in reconciliation.'

'I am unworthy to touch it,' said Varney, dropping on one knee, 'save as a subject honours that of a prince.'

He touched with his lips those fair and slender fingers, so richly loaded with rings and jewels; then, rising with graceful gallantry, was about to hand her to the chair of state, when she said, 'No, good Master Richard Varney, I take not my place there until my lord himself conducts me. I am for the present but a disguised countess, and will not take dignity on me until authorized by him whom I derive it from.'

'I trust, my lady,' said Foster, 'that in doing the commands of my lord your husband, in your restraint and so forth, I have not incurred your displeasure, seeing that I did but my duty towards your lord and mine; for Heaven, as Holy Writ saith, hath given the husband supremacy and dominion over the wife—I think it runs so, or something like it.'

'I receive at this moment so pleasant a surprise, Master Foster,' answered the countess, 'that I cannot but excuse the rigid fidelity which secluded me from these apartments, until they had assumed an appearance so new and so splendid.'

'Ay, lady,' said Foster, 'it hath cost many a fair crown; and that more need not be wasted than is absolutely necessary, I leave you till my lord's arrival with good Master Richard Varney, who, as I think, hath somewhat to say to you from your most noble lord and husband.—Janet, follow me, to see that all be in order.'

'No, Master Foster,' said the countess, 'we will your daughter remains here in our apartment: out of earshot, however, in case Varney hath aught to say to me from my lord.'

Foster made his clumsy reverence, and departed, with an aspect which seemed to grudge the profuse expense, which had been wasted upon changing his house from a bare and ruinous grange to an Asiatic palace. When he was gone, his daughter took her embroidery frame, and went to establish herself at the bottom of the apartment, while Richard Varney, with a profoundly humble courtesy, took the lowest stool he could find, and, placing it by the side of the pile of cushions on which the countess had now again seated herself, sat with his eyes for a time fixed on the ground, and in profound silence.

'I thought, Master Varney,' said the countess, when she saw he was not likely to open the conversation, 'that you had something to communicate from my lord and husband; so at least I understood Master Foster, and therefore I removed my waiting-maid. If I am mistaken, I will recall her to my side; for her needle is not so absolutely perfect in tent and cross-stitch, but that my superintendence is advisable.'

'Lady,' said Varney, 'Foster was partly mistaken in my purpose. It was not *from*, but *of* your noble husband, and my approved and most noble patron, that I am led, and indeed bound, to speak.'

'The theme is most welcome, sir,' said the countess, 'whether it be of or from my noble

husband. But be brief, for I expect his hasty approach.'

'Briefly, then, madam,' replied Varney, 'and boldly, for my argument requires both haste and courage—You have this day seen Tressilian?'

'I have, sir; and what of that?' answered the lady somewhat sharply.

'Nothing that concerns me, lady,' Varney replied, with humility. 'But think you, honoured madam, that your lord will hear it with equal equanimity?'

'And wherefore should he not?—to me alone was Tressilian's visit embarrassing and painful, for he brought news of my good father's illness.'

'Of your father's illness, madam!' answered Varney. 'It must have been sudden, then—very sudden; for the messenger whom I despatched, at my lord's instance, found the good knight on the hunting-field, cheering his beagles with his wonted jovial field-cry. I trust Tressilian has but forged this news—He hath his reasons, madam, as you well know, for disquieting your present happiness.'

'You do him injustice, Master Varney,' replied the countess, with animation,—'you do him much injustice. He is the freest, the most open, the most gentle heart that breathes—My honourable lord ever excepted, I know not one to whom falsehood is more odious than to Tressilian.'

'I crave your pardon, madam,' said Varney; 'I meant the gentleman no injustice—I knew not how nearly his cause affected you. A man may, in some circumstances, disguise the truth for fair and honest purpose; for were it to be always spoken, and upon all occasions, this were no world to live in.'

'You have a courtly conscience, Master Varney,' said the countess, 'and your veracity will not, I think, interrupt your preferment in the world, such as it is.—But touching Tressilian—I must do him justice, for I have done him wrong, as none know better than thou.—Tressilian's conscience is of other mould—the world thou speakest of has not that which could bribe him from the way of truth and honour; and for living in it with a soiled fame, the ermine would as soon seek to lodge in the den of the foul polecat. For this my father loved him—For this I would have loved him—if I could—And yet in this case he had what seemed to him, unknowing alike of my marriage, and to whom I was united, such powerful reasons to withdraw me from this place, that I well trust he exaggerated much of my father's indisposition, and that thy better news may be the truer.'

'Believe me they are, madam,' answered Varney; 'I pretend not to be a champion of that same naked virtue called truth, to the very outrance. I can consent that her charms be hidden with a veil, were it but for decency's sake. But you must think lower of my head and heart, than is due to one whom my noble lord deigns to call his friend, if you suppose I could wilfully and unnecessarily palm upon your ladyship a falsehood, so soon to be detected, in a matter which concerns your happiness.'

'Master Varney,' said the countess, 'I know that my lord esteems you, and holds you a faithful and a good pilot in those seas in which he has spread so high and so venturous a sail. Do not suppose, therefore, I meant hardly by you when I spoke the truth in Tressilian's vindication—I am, as you well know, country-bred, and like plain rustic truth better than courtly compliment; but I must change my fashions with my sphere, I presume.'

'True, madam,' said Varney, smiling; 'and though you speak now in jest, it will not be amiss that in earnest your present speech had some connection with your real purpose.—A court-dame—take the most noble—the most virtuous—the most unimpeachable, that stands around our Queen's throne—would, for example, have shunned to speak the truth, or what she thought such, in praise of a discarded suitor, before the dependent and confidant of her noble husband.'

'And wherefore,' said the countess, colouring impatiently, 'should I not do justice to Tressilian's worth, before my husband's friend—before my husband himself—before the whole world?'

'And with the same openness,' said Varney, 'your ladyship will this night tell my noble lord your husband, that Tressilian has discovered your place of residence, so anxiously concealed from the world, and that he has had an interview with you.'

'Unquestionably,' said the countess. 'It will be the first thing I tell him, together with every word that Tressilian said, and that I answered. I shall speak my own shame in this, for Tressilian's reproaches, less just than he esteemed them, were not altogether unmerited—I will speak, therefore, with pain, but I will speak, and speak all.'

'Your ladyship will do your pleasure,' answered Varney; 'but methinks it were as well, since nothing calls for so frank a disclosure, to spare yourself this pain, and my noble lord the disquiet, and Master Tressilian, since belike he must be thought of in the matter, the danger which is like to ensue.'

'I can see nought of all these terrible consequences,' said the lady composedly, 'unless by imputing to my noble lord unworthy thoughts which I am sure never harboured in his generous heart.'

'Far be it from me to do so,' said Varney.—And then, after a moment's silence, he added, with a real or affected plainness of manner, very different from his usual smooth courtesy—'Come, madam, I will show you that a courtier dare speak truth as well as another, when it concerns the weal of those whom he honours and regards, ay, and although it may infer his own danger.'—He waited as if to receive commands, or at least permission, to go on, but, as the lady remained silent, he proceeded, but obviously with caution.—'Look around you,' he said, 'noble lady, and observe the barriers with which this place is surrounded, the studious mystery with which the brightest jewel that England possesses is secluded from the admiring gaze—See with what rigour your walks are circumscribed, and your movements restrained, at the beck of yonder churlish Foster. Consider all this, and judge for yourself what can be the cause.'

'My lord's pleasure,' answered the countess 'and I am bound to seek no other motive.'

'His pleasure it is indeed,' said Varney, 'and his pleasure arises out of a love worthy of object which inspires it. But he who posse a treasure, and who values it, is oft anxious, in proportion to the value he puts upon it, to secure it from the depredations of others.'

'What needs all this talk, Master Varney? said the lady, in reply; 'you would have me believe that my noble lord is jealous—Suppose it true, I know a cure for jealousy.'

'Indeed, madam!' said Varney.

'It is,' replied the lady, 'to speak the truth to my lord at all times; to hold up my mind and my thoughts before him as pure as that polished mirror; so that when he looks into my heart, he shall only see his own features reflected there.'

'I am mute, madam,' answered Varney; 'and as I have no reason to grieve for Tressilian, who would have my heart's blood were he able, I shall reconcile myself easily to what may befall the gentleman, in consequence of your frank disclosure of his having presumed to intrude upon your solitude.—You, who know my lord so much better than I, will judge if he be likely to bear the insult unavenged.'

'Nay, if I could think myself the cause of Tressilian's ruin,' said the countess,—'I who have already occasioned him so much distress, I might be brought to be silent.—And yet what will it avail, since he was seen by Foster, and I think by some one else?—No, no, Varney, urge it no more. I will tell the whole matter to my lord; and with such pleading for Tressilian's folly, as shall dispose my lord's generous heart rather to serve than to punish him.'

'Your judgment, madam,' said Varney, 'is far superior to mine, especially as you may, if you will, prove the ice before you step on it, by mentioning Tressilian's name to my lord, and observing how he endures it. For Foster and his attendant, they know not Tressilian by sight, and I can easily give them some reasonable excuse for the appearance of an unknown stranger.'

The lady paused for an instant, and then replied, 'If, Varney, it be indeed true that Foster knows not as yet that the man he saw was Tressilian, I own I were unwilling he should learn what nowise concerns him. He bears himself already with austerity enough, and I wish him not to be judge or privy-councillor in my affairs.'

'Tush,' said Varney; 'what has the surly groom to do with your ladyship's concerns?—No more, surely, than the ban-dog which watches his court-yard. If he is in aught distasteful to your ladyship, I have interest enough to have him exchanged for a seneschal that shall be more agreeable to you.'

'Master Varney,' said the countess, 'let us drop this theme—when I complain of the attendants whom my lord has placed around me, it must be to my lord himself.—Hark! I hear the trampling of horse—He comes! he comes!' she exclaimed, jumping up in ecstasy.

'I cannot think it is he,' said Varney; 'or that you can hear the tread of his horse through the closely-mantled casements.'

'Stop me not, Varney—my ears are keener than thine—it is he!'

'But, madam!—but, madam!' exclaimed Varney anxiously, and still placing himself in her way—'I trust that what I have spoken in humble duty and service will not be turned to my ruin?—I hope that my faithful advice will not be betrayed to my prejudice?—I implore that'——

'Content thee, man—content thee!' said the countess, 'and quit my skirt—you are too bold to detain me—Content thyself, I think not of thee.'

At this moment the folding doors flew wide open, and a man of majestic mien, muffled in the folds of a long dark riding-cloak, entered the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

——— This is he
Who rides on the court gale; controls its tides;
Knows all their secret shoals and fatal eddies;
Whose frown abases, and whose smile exalts;
He shines like any rainbow—and, perchance,
His colours are as transient.

OLD PLAY.

THERE was some little displeasure and confusion on the countess's brow, owing to her struggle with Varney's pertinacity; but it was exchanged for an expression of the purest joy and affection, as she threw herself into the arms of the noble stranger who entered, and, clasping him to her bosom, exclaimed, 'At length—at length thou art come!'

Varney discreetly withdrew as his lord entered, and Janet was about to do the same, when her mistress signed to her to remain. She took her place at the farther end of the apartment, and continued standing, as if ready for attendance.

Meanwhile the earl, for he was of no inferior rank, returned his lady's caress with the most affectionate ardour, but affected to resist when she strove to take his cloak from him.

'Nay,' she said, 'but I will unmantle you—I must see if you have kept your word to me, and come as the great earl men call thee, and not as heretofore like a private cavalier.'

'Thou art like the rest of the world, Amy,' said the earl, suffering her to prevail in the playful contest; 'the jewels, and feathers, and silk are more to them than the man whom they adorn—many a poor blade looks gay in a velvet scabbard.'

'But so cannot men say of thee, thou noble Earl,' said his lady, as the cloak dropped on the floor, and showed him dressed as princes when they ride abroad; 'thou art the good and well-tried steel, whose inly worth deserves, yet disdains, its outward ornaments. Do not think Amy can love thee better in this glorious garb than she did when she gave her heart to him who wore the russet-brown cloak in the woods of Devon.'

'And thou too,' said the earl, as gracefully and majestically he led his beautiful countess towards the chair of state which was prepared for them both,—'thou too, my love, hast donned a dress which becomes thy rank, though it cannot

improve thy beauty. What think'st thou of our court taste?'

The lady cast a sidelong glance upon the great mirror as they passed it by, and then said, 'I know not how it is, but I think not of my own person, while I look at the reflection of thine. Sit thou there,' she said, as they approached the chair of state, 'like a thing for men to worship and to wonder at.'

'Ay, love,' said the earl, 'if thou wilt share my state with me.'

'Not so,' said the countess; 'I will sit on this footstool at thy feet, that I may spell over thy splendour, and learn, for the first time, how princes are attired.'

And with a childish wonder, which her youth and rustic education rendered not only excusable but becoming, mixed as it was with a delicate show of the most tender conjugal affection, she examined and admired from head to foot the noble form and princely attire of him who formed the proudest ornament of the court of England's Maiden Queen, renowned as it was for splendid courtiers, as well as for wise counsellors. Regarding affectionately his lovely bride, and gratified by her unrepressed admiration, the dark eye and noble features of the earl expressed passions more gentle than the commanding and aspiring look which usually sat upon his broad forehead and in the piercing brilliancy of his dark eye; and he smiled at the simplicity which dictated the questions she put to him concerning the various ornaments with which he was decorated.

'The embroidered strap, as thou callest it, around my knee,' he said, 'is the English Garter, an ornament which kings are proud to wear. See, here is the star which belongs to it, and here the Diamond George, the jewel of the Order. You have heard how King Edward and the Countess of Salisbury'——

'O, I know all that tale,' said the countess, slightly blushing, 'and how a lady's garter became the proudest badge of English chivalry.'

'Even so,' said the earl; 'and this most honourable Order I had the good hap to receive at the same time with three most noble associates, the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Northampton, and the Earl of Rutland. I was the lowest of the four in rank—but what then?—he that climbs a ladder must begin at the first round.'

'But this other fair collar, so richly wrought, with some jewel like a sheep hung by the middle attached to it, what,' said the young countess, 'does that emblem signify?'

'This collar,' said the earl, 'with its double fusilles interchanged with these knobs, which are supposed to present flint-stones sparkling with fire, and sustaining the jewel you inquire about, is the badge of the noble Order of the Golden Fleece, once appertaining to the House of Burgundy. It hath high privileges, my Amy, belonging to it, this most noble Order; for even the King of Spain himself, who hath now succeeded to the honours and demesnes of Burgundy, may not sit in judgment upon a knight of the Golden Fleece, unless by assistance and consent of the Great Chapter of the Order.'

'And is this an Order belonging to the cruel King of Spain?' said the countess. 'Alas! my noble lord, that you will defile your noble English breast by bearing such an emblem! Bethink you of the most unhappy Queen Mary's days, when this same Philip held sway with her in England, and of the piles which were built for our noblest and our wisest, and our most truly sanctified prelates and divines—And will you, whom men call the standard-bearer of the true Protestant faith, be contented to wear the emblem and mark of such a Romish tyrant as he of Spain?'

'O, content you, my love,' answered the earl; 'we who spread our sails to gales of court favour, cannot always display the ensigns we love the best, or at all times refuse sailing under colours which we like not. Believe me, I am not the less good Protestant, that for policy I must accept the honour offered me by Spain, in admitting me to this his highest Order of knighthood. Besides, it belongs properly to Flanders; and Egmont, Orange, and others have pride in seeing it displayed on an English bosom.'

'Nay, my lord, you know your own path best,' replied the countess.—'And this other collar, to what country does this fair jewel belong?'

'To a very poor one, my love,' replied the earl; 'this is the Order of Saint Andrew, revived by the last James of Scotland. It was bestowed on me when it was thought the young widow of France and Scotland would gladly have wedded an English baron; but a free coronet of England is worth a crown matrimonial held at the humour of a woman, and owning only the poor rocks and bogs of the north.'

The countess paused, as if what the earl last said had excited some painful but interesting train of thought; and, as she still remained silent, her husband proceeded.

'And now, loveliest, your wish is gratified, and you have seen your vassal in such of his trim array as accords with riding vestments; for robes of state and coronets are only for princely halls.'

'Well, then,' said the countess, 'my gratified wish has, as usual, given rise to a new one.'

'And what is it thou canst ask that I can deny?' said the fond husband.

'I wished to see my earl visit this obscure and secret bower,' said the countess, 'in all his princely array; and now, methinks, I long to sit in one of his princely halls, and see him enter dressed in sober russet, as when he won poor Amy Robsart's heart.'

'That is a wish easily granted,' said the earl,—'the sober russet shall be donned to-morrow, if you will.'

'But shall I,' said the lady, 'go with you to one of your castles, to see how the richness of your dwelling will correspond with your peasant habit?'

'Why, Amy,' said the earl, looking around, 'are not these apartments decorated with sufficient splendour? I gave the most unbounded order, and methinks it has been indifferently well obeyed—but if thou canst tell me aught which remains to be done, I will instantly give direction.'

'Nay, my lord, now you mock me,' replied the countess; 'the gaiety of this rich lodging

exceeds my imagination as much as it does my desert. But shall not your wife, my love,—at least one day soon,—be surrounded with the honour which arises neither from the toils of the mechanic who decks her apartment, nor from the silks and jewels with which your generosity adorns her, but which is attached to her place among the matronage, as the avowed wife of England's noblest earl?'

'One day?' said her husband,—'Yes, Amy, my love, one day this shall surely happen; and, believe me, thou canst not wish for that day more fondly than I. With what rapture could I retire from labours of state, and cares and toils of ambition, to spend my life in dignity and honour on my own broad domains, with thee, my lovely Amy, for my friend and companion! But, Amy, this cannot yet be; and these dear but stolen interviews are all I can give to the loveliest and the best beloved of her sex.'

'But *why* can it not be?' urged the countess, in the softest tones of persuasion,—'Why can it not immediately take place—this more perfect, this uninterrupted union, for which you say you wish, and which the laws of God and man alike command?—Ah! did you but desire it half as much as you say, mighty and favoured as you are, who, or what, should bar your attaining your wish?'

The earl's brow was overcast.

'Amy,' he said, 'you speak of what you understand not. We that toil in courts are like those who climb a mountain of loose sand—we dare make no halt until some projecting rock affords us a secure footing and resting place—if we pause sooner, we slide down by our own weight, an object of universal derision. I stand high, but I stand not secure enough to follow my own inclination. To declare my marriage were to be the artificer of my own ruin. But, believe me, I will reach a point, and that speedily, when I can do justice to thee and to myself. Meantime, poison not the bliss of the present moment by desiring that which cannot at present be. Let me rather know whether all here is managed to thy liking. How does Foster bear himself to you?—In all things respectful, I trust, else the fellow shall dearly rue it.'

'He reminds me sometimes of the necessity of this privacy,' answered the lady, with a sigh; 'but that is reminding me of your wishes, and therefore I am rather bound to him than disposed to blame him for it.'

'I have told you the stern necessity which is upon us,' replied the earl. 'Foster is, I note, somewhat sullen of mood, but Varney warrants to me his fidelity and devotion to my service. If thou hast aught, however, to complain of the mode in which he discharges his duty, he shall abye it.'

'O, I have nought to complain of,' answered the lady, 'so he discharges his task with fidelity to you; and his daughter Janet is the kindest and best companion of my solitude—her little air of precision sits so well upon her!'

'Is she indeed?' said the earl; 'she who gives you pleasure must not pass unrewarded.—Come hither, damsel.'

'Janet,' said the lady, 'come hither to my lord.'

Janet, who, as we already noticed, had discreetly retired to some distance, that her presence might be no check upon the private conversation of her lord and lady, now came forward, and, as she made her reverential curtsey, the earl could not help smiling at the contrast which the extreme simplicity of her dress and the prim demureness of her looks made with a very pretty countenance and a pair of black eyes, that laughed in spite of their mistress's desire to look grave.

'I am bound to you, pretty damsel,' said the earl, 'for the contentment which your service hath given to this lady.' As he said this, he took from his finger a ring of some price, and offered it to Janet Foster, adding, 'Wear this for her sake and for mine.'

'I am well pleased, my lord,' answered Janet demurely, 'that my poor service hath gratified my lady, whom no one can draw nigh to without desiring to please; but we of the precious Master Holdforth's congregation seek not, like the gay daughters of this world, to twine gold around our fingers, or wear stones upon our necks, like the vain women of Tyre and of Sidon.'

'O, what! you are a grave professor of the precise sisterhood, pretty Mistress Janet,' said the earl, 'and I think your father is of the same congregation in sincerity. I like you both the better for it; for I have been prayed for, and wished well to, in your congregations. And you may the better afford the lack of ornament, Mistress Janet, because your fingers are slender, and your neck white. But here is what neither papist nor puritan, latitudinarian nor precisian, ever boggles or makes mouths at. E'en take it, my girl, and employ it as you list.'

So saying, he put into her hand five broad gold pieces of Philip and Mary.

'I would not accept this gold neither,' said Janet, 'but that I hope to find a use for it, which will bring a blessing on us all.'

'Even please thyself, pretty Janet,' said the earl, 'and I shall be well satisfied—And I prithee let them hasten the evening collation.'

'I have bidden Master Varney and Master Foster to sup with us, my lord,' said the countess, as Janet retired to obey the earl's commands; 'has it your approbation?'

'What you do ever must have so, my sweet Amy,' replied her husband; 'and I am the better pleased thou hast done them this grace, because Richard Varney is my sworn man, and a close brother of my secret council; and for the present I must needs repose much trust in this Anthony Foster.'

'I had a boon to beg of thee, and a secret to tell thee, my dear lord,' said the countess, with a faltering accent.

'Let both be for to-morrow, my love,' replied the earl. 'I see they open the folding-doors into the banqueting-parlour, and as I have ridden far and fast, a cup of wine will not be unacceptable.'

So saying, he led his lovely wife into the next apartment, where Varney and Foster received them with the deepest reverences, which the first paid with the fashion of the court, and the second after that of the congregation. The earl returned their salutation with the negligent

courtesy of one long used to such homage; while the countess repaid it with a punctilious solicitude, which showed it was not quite so familiar to her.

The banquet at which the company seated themselves corresponded in magnificence with the splendour of the apartment in which it was served up, but no domestic gave his attendance. Janet alone stood ready to wait upon the company; and, indeed, the board was so well supplied with all that could be desired, that little or no assistance was necessary. The earl and his lady occupied the upper end of the table, and Varney and Foster sat beneath the salt, as was the custom with inferiors. The latter, overawed perhaps by society to which he was altogether unused, did not utter a single syllable during the repast; while Varney, with great tact and discernment, sustained just as much of the conversation as, without the appearance of intrusion on his part, prevented it from languishing, and maintained the good humour of the earl at the highest pitch. This man was indeed highly qualified by nature to discharge the part in which he found himself placed, being discreet and cautious on the one hand, and on the other, quick, keen-witted, and imaginative; so that even the countess, prejudiced as she was against him on many accounts, felt and enjoyed his powers of conversation, and was more disposed than she had ever hitherto found herself, to join in the praises which the earl lavished on his favourite. The hour of rest at length arrived; the earl and countess retired to their apartment; and all was silent in the castle for the rest of the night.

Early on the ensuing morning, Varney acted as the earl's chamberlain, as well as his master of horse, though the latter was his proper office in that magnificent household, where knights and gentlemen of good descent were well contented to hold such menial situations, as nobles themselves held in that of the sovereign. The duties of each of these charges were familiar to Varney, who, sprung from an ancient but decayed family, was the earl's page during his earlier and more obscure fortunes, and, faithful to him in adversity, had afterwards contrived to render himself no less useful to him in his rapid and splendid advance to fortune; thus establishing in him an interest, resting both on present and past services, which rendered him an almost indispensable sharer of his confidence.

'Help me to do on a plainer riding suit, Varney,' said the earl, as he laid aside his morning-gown, flowered with silk, and lined with sables, 'and put these chains and fetters there' (pointing to the collars of the various Orders which lay on the table) 'into their place of security—my neck last night was well-nigh broke with the weight of them. I am half of the mind that they shall gall me no more. They are bonds which knaves have invented to fetter fools. How think'st thou, Varney?'

'Faith, my good lord,' said his attendant, 'I think fetters of gold are like no other fetters—they are ever the weightier the welcomer.'

'For all that, Varney,' replied his master, 'I am well-nigh resolved they shall bind me to the court no longer. What can further service and higher favour give me, beyond the high rank and large estate which I have already secured?—What brought my father to the block, but that he could not bound his wishes within right and reason?—I have, you know, had mine own ventures and mine own escapes: I am well-nigh resolved to tempt the sea no further, but sit me down in quiet on the shore.'

'And gather cockle-shells, with Dan Cupid to aid you,' said Varney.

'How mean you by that, Varney?' said the earl, somewhat hastily.

'Nay, my lord,' said Varney, 'be not angry with me. If your lordship is happy in a lady so rarely lovely, that, in order to enjoy her company with somewhat more freedom, you are willing to part with all you have hitherto lived for, some of your poor servants may be sufferers; but your bounty hath placed me so high, that I shall ever have enough to maintain a poor gentleman in the rank befitting the high office he has held in your lordship's family.'

'Yet you seem discontented when I propose throwing up a dangerous game, which may end in the ruin of both of us.'

'I, my lord?' said Varney; 'surely I have no cause to regret your lordship's retreat!—It will not be Richard Varney who will incur the displeasure of Majesty, and the ridicule of the court, when the stateliest fabric that ever was founded upon a prince's favour melts away like a morning frost-work.—I would only have you yourself to be assured, my lord, ere you take a step which cannot be retracted, that you consult your fame and happiness in the course you propose.'

'Speak on, then, Varney,' said the earl; 'I tell thee I have determined nothing, and will weigh all considerations on either side.'

'Well, then, my lord,' replied Varney, 'we will suppose the step taken, the frown frowned, the laugh laughed, and the moan moaned. You have retired, we will say, to some one of your most distant castles, so far from court that you hear neither the sorrow of your friends nor the glee of your enemies. We will suppose, too, that your successful rival will be satisfied (a thing greatly to be doubted) with abridging and cutting away the branches of the great tree which so long kept the sun from him, and that he does not insist upon tearing you up by the roots. Well; the late prime favourite of England, who wielded her general's staff and controlled her parliaments, is now a rural baron, hunting, hawking, drinking fat ale with country esquires, and mustering his men at the command of the High Sheriff'——

'Varney, forbear!' said the earl.

'Nay, my lord, you must give me leave to conclude my picture.—Sussex governs England—the Queen's health fails—the succession is to be settled—a road is opened to ambition more splendid than ambition ever dreamed of.—You hear all this as you sit by the hob, under the shade of your hall-chimney—You then begin to think what hopes you have fallen from, and what insignificance you have embraced—and all that you might look babies in the eyes of your fair wife oftener than once a fortnight.'

'I say, Varney,' said the earl, 'no more of

this. I said not that the step, which my own ease and comfort would urge me to, was to be taken hastily, or without due consideration to the public safety. Bear witness to me, Varney; I subdue my wishes of retirement, not because I am moved by the call of private ambition, but that I may preserve the position in which I may best serve my country at the hour of need.—Order our horses presently—I will wear, as formerly, one of the livery cloaks, and ride before the portmantle.—Thou shalt be master for the day, Varney—neglect nothing that can blind suspicion. We will to horse ere men are stirring. I will but take leave of my lady, and be ready. I impose a restraint on my own poor heart, and wound one yet more dear to me; but the patriot must subdue the husband.'

Having said this in a melancholy but firm accent, he left the dressing apartment.

'I am glad thou art gone,' thought Varney, 'or, practised as I am in the follies of mankind, I had laughed in the very face of thee! Thou mayest tire as thou wilt of thy new bauble, thy pretty piece of painted Eve's flesh there, I will not be thy hindrance. But of thine old bauble, ambition, thou shalt not tire, for, as you climb the hill, my lord, you must drag Richard Varney up with you; and if he can urge you to the ascent he means to profit by, believe me he will spare neither whip nor spur.—And for you, my pretty lady, that would be countess outright, you were best not thwart my courses, lest you are called to an old reckoning on a new score. "Thou shalt be master," did he say!—By my faith, he may find that he spoke truer than he is aware of—And thus he who, in the estimation of so many wise-judging men, can match Burleigh and Walsingham in policy, and Sussex in war, becomes pupil to his own menial; and all for a hazel eye and a little cunning red and white—and so falls ambition. And yet if the charms of mortal woman could excuse a man's politic pate for becoming bewildered, my lord had the excuse at his right hand on this blessed evening that has last passed over us. Well—let things roll as they may, he shall make me great, or I will make myself happy; and for that softer piece of creation, if she speak not out her interview with Tressilian, as well I think she dare not, she also must traffic with me for concealment and mutual support in spite of all this scorn.—I must to the stables.—Well, my lord, I order your retinue now; the time may soon come that *my* master of the horse shall order mine own. What was Thomas Cromwell but a smith's son? and he died my lord—on a scaffold, doubtless, but that, too, was in character—And what was Ralph Sadler but the clerk of Cromwell? and he has gazed eighteen fair lordships,—*via!* I know my steerage as well as they.'

So saying, he left the apartment.

In the meanwhile, the earl had re-entered the bedchamber, bent on taking a hasty farewell of the lovely countess, and scarce daring to trust himself in private with her, to hear requests again urged, which he found it difficult to parry, yet which his recent con[illegible]ation with his master of horse had determined [illegible]n not to grant.

He found her in a w[illegible] cymar of silk lined with furs, her little feet unstockinged and hastily thrust into slippers; her unbraided hair escaping from under her midnight coif, with little array but her own loveliness, rather augmented than diminished by the grief which she felt at the approaching moment of separation.

'Now, God be with thee, my dearest and loveliest!' said the earl, scarce tearing himself from her embrace, yet again returning to fold her again and again in his arms, and again bidding farewell, and again returning to kiss and bid adieu once more.

'The sun is on the verge of the blue horizon—I dare not stay. Ere this I should have been ten miles from hence.'

Such were the words with which at length he strove to cut short their parting interview.

'You will not grant my request, then?' said the countess. 'Ah, false knight! did ever lady, with bare foot in slipper, seek boon of a brave knight, yet return with denial?'

'Anything, Amy, anything thou canst ask I will grant,' answered the earl—'always excepting,' he said, 'that which might ruin us both.'

'Nay,' said the countess, 'I urge not my wish to be acknowledged in the character which would make me the envy of England—as the wife, that is, of my brave and noble lord, the first as the most fondly beloved of English nobles. Let me but share the secret with my dear father! Let me but end his misery on my unworthy account—they say he is ill, the good old kind-hearted man.'

'*They* say?' asked the earl hastily; 'who says? Did not Varney convey to Sir Hugh all we dare at present tell him concerning your happiness and welfare? and has he not told you that the good old knight was following, with good heart and health, his favourite and wonted exercise? Who has dared put other thoughts into your head?'

'O, no one, my lord, no one!' said the countess, something alarmed at the tone in which the question was put; 'but yet, my lord, I would fain be assured by mine own eyesight that my father is well.'

'Be contented, Amy—thou canst not now have communication with thy father or his house. Were it not a deep course of policy to commit no secret unnecessarily to the custody of more than must needs be, it were sufficient reason for secrecy, that yonder Cornish man, yonder Trevanion, or Tressilian, or whatever his name is, haunts the old knight's house, and must necessarily know whatever is communicated there.'

'My lord,' answered the countess, 'I do not think it so. My father has been long noted a worthy and honourable man; and for Tressilian, if we can pardon ourselves the ill we have wrought him, I will wager the coronet I am to share with you one day, that he is incapable of returning injury for injury.'

'I will not trust him, however, Amy,' said her husband; 'by my honour, I will not trust him. I would rather the foul fiend intermingle in our secret than this Tressilian!'

'And why, my lord?' said the countess, though she shuddered slightly at the tone of determination in which he spoke; 'let me but know why you think thus hardly of Tressilian?'

'Madam,' replied the earl, 'my will ought to be a sufficient reason. If you desire more, consider how this Tressilian is leagued, and with whom. He stands high in the opinion of this Radcliffe, this Sussex, against whom I am barely able to maintain my ground in the opinion of our suspicious mistress; and if he had me at such advantage, Amy, as to become acquainted with the tale of our marriage, before Elizabeth were fitly prepared, I were an outcast from her grace for ever—a bankrupt at once in favour and in fortune, perhaps, for she hath in her a touch of her father Henry,—a victim, and it may be a bloody one, to her offended and jealous resentment.'

'But why, my lord,' again urged his lady, 'should you deem thus injuriously of a man of whom you know so little? What you do know of Tressilian is through me, and it is I who assure you that in no circumstances will he betray your secret. If I did him wrong in your behalf, my lord, I am now the more concerned you should do him justice. You are offended at my speaking of him, what would you say had I actually myself seen him?'

'If you had,' replied the earl, 'you would do well to keep that interview as secret as that which is spoken in a confessional. I seek no one's ruin; but he who thrusts himself on my secret privacy, were better look well to his future walk. The bear * brooks no one to cross his awful path.'

'Awful, indeed!' said the countess, turning very pale.

'You are ill, my love,' said the earl, supporting her in his arms; 'stretch yourself on your couch again; it is but an early day for you to leave it.—Have you aught else, involving less than my fame, my fortune, and my life, to ask of me?'

'Nothing, my lord and love,' answered the countess faintly; 'something there was that I would have told you, but your anger has driven it from my recollection.'

'Reserve it till our next meeting, my love,' said the earl fondly, and again embracing her; 'and barring only those requests which I cannot and dare not grant, thy wish must be more than England and all its dependencies can fulfil, if it is not gratified to the letter.'

Thus saying, he at length took farewell. At the bottom of the staircase he received from Varney an ample livery cloak and slouched hat, in which he wrapped himself so as to disguise his person, and completely conceal his features. Horses were ready in the court-yard for himself and Varney;—for one or two of his train, entrusted with the secret so far as to know or guess that the earl intrigued with a beautiful lady at that mansion, though her name and quality were unknown to them, had already been dismissed over-night.

Anthony Foster himself had in hand the rein of the earl's palfrey, a stout and able nag for the road; while his old serving-man held the bridle of the more showy and gallant steed which Richard Varney was to occupy in the character of master.

As the earl approached, however, Varney advanced to hold his master's bridle, and to prevent Foster from paying that duty to the earl, which he probably considered as belonging to his own office. Foster scowled at an interference which seemed intended to prevent his paying his court to his patron, but gave place to Varney; and the earl, mounting without further observation, and forgetting that his assumed character of a domestic threw him into the rear of his supposed master, rode pensively out of the quadrangle, not without waving his hand repeatedly in answer to the signals which were made by the countess with her kerchief, from the windows of her apartment.

While his stately form vanished under the dark archway which led out of the quadrangle, Varney muttered, 'There goes fine policy—the servant before the master!' then, as he disappeared, seized the moment to speak a word with Foster. 'Thou look'st dark on me, Anthony,' he said, 'as if I had deprived thee of a parting nod of my lord; but I have moved him to leave thee a better remembrance for thy faithful service. See here! a purse of as good gold as ever chinked under a miser's thumb and forefinger. Ay, count them, lad,' said he, as Foster received the gold with a grim smile, 'and add to them the goodly remembrance he gave last night to Janet.'

'How's this! how's this!' said Anthony Foster hastily, 'gave he gold to Janet?'

'Ay, man, wherefore not?—does not her service to his fair lady require guerdon?'

'She shall have none on't,' said Foster; 'she shall return it. I know his dotage on one face is as brief as it is deep. His affections are as fickle as the moon.'

'Why, Foster, thou art mad—thou dost not hope for such good fortune as that my lord should cast an eye on Janet?—Who, in the fiend's name, would listen to the thrush when the nightingale is singing?'

'Thrush or nightingale, all is one to the fowler; and, Master Varney, you can sound the quailpipe most daintily to wile wantons into his nets. I desire no such devil's preferment for Janet as you have brought many a poor maiden to. Dost thou laugh? I will keep one limb of my family, at least, from Satan's clutches, that thou mayest rely on—She shall restore the gold.'

'Ay, or give it to thy keeping, Tony, which will serve as well,' answered Varney; 'but I have that to say which is more serious. Our lord is returning to court in an evil humour for us.'

'How meanest thou?' said Foster. 'Is he tired already of his pretty toy—his plaything yonder? He has purchased her at a monarch's ransom, and I warrant me he rues his bargain.'

'Not a whit, Tony,' answered the master of the horse; 'he dotes on her, and will forsake the court for her—then down go hopes, possessions, and safety—church-lands are resumed, Tony, and well if the holders be not called to account in Exchequer.'

* The Leicester cognisance was the ancient device adopted by his father, when Earl of Warwick, the bear and ragged staff.

'That were ruin,' said Foster, his brow darkening with apprehensions; 'and all this for a woman! Had it been for his soul's sake, it were something; and I sometimes wish I myself could fling away the world that cleaves to me, and be as one of the poorest of our church.'

'Thou art like enough to be so, Tony,' answered Varney; 'but I think the devil will give thee little credit for thy compelled poverty, and so thou losest on all hands. But follow my counsel, and Cumnor Place shall be thy copyhold yet. Say nothing of this Tressilian's visit —not a word until I give thee notice.'

'And wherefore, I pray you?' asked Foster suspiciously.

'Dull beast!' replied Varney; 'in my lord's present humour it were the ready way to confirm him in his resolution of retirement, should he know that his lady was haunted with such a spectre in his absence. He would be for playing the dragon himself over his golden fruit, and then, Tony, thy occupation is ended. A word to the wise—Farewell—I must follow him.'

He turned his horse, struck him with the spurs, and rode off under the archway in pursuit of his lord.

'Would thy occupation were ended, or thy neck broken, damned pander!' said Anthony Foster. 'But I must follow his beck, for his interest and mine are the same, and he can wind the proud earl to his will. Janet shall give me these pieces, though—they shall be laid out in some way for God's service, and I will keep them separate in my strong chest till I can fall upon a fitting employment for them. No contagious vapour shall breathe on Janet—she shall remain pure as a blessed spirit, were it but to pray God for her father. I need her prayers, for I am at a hard pass—Strange reports are abroad concerning my way of life. The congregation look cold on me; and when Master Holdforth spoke of hypocrites being like a whited sepulchre, which within was full of dead men's bones, methought he looked full at me. The Romish was a comfortable faith; Lambourne spoke true in that. A man had but to follow his thrift by such ways as offered—tell his beads—hear a mass—confess, and be absolved. These puritans tread a harder and a rougher path; but I will try—I will read my Bible for an hour ere I again open mine iron chest.'

Varney, meantime, spurred after his lord, whom he found waiting for him at the postern-gate of the park.

'You waste time, Varney,' said the earl; 'and it presses. I must be at Woodstock before I can safely lay aside my disguise; and till then, I journey in some peril.'

'It is but two hours' brisk riding, my lord,' said Varney; 'for me, I only stopped to enforce your commands of care and secrecy on yonder Foster, and to inquire about the abode of the gentleman whom I would promote to your lordship's train, in the room of Trevors.'

'Is he fit for the meridian of the antechamber, think'st thou?' said the earl.

'He promises well, my lord,' replied Varney; 'but if your lordship were pleased to ride on, I could go back to Cumnor and bring him to your lordship at Woodstock before you are out of bed.'

'Why, I am asleep there, thou knowest, at this moment,' said the earl; 'and I pray you not to spare horse-flesh, that you may be with me at my levee.'

So saying, he gave his horse the spur, and proceeded on his journey, while Varney rode back to Cumnor by the public road, avoiding the park. The latter alighted at the door of the bonnie Black Bear, and desired to speak with Master Michael Lambourne. That respectable character was not long of appearing before his new patron, but it was with downcast looks.

'Thou hast lost the scent,' said Varney, 'of thy comrade Tressilian—I know it by thy hang-dog visage. Is this thy alacrity, thou impudent knave?'

'Cogswounds!' said Lambourne, 'there was never a trail so finely hunted. I saw him to earth at mine uncle's here—stuck to him like bees'-wax—saw him at supper—watched him to his chamber, and presto—he is gone next morning, the very hostler knows not where!'

'This sounds like practice upon me, sir,' replied Varney; 'and if it proves so, by my soul you shall repent it!'

'Sir, the best hound will be sometimes at fault,' answered Lambourne; 'how should it serve me that this fellow should have thus evanished? You may ask mine host, Giles Gosling—ask the tapster and hostler—ask Cicely, and the whole household, how I kept eyes on Tressilian while he was on foot.—On my soul, I could not be expected to watch him like a sick-nurse, when I had seen him fairly a-bed in his chamber. That will be allowed me, surely?'

Varney did, in fact, make some inquiry among the household, which confirmed the truth of Lambourne's statement. Tressilian, it was unanimously agreed, had departed suddenly and unexpectedly, betwixt night and morning.

'But I will wrong no one,' said mine host; 'he left on the table in his lodging the full value of his reckoning, with some allowance to the servants of the house, which was the less necessary, that he saddled his own gelding, as it seems, without the hostler's assistance.'

Thus satisfied of the rectitude of Lambourne's conduct, Varney began to talk to him upon his future prospects, and the mode in which he meant to bestow himself, intimating that he understood from Foster he was not disinclined to enter into the household of a nobleman.

'Have you,' said he, 'ever been at court?'

'No,' replied Lambourne; 'but ever since I was ten years old, I have dreamt once a-week that I was there, and made my fortune.'

'It may be your own fault if your dream comes not true,' said Varney. 'Are you needy?'

'Um!' replied Lambourne; 'I love pleasure.'

'That is a sufficient answer, and an honest one,' said Varney. 'Know you aught of the requisites expected from the retainer of a rising courtier?'

'I have imagined them to myself, sir,' answered Lambourne; 'as, for example, a quick eye—a close mouth—a ready and bold hand—a sharp wit, and a blunt conscience.'

'And thine, I suppose,' said Varney, 'has had its edge blunted long since?'

'I cannot remember, sir, that its edge was ever over keen,' replied Lambourne. 'When I was a youth, I had some few whimsies, but I rubbed them partly out of my recollection on the rough grindstone of the wars, and what remained I washed out in the broad waves of the Atlantic.'

'Thou hast served, then, in the Indies?'

'In both East and West,' replied the candidate for court service, 'by both sea and land: I have served both the Portugal and the Spaniard—both the Dutchman and the Frenchman, and have made war on our own account with a crew of jolly fellows, who held there was no peace beyond the Line.'*

'Thou mayest do me, and my lord, and thyself, good service,' said Varney, after a pause. 'But observe, I know the world—and answer me truly, canst thou be faithful?'

'Did you not know the world,' answered Lambourne, 'it were my duty to say ay, without further circumstance, and to swear it with life and honour, and so forth. But as it seems to me that your worship is one who desires rather honest truth than politic falsehood—I reply to you, that I can be faithful to the gallows foot; ay, to the loop that dangles from it, if I am well used and well recompensed;—not otherwise.'

'To thy other virtues thou canst add, no doubt,' said Varney, in a jeering tone, 'the knack of seeming serious and religious when the moment demands it?'

'It would cost me nothing,' said Lambourne, 'to say yes—but, to speak on the square, I must needs say no. If you want a hypocrite, you may take Anthony Foster, who, from his childhood, had some sort of phantom haunting him, which he called religion, though it was that sort of godliness which always ended in being great gain. But I have no such knack of it.'

'Well,' replied Varney, 'if thou hast no hypocrisy, hast thou not a nag here in the stable?'

'Ay, sir,' said Lambourne, 'that shall take hedge and ditch with my lord duke's best hunters. When I made a little mistake on Shooter's Hill, and stopped an ancient grazier whose pouches were better lined than his brainpan, the bonnie bay nag carried me sheer off in spite of the whole hue and cry.'

'Saddle him, then, instantly, and attend me,' said Varney. 'Leave thy clothes and baggage under charge of mine host, and I will conduct thee to a service, in which, if thou do not better thyself, the fault shall not be fortune's, but thine own.'

'Brave and hearty!' said Lambourne, 'and I am mounted in an instant.—Knave hostler, saddle my nag without the loss of one instant, as thou dost value the safety of thy noddle.—Pretty Cicely, take half this purse to comfort thee for my sudden departure.'

'Gogsnouns!' replied the father, 'Cicely wants no such token from thee.—Go away, Mike, and gather grace if thou canst, though I think thou goest not to the land where it grows.'

'Let me look at this Cicely of thine, mine host,' said Varney; 'I have heard much talk of her beauty.'

'It is a sunburnt beauty,' said mine host, 'well qualified to stand out rain and wind, but little calculated to please such critical gallants as yourself. She keeps her chamber, and cannot encounter the glance of such sunny-day courtiers as my noble guest.'

'Well, peace be with her, my good host,' answered Varney; 'our horses are impatient—we bid you good day.'

'Does my nephew go with you, so please you?' said Gosling.

'Ay, such is his purpose,' answered Richard Varney.

'You are right—fully right,' replied mine host—'you are, I say, fully right, my kinsman. Thou hast got a gay horse, see thou light not unaware upon a halter—or, if thou wilt needs be made immortal by means of a rope, which thy purpose of following this gentleman renders not unlikely, I charge thee to find a gallows as far from Cumnor as thou conveniently mayest, and so I commend you to your saddle.'

The master of the horse and his new retainer mounted accordingly, leaving the landlord to conclude his ill-omened farewell to himself and at leisure, and set off together at a rapid pace, which prevented conversation until the ascent of a steep sandy hill permitted them to resume it.

'You are contented, then,' said Varney to his companion, 'to take court service?'

'Ay, worshipful sir, if you like my terms as well as I like yours.'

'And what are your terms?' demanded Varney.

'If I am to have a quick eye for my patron's interest, he must have a dull one towards my faults,' said Lambourne.

'Ay,' said Varney, 'so they lie not so grossly open that he must needs break his shins over them.'

'Agreed,' said Lambourne. 'Next, if I run down game, I must have the picking of the bones.'

'That is but reason,' replied Varney, 'so that your betters are served before you.'

'Good,' said Lambourne; 'and it only remains to be said, that if the law and I quarrel, my patron must bear me out, for that is a chief point.'

'Reason again,' said Varney, 'if the quarrel hath happened in your master's service.'

'For the wage and so forth, I say nothing,' proceeded Lambourne; 'it is the secret guerdon that I must live by.'

'Never fear,' said Varney; 'thou shalt have clothes and spending money to ruffle it with the best of thy degree, for thou goest to a household where you have gold, as they say, by the eye.'

'That jumps all with my humour,' replied Michael Lambourne; 'and it only remains that you tell me my master's name.'

'My name is Master Richard Varney,' answered his companion.

'But I mean,' said Lambourne, 'the name of the noble lord to whose service you are to prefer me.'

'How, knave, art thou too good to call *me* master?' said Varney hastily; 'I would have thee bold to others, but not saucy to me.'

* Sir Francis Drake, Morgan, and many a bold buccanier of those days, were, in fact, little better than pirates.

'I crave your worship's pardon,' said Lambourne; 'but you seemed familiar with Anthony Foster; now I am familiar with Anthony myself.'

'Thou art a shrewd knave, I see,' replied Varney. 'Mark me—I do indeed propose to introduce thee into a nobleman's household; but it is upon my person thou wilt chiefly wait, and upon my countenance that thou wilt depend. I am his master of horse—Thou wilt soon know his name—it is one that shakes the council and wields the state.'

'By this light, a brave spell to conjure with,' said Lambourne, 'if a man would discover hidden treasures!'

'Used with discretion, it may prove so,' replied Varney; 'but mark—if thou conjure with it at thine own hand, it may raise a devil who will tear thee in fragments.'

'Enough said,' replied Lambourne; 'I will not exceed my limits.'

The travellers then resumed the rapid rate of travelling which their discourse had interrupted, and soon arrived at the royal park of Woodstock. This ancient possession of the crown of England was then very different from what it had been when it was the residence of the fair Rosamond, and the scene of Henry the Second's secret and illicit amours; and yet more unlike to the scene which it exhibits in the present day, when Blenheim House commemorates the victory of Marlborough, and no less the genius of Vanbrugh, though decried in his own time by persons of taste far inferior to his own. It was, in Elizabeth's time, an ancient mansion in bad repair, which had long ceased to be honoured with the royal residence, to the great impoverishment of the adjacent village. The inhabitants, however, had made several petitions to the queen to have the favour of the sovereign's countenance occasionally bestowed upon them; and upon this very business, ostensibly at least, was the noble lord, whom we have already introduced to our readers, a visitor at Woodstock.

Varney and Lambourne galloped without ceremony into the court-yard of the ancient and dilapidated mansion, which presented on that morning a scene of bustle which it had not exhibited for two reigns. Officers of the earl's household, liverymen and retainers, went and came with all the insolent fracas which attaches to their profession. The neigh of horses and the baying of hounds were heard; for my lord, in his occupation of inspecting and surveying the manor and demesne, was of course provided with the means of following his pleasure in the chase or park, said to have been the earliest that was enclosed in England, and which was well stocked with deer, that had long roamed there unmolested. Several of the inhabitants of the village, in anxious hope of a favourable result from this unwonted visit, loitered about the court-yard, and awaited the great man's coming forth. Their attention was excited by the hasty arrival of Varney, and a murmur ran amongst them, 'The Earl's master of the horse!' while they hurried to bespeak favour by hastily unbonneting, and proffering to hold the bridle and stirrup of the favoured retainer and his attendant.

'Stand somewhat aloof, my masters!' said Varney haughtily, 'and let the domestics do their office.'

The mortified citizens and peasants fell back at the signal; while Lambourne, who had his eye upon his superior's deportment, repelled the services of those who offered to assist him with yet more discourtesy—'Stand back, Jack peasant, with a murrain to you, and let these knave footmen do their duty!'

While they gave their nags to the attendants of the household, and walked into the mansion with an air of superiority which long practice and consciousness of birth rendered natural to Varney, and which Lambourne endeavoured to imitate as well as he could, the poor inhabitants of Woodstock whispered to each other, 'Well-a-day—God save us from all such misproud princoxes! An the master be like the men, why, the fiend may take all, and yet have no more than his due.'

'Silence, good neighbours!' said the bailiff, 'keep tongue betwixt teeth—we shall know more by and by.—But never will a lord come to Woodstock so welcome as bluff old King Harry! He would horsewhip a fellow one day with his own royal hand, and then fling him an handful of silver groats, with his own broad face on them, to 'noint the sore withal.'

'Ay, rest be with him!' echoed the auditors; 'it will be long ere this Lady Elizabeth horsewhip any of us.'

'There is no saying,' answered the bailiff. 'Meanwhile, patience, good neighbours, and let us comfort ourselves by thinking that we deserve such notice at her Grace's hands.'

Meanwhile, Varney, closely followed by his new dependent, made his way to the hall, where men of more note and consequence than those left in the court-yard awaited the appearance of the earl, who as yet kept his chamber. All paid court to Varney, with more or less deference, as suited their own rank, or the urgency of the business which brought them to his lord's levee. To the general question of 'When comes my lord forth, Master Varney?' he gave brief answers, as, 'See you not my boots? I am just returned from Oxford, and know nothing of it,' and the like, until the same query was put in a higher tone by a personage of more importance. 'I will inquire of the chamberlain, Sir Thomas Copely,' was the reply. The chamberlain, distinguished by his silver key, answered, that the earl only waited Master Varney's return to come down, but that he would first speak with him in his private chamber. Varney, therefore, bowed to the company, and took leave, to enter his lord's apartment.

There was a murmur of expectation which lasted a few minutes, and was at length hushed by the opening of the folding-doors at the upper end of the apartment, through which the earl made his entrance, marshalled by his chamberlain and the steward of his family, and followed by Richard Varney. In his noble mien and princely features, men read nothing of that insolence which was practised by his dependents. His courtesies were, indeed, measured by the rank of those to whom they were addressed, but even the meanest person present had a share of his gracious notice. The inquiries which he

made respecting the condition of the manor, of the queen's rights there, and of the advantages and disadvantages which might attend her occasional residence at the royal seat of Woodstock, seemed to show that he had most earnestly investigated the matter of the petition of the inhabitants, and with a desire to forward the interest of the place.

'Now, the Lord love his noble countenance,' said the bailiff, who had thrust himself into the presence-chamber; 'he looks somewhat pale. I warrant him he hath spent the whole night in perusing our memorial. Master Toughyarn, who took six months to draw it up, said it would take a week to understand it; and see if the Earl hath not knocked the marrow out of it in twenty-four hours.'

The earl then acquainted them that he should move their sovereign to honour Woodstock occasionally with her residence during her royal progresses, that the town and its vicinity might derive, from her countenance and favour, the same advantages as from those of her predecessors. Meanwhile he rejoiced to be the expounder of her gracious pleasure, in assuring them that, for the increase of trade, and encouragement of the worthy burgesses of Woodstock, her Majesty was minded to erect the town into a staple for wool.

This joyful intelligence was received with the acclamations not only of the better sort who were admitted to the audience-chamber, but of the commons who awaited without.

The freedom of the corporation was presented to the earl upon knee by the magistrates of the place, together with a purse of gold pieces, which the earl handed to Varney, who, on his part, gave a share to Lambourne, as the most acceptable earnest of his new service.

The earl and his retinue took horse soon after, to return to court, accompanied by the shouts of the inhabitants of Woodstock, who made the old oaks ring with re-echoing, 'Long live Queen Elizabeth, and the noble Earl of Leicester!' The urbanity and courtesy of the earl even threw a gleam of popularity over his attendants, as their haughty deportment had formerly obscured that of their master; and men shouted, 'Long life to the Earl, and to his gallant followers!' as Varney and Lambourne, each in his rank, rode proudly through the streets of Woodstock.

CHAPTER VIII.

Host. I will hear you, Master Fenton; and I will, at least, keep your counsel.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

IT becomes necessary to return to the detail of those circumstances which accompanied, and indeed occasioned, the sudden disappearance of Tressilian from the sign of the Black Bear at Cumnor. It will be recollected that this gentleman, after his rencounter with Varney, had returned to Giles Gosling's caravansary, where he shut himself up in his own chamber, demanded pen, ink, and paper, and announced his purpose to remain private for the day: in the evening he appeared again in the public room, where Michael Lambourne, who had been on the watch for him, agreeably to his engagement to Varney, endeavoured to renew his acquaintance with him, and hoped he retained no unfriendly recollection of the part he had taken in the morning's scuffle.

But Tressilian repelled his advances firmly, though with civility—'Master Lambourne,' said he, 'I trust I have recompensed to your pleasure the time you have wasted on me. Under the show of wild bluntness which you exhibit, I know you have sense enough to understand me, when I say frankly, that the object of our temporary acquaintance having been accomplished, we must be strangers to each other in future.'

'*Voto!*' said Lambourne, twirling his whiskers with one hand, and grasping the hilt of his weapon with the other; 'if I thought that this usage was meant to insult me'——

'You would bear it with discretion, doubtless,' interrupted Tressilian, 'as you must do at any rate. You know too well the distance that is betwixt us, to require me to explain myself further---Good evening.'

So saying, he turned his back upon his former companion, and entered into discourse with the landlord. Michael Lambourne felt strongly disposed to bully; but his wrath died away in a few incoherent oaths and ejaculations, and he sank unresistingly under the ascendency which superior spirits possess over persons of his habits and description. He remained moody and silent in a corner of the apartment, paying the most marked attention to every motion of his late companion, against whom he began now to nourish a quarrel on his own account, which he trusted to avenge by the execution of his new master Varney's directions. The hour of supper arrived, and was followed by that of repose, when Tressilian, like others, retired to his sleeping apartment.

He had not been in bed long, when the train of sad reveries, which supplied the place of rest in his disturbed mind, was suddenly interrupted by the jar of a door on its hinges, and a light was seen to glimmer in the apartment. Tressilian, who was as brave as steel, sprang from his bed at this alarm, and had laid hand upon his sword, when he was prevented from drawing it, by a voice which said, 'Be not too rash with your rapier, Master Tressilian—It is I, your host, Giles Gosling.'

At the same time, unshrouding the dark lantern, which had hitherto only emitted an indistinct glimmer, the goodly aspect and figure of the landlord of the Black Bear was visibly presented to his astonished guest.

'What mummery is this, mine host?' said Tressilian; 'have you supped as jollily as last night, and so mistaken your chamber? or is midnight a time for masquerading it in your guest's lodging?'

'Master Tressilian,' replied mine host, 'I know my place and my time as well as e'er a merry landlord in England. But here has been my hang-dog kinsman watching you as close as ever cat watched a mouse; and here have you, on the other hand, quarrelled and fought either with him or with some other person, and I fear that danger will come of it.'

'Go to, thou art but a fool, man,' said Tressilian; 'thy kinsman is beneath my resentment; and besides, why shouldst thou think I had quarrelled with any one whomsoever?'

'O, sir,' replied the innkeeper, 'there was a red spot on thy very cheek-bone, which boded of a late brawl, as sure as the conjunction of Mars and Saturn threatens misfortune—and when you returned, the buckles of your girdle were brought forward, and your step was quick and hasty, and all things showed your hand and your hilt had been lately acquainted.'

'Well, good mine host, if I have been obliged to draw my sword,' said Tressilian, 'why should such a circumstance fetch thee out of thy warm bed at this time of night? Thou seest the mischief is all over.'

'Under favour, that is what I doubt. Anthony Foster is a dangerous man, defended by strong court patronage, which hath borne him out in matters of very deep concernment. And then, my kinsman—why, I have told you what he is; and if these two old cronies have made up their old acquaintance, I would not, my worshipful guest, that it should be at thy cost. I promise you, Mike Lambourne has been making very particular inquiries at mine hostler, when and which way you ride. Now, I would have you think, whether you may not have done or said something for which you may be waylaid, and taken at disadvantage.'

'Thou art an honest man, mine host,' said Tressilian, after a moment's consideration, 'and I will deal frankly with thee. If these men's malice is directed against me—as I deny not but it may—it is because they are the agents of a more powerful villain than themselves.'

'You mean Master Richard Varney, do you not?' said the landlord; 'he was at Cumnor Place yesterday, and came not thither so private but what he was espied by one who told me.'

'I mean the same, mine host.'

'Then, for God's sake, worshipful Master Tressilian,' said honest Gosling, 'look well to yourself. This Varney is the protector and patron of Anthony Foster, who holds under him, and by his favour, some lease of yonder mansion and the park. Varney got a large grant of the lands of the Abbacy of Abingdon and Cumnor Place, amongst others, from his master, the Earl of Leicester. Men say he can do everything with him, though I hold the Earl too good a nobleman to employ him as some men talk of.—And then the Earl can do anything (that is, anything right or fitting) with the Queen, God bless her! so you see what an enemy you have made to yourself.'

'Well—it is done, and I cannot help it,' answered Tressilian.

'Uds precious, but it must be helped in some manner,' said the host. 'Richard Varney—why, what between his influence with my lord, and his pretending to so many old and vexatious claims in right of the abbot here, men fear almost to mention his name, much more to set themselves against his practices. You may judge by our discourses the last night. Men said their pleasure of Tony Foster, but not a word of Richard Varney, though all men judge him to be at the bottom of yonder mystery about the pretty wench. But perhaps you know more of that matter than I do, for women, though they wear not swords, are occasion for many a blade's exchanging a sheath of neat's leather for one of flesh and blood.'

'I do indeed know more of that poor unfortunate lady than thou dost, my friendly host; and so bankrupt am I, at this moment, of friends and advice, that I will willingly make a counsellor of thee, and tell thee the whole history, the rather that I have a favour to ask when my tale is ended.'

'Good Master Tressilian,' said the landlord, 'I am but a poor innkeeper, little able to adjust or counsel such a guest as yourself. But as sure as I have risen decently above the world, by giving good measure and reasonable charges, I am an honest man; and as such, if I may not be able to assist you, I am at least not capable to abuse your confidence. Say away, therefore, as confidently as if you spoke to your father; and thus far at least be certain, that my curiosity—for I will not deny that which belongs to my calling—is joined to a reasonable degree of discretion.'

'I doubt it not, mine host,' answered Tressilian; and while his auditor remained in anxious expectation, he meditated for an instant how he should commence his narrative. 'My tale,' he at length said, 'to be quite intelligible, must begin at some distance back.—You have heard of the battle of Stoke, my good host, and perhaps of old Sir Roger Robsart, who, in that battle, valiantly took part with Henry VII., the Queen's grandfather, and routed the Earl of Lincoln, Lord Geraldin and his wild Irish, and the Flemings whom the Duchess of Burgundy had sent over, in the quarrel of Lambert Simnel?'

'I remember both one and the other,' said Giles Gosling; 'it is sung of a dozen times a-week on my ale-bench below.—Sir Roger Robsart of Devon—O, ay,—'tis him of whom minstrels sing to this hour,—

> He was the flower of Stoke's red field,
> When Martin Swart on ground lay slain;
> In raging rout he never reel'd,
> But like a rock did firm remain.*

Ay, and then there was Martin Swart I have heard my grandfather talk of, and of the jolly Almains whom he commanded, with their slashed doublets and quaint hose, all frounced with ribbons above the nether stocks. Here's a song goes of Martin Swart, too, an I had but memory for it:—

> Martin Swart and his men,
> Saddle them, saddle them;
> Martin Swart and his men,
> Saddle them well.'†

'True, good mine host—the day was long talked of; but if you sing so loud, you will awake more listeners than I care to commit my confidence unto.'

'I crave pardon, my worshipful guest,' said —

* This verse, or something similar, occurs in a long ballad, or poem, on Flodden Field, reprinted by the late Henry Weber [p. 65, Edinb. 1808, 8vo].

† This verse of an old song *actually* occurs in an old poem [by Skelton], where the singer boasts—

> 'Courteously he can both counter and knack
> Of Martin Swart and all his merry men.'

[See Weber's notes, in the above vol. p. 182.]

mine host; 'I was oblivious. When an old song comes across us merry old knights of the spigot, it runs away with our discretion.'

'Well, mine host, my grandfather, like some other Cornish men, kept a warm affection to the House of York, and espoused the quarrel of this Simnel, assuming the title of Earl of Warwick, as the county afterwards, in great numbers, countenanced the cause of Perkin Warbeck, calling himself the Duke of York. My grandsire joined Simnel's standard, and was taken fighting desperately at Stoke, where most of the leaders of that unhappy army were slain in their harness. The good knight to whom he rendered himself, Sir Roger Robsart, protected him from the immediate vengeance of the king, and dismissed him without ransom. But he was unable to guard him from other penalties of his rashness, being the heavy fines by which he was impoverished, according to Henry's mode of weakening his enemies. The good knight did what he might to mitigate the distresses of my ancestor; and their friendship became so strict, that my father was bred up as the sworn brother and intimate of the present Sir Hugh Robsart, the only son of Sir Roger, and the heir of his honest and generous and hospitable temper, though not equal to him in martial achievements.'

'I have heard of good Sir Hugh Robsart,' interrupted the host, 'many a time and oft. His huntsman and sworn servant, Will Badger, hath spoken of him an hundred times in this very house—a jovial knight he is, and hath loved hospitality and open housekeeping more than the present fashion, which lays as much gold lace on the seams of a doublet as would feed a dozen of tall fellows with beef and ale for a twelvemonth, and let them have their evening at the ale-house once a-week, to do good to the publican.'

'If you have seen Will Badger, mine host,' said Tressilian, 'you have heard enough of Sir Hugh Robsart; and therefore I will but say, that the hospitality you boast of hath proved somewhat detrimental to the estate of his family, which is perhaps of the less consequence, as he has but one daughter to whom to bequeath it. And here begins my share in the tale. Upon my father's death, now several years since, the good Sir Hugh would willingly have made me his constant companion. There was a time, however, at which I felt the kind knight's excessive love for field-sports detained me from studies by which I might have profited more; but I ceased to regret the leisure which gratitude and hereditary friendship compelled me to bestow on these rural avocations. The exquisite beauty of Mistress Amy Robsart, as she grew up from childhood to woman, could not escape one whom circumstances obliged to be so constantly in her company—I loved her, in short, my host, and her father saw it.'

'And crossed your true loves, no doubt?' said mine host; 'it is the way in all such cases; and I judge it must have been so in your instance, from the heavy sigh you uttered even now.'

'The case was different, mine host. My suit was highly approved by the generous Sir Hugh Robsart—it was his daughter who was cold to my passion.'

'She was the most dangerous enemy of the two,' said the innkeeper. 'I fear your suit proved a cold one.'

'She yielded me her esteem,' said Tressilian, 'and seemed not unwilling that I should hope it might ripen into a warmer passion. There was a contract of future marriage executed betwixt us upon her father's intercession; but to comply with her anxious request, the execution was deferred for a twelvemonth. During this period, Richard Varney appeared in the country, and, availing himself of some distant family connection with Sir Hugh Robsart, spent much of his time in his company, until, at length, he almost lived in the family.'

'That could bode no good to the place he honoured with his residence,' said Gosling.

'No, by the rood!' replied Tressilian. 'Misunderstanding and misery followed his presence, yet so strangely, that I am at this moment at a loss to trace the gradations of their encroachment upon a family, which had, till then, been so happy. For a time Amy Robsart received the attentions of this man Varney with the indifference attached to common courtesies; then followed a period in which she seemed to regard him with dislike, and even with disgust; and then an extraordinary species of connection appeared to grow up betwixt them. Varney dropped those airs of pretension and gallantry which had marked his former approaches; and Amy, on the other hand, seemed to renounce the ill-disguised disgust with which she had regarded them. They seemed to have more of privacy and confidence together than I fully liked; and I suspected that they met in private, where there was less restraint than in our presence. Many circumstances, which I noticed but little at the time—for I deemed her heart as open as her angelic countenance—have since arisen on my memory, to convince me of their private understanding. But I need not detail them—the fact speaks for itself. She vanished from her father's house—Varney disappeared at the same time—and this very day I have seen her in the character of his paramour, living in the house of his sordid dependent Foster, and visited by him, muffled, and by a secret entrance.'

'And this, then, is the cause of your quarrel? Methinks, you should have been sure that the fair lady either desired or deserved your interference.'

'Mine host,' answered Tressilian, 'my father, such as I must ever consider Sir Hugh Robsart, sits at home struggling with his grief, or, if so far recovered, vainly attempting to drown, in the practice of his field-sports, the recollection that he had once a daughter—a recollection which ever and anon breaks from him under circumstances the most pathetic. I could not brook the idea that he should live in misery, and Amy in guilt; and I endeavoured to seek her out, with the hope of inducing her to return to her family. I have found her, and when I have either succeeded in my attempt, or have found it altogether unavailing, it is my purpose to embark for the Virginia voyage.'

'Be not so rash, good sir,' replied Giles Gosling, 'and cast not yourself away because a woman—to be brief—is a woman, and changes

her lovers like her suit of ribands, with no better reason than mere fantasy. And ere we probe this matter further, let me ask you what circumstances of suspicion directed you so truly to this lady's residence, or rather to her place of concealment?'

'The last is the better chosen word, mine host,' answered Tressilian; 'and touching your question, the knowledge that Varney held large grants of the demesnes formerly belonging to the monks of Abingdon, directed me to this neighbourhood; and your nephew's visit to his old comrade Foster gave me the means of conviction on the subject.'

'And what is now your purpose, worthy sir?—excuse my freedom in asking the question so broadly.'

'I purpose, mine host,' said Tressilian, 'to renew my visit to the place of her residence to-morrow, and to seek a more detailed communication with her than I have had to-day. She must indeed be widely changed from what she once was, if my words make no impression upon her.'

'Under your favour, Master Tressilian,' said the landlord, 'you can follow no such course. The lady, if I understand you, has already rejected your interference in the matter.'

'It is but too true,' said Tressilian; 'I cannot deny it.'

'Then, marry, by what right or interest do you process a compulsory interference with her inclination, disgraceful as it may be to herself and to her parents? Unless my judgment gulls me, those under whose protection she has thrown herself, would have small hesitation to reject your interference, even if it were that of a father or brother; but, as a discarded lover, you expose yourself to be repelled with the strong hand as well as with scorn. You can apply to no magistrate for aid or countenance; and you are hunting, therefore, a shadow in water, and will only (excuse my plainness) come by ducking and danger in attempting to catch it.'

'I will appeal to the Earl of Leicester,' said Tressilian, 'against the infamy of his favourite.—He courts the severe and strict sect of puritans—He dare not, for the sake of his own character, refuse my appeal, even although he were destitute of the principles of honour and nobleness with which fame invests him. Or I will appeal to the Queen herself.'

'Should Leicester,' said the landlord, 'be disposed to protect his dependent (as indeed he is said to be very confidential with Varney), the appeal to the Queen may bring them both to reason. Her Majesty is strict in such matters, and (if it be not treason to speak it) will rather, it is said, pardon a dozen courtiers for falling in love with herself, than one for giving preference to another woman. Coragio, then, my brave guest! for if thou layest a petition from Sir Hugh at the foot of the throne, buckler'd by the story of thine own wrongs, the favourite earl dared as soon leap into the Thames at the fullest and deepest, as offer to protect Varney in a cause of this nature. But to do this with any chance of success, you must go formally to work; and, without staying here to tilt with the master of horse to a privy councillor, and expose yourself to the dagger of his cameradoes, you should hie you to Devonshire, get a petition drawn up for Sir Hugh Robsart, and make as many friends as you can to forward your interest at court.'

'You have spoken well, mine host,' said Tressilian. 'And I will profit by your advice, and leave you to-morrow early.'

'Nay, leave me to-night, sir, before to-morrow comes,' said the landlord. 'I never prayed for a guest's arrival more eagerly than I do to have you safely gone. My kinsman's destiny is most like to be hanged for something, but I would not that the cause were the murder of an honoured guest of mine. "Better ride safe in the dark," says the proverb, "than in daylight with a cut-throat at your elbow." Come, sir, I move you for your own safety. Your horse and all is ready, and here is your score.'

'It is somewhat under a noble,' said Tressilian, giving one to the host; 'give the balance to pretty Cicely, your daughter, and the servants of the house.'

'They shall taste of your bounty, sir,' said Gosling, 'and you should taste of my daughter's lips in grateful acknowledgment, but at this hour she cannot grace the porch to greet your departure.'

'Do not trust your daughter too far with your guests, my good landlord,' said Tressilian.

'O, sir, we will keep measure; but I wonder not that you are jealous of them all.—May I crave to know with what aspect the fair lady at the Place yesterday received you?'

'I own,' said Tressilian, 'it was angry as well as confused, and affords me little hope that she is yet awakened from her unhappy delusion.'

'In that case, sir, I see not why you should play the champion of a wench that will none of you, and incur the resentment of a favourite's favourite, as dangerous a monster as ever a knight adventurer encountered in the old story-books.'

'You do me wrong in the supposition, mine host—gross wrong,' said Tressilian; 'I do not desire that Amy should ever turn thought upon me more. Let me but see her restored to her father, and all I have to do in Europe—perhaps in the world—is over and ended.'

'A wiser resolution were to drink a cup of sack, and forget her,' said the landlord. 'But five-and-twenty and fifty look on those matters with different eyes, especially when one case of peepers is set in the skull of a young gallant, and the other in that of an old publican. I pity you, Master Tressilian, but I see not how I can aid you in the matter.'

'Only thus far, mine host,' replied Tressilian—'Keep a watch on the motions of those at the Place, which thou canst easily learn without suspicion, as all men's news fly to the ale-bench; and be pleased to communicate the tidings in writing to such person, and to no other, who shall bring you this ring as a special token—look at it—it is of value, and I will freely bestow it on you.'

'Nay, sir,' said the landlord, 'I desire no recompense—but it seems an unadvised course in me, being in a public line, to connect myself in a matter of this dark and perilous nature. I have no interest in it.'

'You, and every father in the land who would have his daughter released from the snares of

shame, and sin, and misery, have an interest deeper than aught concerning earth only could create.'

'Well, sir,' said the host, 'these are brave words; and I do pity from my soul the frank hearted old gentleman, who has minished his estate in good housekeeping for the honour of his country, and now has his daughter, who should be the stay of his age, and so forth, whisked up by such a kite as this Varney. And though your part in the matter is somewhat of the wildest, yet I will e'en be a madcap for company, and help you in your honest attempt to get back the good man's child, so far as being your faithful intelligencer can serve. And as I shall be true to you, I pray you to be trusty to me, and keep my secret; for it were bad for the custom of the Black Bear should it be said the bear-warder interfered in such matters. Varney has interest enough with the justices to dismount my noble emblem from the post on which he swings so gallantly, to call in my licence, and ruin me from garret to cellar.'

'Do not doubt my secrecy, mine host,' said Tressilian; 'I will retain, besides, the deepest sense of thy service, and of the risk thou dost run—remember the ring is my sure token.—And now, farewell—for it was thy wise advice that I should tarry here as short a time as may be.'

'Follow me, then, Sir Guest,' said the landlord, 'and tread as gently as if eggs were under your foot, instead of deal boards.—No one must know when or how you departed.'

By the aid of his dark lantern he conducted Tressilian, as soon as he had made himself ready for his journey, through a long intricacy of passages, which opened to an outer court, and from thence to a remote stable, where he had already placed his guest's horse. He then aided him to fasten on the saddle the small portmantle which contained his necessaries, opened a postern-door, and, with a hearty shake of the hand, and a reiteration of his promise to attend to what went on at Cumnor Place, he dismissed his guest on his solitary journey.

CHAPTER IX.

Far in the lane a lonely hut he found,
No tenant ventured on the unwholesome ground;
Here smokes his forge, he bares his sinewy arm,
And early strokes the sounding anvil warm;
Around his shop the steely sparkles flew,
As for the steed he shaped the bending shoe.
GAY'S TRIVIA.

As it was deemed proper by the traveller himself, as well as by Giles Gosling, that Tressilian should avoid being seen in the neighbourhood of Cumnor by those whom accident might make early risers, the landlord had given him a route, consisting of various byways and lanes, which he was to follow in succession, and which, all the turns and short-cuts duly observed, was to conduct him to the public road to Marlborough.

But, like counsel of every other kind, this species of direction is much more easily given than followed; and what betwixt the intricacy of the way, the darkness of the night, Tressilian's ignorance of the country, and the sad and perplexing thoughts with which he had to contend, his journey proceeded so slowly, that morning found him only in the vale of Whitehorse, memorable for the defeat of the Danes in former days, with his horse deprived of a forefoot shoe, an accident which threatened to put a stop to his journey, by laming the animal. The residence of a smith was his first object of inquiry, in which he received little satisfaction from the dulness or sullenness of one or two peasants, early bound for their labour, who gave brief and indifferent answers to his questions on the subject. Anxious, at length, that the partner of his journey should suffer as little as possible from the unfortunate accident, Tressilian dismounted, and led his horse in the direction of a little hamlet, where he hoped either to find or hear tidings of such an artificer as he now wanted. Through a deep and muddy lane, he at length waded on to the place, which proved only an assemblage of five or six miserable huts, about the doors of which one or two persons, whose appearance seemed as rude as that of their dwellings, were beginning the toils of the day. One cottage, however, seemed of rather superior aspect, and the old dame, who was sweeping her threshold, appeared something less rude than her neighbours. To her Tressilian addressed the oft-repeated question, whether there was a smith in this neighbourhood, or any place where he could refresh his horse? The dame looked him in the face with a peculiar expression, as she replied, 'Smith! ay, truly is there a smith—what wouldst ha' wi' un, mon?'

'To shoe my horse, good dame,' answered Tressilian; 'you may see that he has thrown a forefoot shoe.'

'Master Holiday!' exclaimed the dame, without returning any direct answer—'Master Herasmus Holiday, come and speak to mon, and please you.'

'*Favete linguis*,' answered a voice from within; 'I cannot now come forth, Gammer Sludge, being in the very sweetest bit of my morning studies.'

'Nay but, good now, Master Holiday, come ye out, do ye—Here's a mon would to Wayland Smith, and I care not to show him way to devil his horse hath cast shoe.'

'*Quid mihi cum caballo?*' replied the man of learning from within; 'I think there is but one wise man in the hundred, and they cannot shoe a horse without him!'

And forth came the honest pedagogue, for such his dress bespoke him. A long, lean, shambling, stooping figure was surmounted by a head thatched with lank black hair somewhat inclining to grey. His features had the cast of habitual authority, which I suppose Dionysius carried with him from the throne to the schoolmaster's pulpit, and bequeathed as a legacy to all of the same profession. A black buckram cassock was gathered at his middle with a belt, at which hung, instead of knife or weapon, a goodly leathern pen-and-ink case. His ferula was stuck on the other side, like Harlequin's wooden sword; and he carried in his hand the tattered volume which he had been busily perusing.

On seeing a person of Tressilian's appearance, which he was better able to estimate than the

country folks had been, the schoolmaster unbonneted, and accosted him with '*Salve, domine. Intelligisne linguam Latinam?*'

Tressilian mustered his learning to reply, '*Linguæ Latinæ haud penitus ignarus, venia tua, domine eruditissime, vernaculam libentius loquor.*'

The Latin reply had upon the schoolmaster the effect which the mason's sign is said to produce on the brethren of the trowel. He was at once interested in the learned traveller, listened with gravity to his story of a tired horse and a lost shoe, and then replied with solemnity, 'It may appear a simple thing, most worshipful, to reply to you that there dwells, within a brief mile of these *tuguria*, the best *faber ferrarius*, the most accomplished blacksmith that ever nailed iron upon horse. Now, were I to say so, I warrant me you would think yourself *compos voti*, or, as the vulgar have it, a made man.'

'I should at least,' said Tressilian, 'have a direct answer to a plain question, which seems difficult to be obtained in this country.'

'It is a mere sending of a sinful soul to the evil un,' said the old woman, 'the sending a living creature to Wayland Smith.'

'Peace, Gammer Sludge!' said the pedagogue; '*pauca verba*, Gammer Sludge; look to the furmity, Gammer Sludge; *curetur jentaculum*, Gammer Sludge; this gentleman is none of thy gossips.' Then turning to Tressilian, he resumed his lofty tone, 'And so, most worshipful, you would really think yourself *felix bis terque*, should I point out to you the dwelling of this same smith?'

'Sir,' replied Tressilian, 'I should in that case have all that I want at present—a horse fit to carry me forward—out of hearing of your learning.' The last words he muttered to himself.

'*O cæca mens mortalium!*' said the learned man; 'well was it sung by Junius Juvenalis, "*numinibus vota exaudita malignis!*"'

'Learned Magister,' said Tressilian, 'your erudition so greatly exceeds my poor intellectual capacity, that you must excuse my seeking elsewhere for information which I can better understand.'

'There again now,' replied the pedagogue, 'how fondly you fly from him that would instruct you! Truly said Quintilian'——

'I pray, sir, let Quintilian be for the present, and answer, in a word and in English, if your learning can condescend so far, whether there is any place here where I can have opportunity to refresh my horse, until I can have him shod?'

'Thus much courtesy, sir,' said the schoolmaster, 'I can readily render you, that although there is in this poor hamlet (*nostra paupera regna*) no regular *hospitium*, as my namesake Erasmus calleth it, yet forasmuch as you are somewhat imbued, or at least tinged as it were, with good letters, I will use my interest with the good woman of the house to accommodate you with a platter of furmity—an wholesome food, for which I have found no Latin phrase—your horse shall have a share of the cow-house, with a bottle of sweet hay, in which the good woman Sludge so much abounds, that it may be said of her cow, *fœnum habet in cornu*; and if it please you to bestow on me the pleasure of your company, the banquet shall cost you *ne semissem quidem*, so much is Gammer Sludge bound to me for the pains I have bestowed on the top and bottom of her hopeful heir Dickie, whom I have painfully made to travel through the accidence.'

'Now, God yield ye for it, Master Herasmus,' said the good Gammer, 'and grant that little Dickie may be the better for his accident!—and for the rest, if the gentleman list to stay, breakfast shall be on the board in the wringing of a dishclout; and for horse-meat, and man's meat, I bear no such base mind as to ask a penny.'

Considering the state of his horse, Tressilian, upon the whole, saw no better course than to accept the invitation thus learnedly made and hospitably confirmed, and take chance that when the good pedagogue had exhausted every topic of conversation, he might possibly condescend to tell him where he could find the smith they spoke of. He entered the hut accordingly, and sat down with the learned Magister Erasmus Holiday, partook of his furmity, and listened to his learned account of himself for a good half-hour, ere he could get him to talk upon any other topic. The reader will readily excuse our accompanying this man of learning into all the details with which he favoured Tressilian, of which the following sketch may suffice.

He was born at Hogsnorton, where, according to popular saying, the pigs play upon the organ; a proverb which he interpreted allegorically, as having reference to the herd of Epicurus, of which litter Horace confessed himself a porker. His name of Erasmus he derived partly from his father having been the son of a renowned washerwoman, who had held that great scholar in clean linen all the while he was at Oxford; a task of some difficulty, as he was only possessed of two shirts, 'the one,' as she expressed herself, 'to wash the other.' The vestiges of one of these *camiciæ*, as Master Holiday boasted, were still in his possession, having fortunately been detained by his grandmother to cover the balance of her bill. But he thought there was a still higher and overruling cause for his having had the name of Erasmus conferred on him, namely, the secret presentiment of his mother's mind, that, in the babe to be christened, was a hidden genius, which should one day lead him to rival the fame of the great scholar of Amsterdam. The schoolmaster's surname led him as far into dissertation as his Christian appellative. He was inclined to think that he bore the name of Holiday *quasi lucus a non lucendo*, because he gave such few holidays to his school. 'Hence,' said he, 'the schoolmaster is termed, classically, *Ludi Magister*, because he deprives the boys of their play.' And yet, on the other hand, he thought it might bear a very different interpretation, and refer to his own exquisite art in arranging pageants, morris-dances, May-day festivities, and such-like holiday delights, for which he assured Tressilian he had positively the purest and the most inventive brain in England; insomuch that his cunning in framing such pleasures had made him known to many honourable persons, both in country and in court, and especially to the noble Earl of Leicester—'And although he may now seem to forget me,' he said, 'in the multitude of state affairs, yet I

am well assured that, had he some pretty pastime to array for entertainment of the Queen's Grace, horse and man would be seeking the humble cottage of Erasmus Holiday. *Parvo contentus*, in the meanwhile, I hear my pupils parse, and construe, worshipful sir, and drive away my time with the aid of the Muses. And I have at all times, when in correspondence with foreign scholars, subscribed myself Erasmus ab Die Fausto, and have enjoyed the distinction due to the learned under that title; witness the erudite Diedrichus Buckerschockius, who dedicated to me under that title his treatise on the letter *Tau*. In fine, sir, I have been a happy and distinguished man.'

'Long may it be so, sir!' said the traveller; 'but permit me to ask, in your own learned phrase, *Quid hoc ad Iphycli boves*—what has all this to do with the shoeing of my poor nag?'

'*Festina lente*,' said the man of learning, 'we will presently come to that point. You must know that some two or three years past, there came to these parts one who called himself Doctor Doboobie, although it may be he never wrote even *Magister artium*, save in right of his hungry belly. Or it may be that, if he had any degrees, they were of the devil's giving, for he was what the vulgar call a white witch—a cunning man, and such like. Now, good sir, I perceive you are impatient; but if a man tell not his tale his own way, how have you warrant to think that he can tell it in yours?'

'Well, then, learned sir, take your way,' answered Tressilian; 'only let us travel at a sharper pace, for my time is somewhat of the shortest.'

'Well, sir,' resumed Erasmus Holiday, with the most provoking perseverance, 'I will not say that this same Demetrius, for so he wrote himself when in foreign parts, was an actual conjuror, but certain it is that he professed to be a brother of the mystical Order of the Rosy Cross, a disciple of Geber (*ex nomine cujus venit verbum vernaculum, gibberish*). He cured wounds by salving the weapon instead of the sore—told fortunes by palmistry—discovered stolen goods by the sieve and shears—gathered the right maddow and the male-fern seed, through use of which men walk invisible—pretended some advances towards the panacea, or universal elixir, and affected to convert good lead into sorry silver.'

'In other words,' said Tressilian, 'he was a quacksalver and common cheat: but what has all this to do with my nag, and the shoe which he has lost?'

'With your worshipful patience,' replied the diffusive man of letters, 'you shall understand that presently,—*patientia*, then, right worshipful, which word, according to our Marcus Tullius, is "*difficilium rerum diuturna perpessio*." This same Demetrius Doboobie, after dealing with the country, as I have told you, began to acquire fame *inter magnates*, among the prime men of the land, and there is likelihood he might have aspired to great matters, had not, according to vulgar fame, (for I aver not the thing as according with my certain knowledge), the devil claimed his right, one dark night, and flown off with Demetrius, who was never seen or heard of afterwards. Now here comes the *medulla*, the very marrow of my tale. This Doctor Doboobie had a servant, a poor snake, whom he employed in trimming his furnace, regulating it by just measure—compounding his drugs—tracing his circles—cajoling his patients, *et sic de cæteris*.—Well, right worshipful, the doctor being removed thus strangely, and in a way which struck the whole country with terror, this poor Zany thinks to himself, in the words of Maro, "*Uno avulso, non deficit alter*;" and, even as a tradesman's apprentice sets himself up in his master's shop when he is dead, or hath retired from business, so doth this Wayland assume the dangerous trade of his defunct master. But although, most worshipful sir, the world is ever prone to listen to the pretensions of such unworthy men, who are, indeed, mere *saltim banqui* and *charlatani*, though usurping the style and skill of doctors of medicine, yet the pretensions of this poor Zany, this Wayland, were too gross to pass on them, nor was there a mere rustic, a villager, who was not ready to accost him in the sense of Persius, though in their own rugged words,—

> Diluis helleborum, certo compescere puncto
> Nescius examen? vetat hoc natura medendi;

which I have thus rendered in a poor paraphrase of mine own,—

> Wilt thou mix hellebore, who doth not know
> How many grains should to the mixture go?
> The art of medicine this forbids, I trow.

Moreover, the evil reputation of the master, and his strange and doubtful end, or, at least, sudden disappearance, prevented any, excepting the most desperate of men, to seek any advice or opinion from the servant; wherefore the poor vermin was likely at first to swarf for very hunger. But the devil that serves him, since the death of Demetrius or Doboobie, put him on a fresh device. This knave, whether from the inspiration of the devil, or from early education, shoes horses better than e'er a man betwixt us and Iceland; and so he gives up his practice on the bipeds, the two-legged and unfledged species called mankind, and betakes him entirely to shoeing of horses.'

'Indeed! and where does he lodge all this time?' said Tressilian. 'And does he shoe horses well?—show me his dwelling presently.'

The interruption pleased not the Magister, who exclaimed, '*O cæca mens mortalium!* though, by the way, I used that quotation before. But I would the classics could afford me any sentiment of power to stop those who are so willing to rush upon their own destruction. Hear but, I pray you, the conditions of this man,' said he, in continuation, 'ere you are so willing to place yourself within his danger'——

'A' takes no money for a's work,' said the dame, who stood by, enraptured as it were with the fine words and learned apophthegms which glided so fluently from her erudite inmate, Master Holiday. But this interruption pleased not the Magister, more than that of the traveller.

'Peace,' said he, 'Gammer Sludge; know your place, if it be your will. *Sufflamina*, Gammer Sludge, and allow me to expound this matter to our worshipful guest.—Sir,' said he, again addressing Tressilian, 'this old woman

speaks true, though in her own rude style; for certainly this *faber ferrarius*, or blacksmith takes money of no one.'

'And that is a sure sign he deals with Satan, said Dame Sludge; 'since no good Christian would ever refuse the wages of his labour.'

'The old woman hath touched it again,' said the pedagogue; '*rem acu tetigit*—she hath pricked it with her needle's point.—This Wayland takes no money, indeed, nor doth he show himself to any one.'

'And can this madman, for such I hold him,' said the traveller, 'know aught like good skill of his trade?'

'O, sir, in that let us give the devil his due—Mulciber himself, with all his Cyclops, could hardly amend him. But assuredly there is little wisdom in taking counsel or receiving aid from one who is but too plainly in league with the author of evil.'

'I must take my chance of that, good Master Holiday,' said Tressilian, rising; 'and as my horse must now have eaten his provender, I must needs thank you for your good cheer, and pray you to show me this man's residence, that I may have the means of proceeding on my journey.'

'Ay, ay, do ye show him, Master Herasmus,' said the old dame, who was, perhaps, desirous to get her house freed of her guest; 'a' must needs go when the devil drives.'

'*Do manus*,' said the Magister, 'I submit—taking the world to witness, that I have possessed this honourable gentleman with the full injustice which he has done and shall do to his own soul, if he becomes thus a trinketer with Satan. Neither will I go forth with our guest myself, but rather send my pupil.—*Ricarde! adsis nebulo*.'

'Under your favour, not so,' answered the old woman; 'you may peril your own soul, if you list, but my son shall budge on no such errand; and I wonder at you, Dominie Doctor, to propose such a piece of service for little Dickie.'

'Nay, my good Gammer Sludge,' answered the preceptor, 'Ricardus shall go but to the top of the hill, and indicate with his digit to the stranger the dwelling of Wayland Smith. Believe not that any evil can come to him, he having read this morning, fasting, a chapter of the Septuagint, and, moreover, having had his lesson in the Greek Testament.'

'Ay,' said his mother, 'and I have sewn a sprig of witch's elm in the neck of un's doublet, ever since that foul thief has begun his practices on man and beast in these parts.'

'And as he goes oft (as I hugely suspect) towards this conjuror for his own pastime, he may for once go thither, or near it, to pleasure us, and to assist this stranger.—*Ergo, heus Ricarde! adsis, quæso, mi didascule*.'

The pupil, thus affectionately invoked, at length came stumbling into the room; a queer, shambling, ill-made urchin, who, by his stunted growth, seemed about twelve or thirteen years old, though he was probably, in reality, a year or two older, with a carroty pate in huge disorder, a freckled sunburnt visage, with a snub nose, a long chin, and two peery grey eyes, which had a droll obliquity of vision, approaching to a squint, though perhaps not a decided one. It was impossible to look at the little man without some disposition to laugh, especially when Gammer Sludge, seizing upon and kissing him, in spite of his struggling and kicking in reply to her caresses, termed him her own precious pearl of beauty.

'*Ricarde*,' said the preceptor, 'you must forthwith (which is *profecto*) set forth so far as the top of the hill, and show this man of worship Wayland Smith's workshop.'

'A proper errand of a morning,' said the boy, in better language than Tressilian expected; 'and who knows but the devil may fly away with me before I come back?'

'Ay, marry may un,' said Dame Sludge, 'and you might have thought twice, Master Dominie, ere you sent my dainty darling on arrow such errand. It is not for such doings I feed your belly and clothe your back, I warrant you!'

'Pshaw—*nugæ*, good Gammer Sludge,' answered the preceptor; 'I insure you that Satan, if there be Satan in the case, shall not touch a thread of his garment; for Dickie can say his *pater* with the best, and may defy the foul fiend—*Eumenides, Stygiumque nefas*.'

'Ay, and I, as I said before, have sewed a sprig of the mountain-ash into his collar,' said the good woman, 'which will avail more than your clerkship, I wus; but for all that, it is ill to seek the devil or his mates either.'

'My good boy,' said Tressilian, who saw, from a grotesque sneer on Dickie's face, that he was more likely to act upon his own bottom than by the instructions of his elders, 'I will give thee a silver groat, my pretty fellow, if you will but guide me to this man's forge.'

The boy gave him a knowing side look, which seemed to promise acquiescence, while at the same time he exclaimed, 'I be your guide to Wayland Smith's! Why, man, did I not say that the devil might fly off with me, just as the kite there' (looking to the window) 'is flying off with one of grandam's chicks.'

'The kite! the kite!' exclaimed the old woman in return, and, forgetting all other matters in her alarm, hastened to the rescue of her chicken as fast as her old legs could carry her.

'Now for it,' said the urchin to Tressilian; 'snatch your beaver, get out your horse, and have at the silver groat you spoke of.'

'Nay, but tarry, tarry,' said the preceptor. '*Sufflamina, Ricarde*.'

'Tarry yourself,' said Dickie, 'and think what answer you are to make to granny for sending me post to the devil.'

The teacher, aware of the responsibility he was incurring, bustled up in great haste to lay hold of the urchin, and to prevent his departure; but Dickie slipped through his fingers, bolted from the cottage, and sped him to the top of a neighbouring rising ground; while the preceptor, despairing, by well-taught experience, of recovering his pupil by speed of foot, had recourse to the most honeyed epithets the Latin vocabulary affords, to persuade his return. But to *mi anime, corculum meum*, and all such classical endearments, the truant turned a deaf ear, and kept frisking on the top of the rising ground like

a goblin by moonlight, making signs to his new acquaintance, Tressilian, to follow him.

The traveller lost no time in getting out his horse, and departed to join his elvish guide, after half forcing on the poor deserted teacher a recompense for the entertainment he had received, which partly allayed the terror he had for facing the return of the old lady of the mansion. Apparently this took place soon afterwards; for ere Tressilian and his guide had proceeded far on their journey, they heard the screams of a cracked female voice, intermingled with the classical objurgations of Master Erasmus Holiday. But Dickie Sludge, equally deaf to the voice of maternal tenderness and of magisterial authority, skipped on unconsciously before Tressilian, only observing that, 'if they cried themselves hoarse, they might go lick the honey-pot, for he had eaten up all the honey-comb himself on yesterday even.'

CHAPTER X.

> There entering in, they found the goodman selfe
> Full busylie unto his work ybent,
> Who was to weet a wietched wearish elf,
> With hollow eyes and rawbone cheeks forspent,
> As if he had been long in prison pent.
> THE FAERY QUEENE.

'ARE we far from the dwelling of this smith, my pretty lad?' said Tressilian to his young guide.

'How is it you call me?' said the boy, looking askew at him with his sharp grey eyes.

'I call you my pretty lad—is there any offence in that, my boy?'

'No;—but were you with my grandam and Dominie Holiday, you might sing chorus to the old song of

> We three
> Tom-fools be.'

'And why so, my little man?' said Tressilian.

'Because,' answered the ugly urchin, 'you are the only three ever called me pretty lad.—Now, my grandam does it because she is parcel blind by age, and whole blind by kindred—and my master, the poor dominie, does it to curry favour, and have the fullest platter of furmity, and the warmest seat by the fire. But what you call me pretty lad for, you know best yourself.'

'Thou art a sharp wag at least, if not a pretty one. But what do thy playfellows call thee?'

'Hobgoblin,' answered the boy readily; 'but for all that, I would rather have my own ugly viznomy than any of their jolterheads, that have no more brains in them than a brickbat.'

'Then you fear not this smith, whom you are going to see?'

'Me fear him!' answered the boy; 'if he were the devil folk think him, I would not fear him; but though there is something queer about him, he's no more a devil than you are, and that's what I would not tell to every one.'

'And why do you tell it to me, then, my boy?' said Tressilian.

'Because you are another guess gentleman than those we see here every day,' replied Dickie; 'and though I am as ugly as sin, I would not have you think me an ass, especially as I may have a boon to ask of you one day.'

'And what is that, my lad, whom I must not call pretty?' replied Tressilian.

'O, if I were to ask it just now,' said the boy, 'you would deny it me—but I will wait till we meet at court.'

'At court, Richard! are you bound for court?' said Tressilian.

'Ay, ay, that's just like the rest of them,' replied the boy; 'I warrant me you think, what should such an ill-favoured, scrambling urchin do at court? But let Richard Sludge alone; I have not been cock of the roost here for nothing. I will make sharp wit mend foul feature.'

'But what will your grandam say, and your tutor, Dominie Holiday?'

'E'en what they like,' replied Dickie; 'the one has her chickens to reckon, and the other has his boys to whip. I would have given them the candle to hold long since, and shown this trumpery hamlet a fair pair of heels, but the dominie promises I should go with him to bear share in the next pageant he is to set forth, and they say there are to be great revels shortly.'

'And whereabouts are they to be held, my little friend?' said Tressilian.

'O, at some castle far in the north,' answered his guide—'a world's breadth from Berkshire. But our old dominie holds that they cannot go forward without him; and it may be he is right, for he has put in order many a fair pageant. He is not half the fool you would take him for, when he gets to work he understands; and so he can spout verses like a play-actor, when, God wot, if you set him to steal a goose's egg, he would be drubbed by the gander.'

'And you are to play a part in his next show?' said Tressilian, somewhat interested by the boy's boldness of conversation, and shrewd estimate of character.

'In faith,' said Richard Sludge, in answer, 'he hath so promised me; and if he break his word, it will be the worse for him; for let me take the bit between my teeth, and turn my head down hill, and I will shake him off with a fall that may harm his bones—And I should not like much to hurt him neither,' said he, 'for the tiresome old fool has painfully laboured to teach me all he could.—But enough of that—here are we at Wayland Smith's forge-door.'

'You jest, my little friend,' said Tressilian; 'here is nothing but a bare moor, and that ring of stones, with a great one in the midst, like a Cornish barrow.'

'Ay, and that great flat stone in the midst, which lies across the top of these uprights,' said the boy, 'is Wayland Smith's counter, that you must tell down your money upon.'

'What do you mean by such folly?' said the traveller, beginning to be angry with the boy, and vexed with himself for having trusted such a harebrained guide.

'Why,' said Dickie, with a grin, 'you must tie your horse to that upright stone that has the ring in't, and then you must whistle three times, and lay me down your silver groat on that other flat stone, walk out of the circle, sit down on the west side of that little thicket of bushes, and

take heed you look neither to right nor to left for ten minutes, or so long as you shall hear the hammer clink, and whenever it ceases, say your prayers for the space you could tell a hundred, —or count over a hundred, which will do as well, —and then come into the circle; you will find your money gone, and your horse shod.'

'My money gone to a certainty!' said Tressilian; 'but as for the rest—Hark ye, my lad, I am not your schoolmaster; but if you play off your waggery on me, I will take a part of his task off his hands, and punish you to purpose.'

'Ay, when you catch me!' said the boy; and presently took to his heels across the heath, with a velocity which baffled every attempt of Tressilian to overtake him, loaded as he was with his heavy boots. Nor was it the least provoking part of the urchin's conduct, that he did not exert his utmost speed, like one who finds himself in danger, or who is frightened, but preserved just such a rate as to encourage Tressilian to continue the chase, and then darted away from him with the swiftness of the wind, when his pursuer supposed he had nearly run him down, doubling, at the same time, and winding, so as always to keep near the place from which he started.

This lasted until Tressilian, from very weariness, stood still, and was about to abandon the pursuit, with a hearty curse on the ill-favoured urchin, who had engaged him in an exercise so ridiculous. But the boy, who had, as formerly, planted himself on the top of a hillock close in front, began to clap his long thin hands, point with his skinny fingers, and twist his wild and ugly features into such an extravagant expression of laughter and derision, that Tressilian began half to doubt whether he had not in view an actual hobgoblin.

Provoked extremely, yet at the same time feeling an irresistible desire to laugh, so very odd were the boy's grimaces and gesticulations, the Cornish man returned to his horse, and mounted him with the purpose of pursuing Dickie at more advantage.

The boy no sooner saw him mount his horse, than he hollo'd out to him, that rather than he should spoil his white-footed nag, he would come to him, on condition he would keep his fingers to himself.

'I will make no condition with thee, thou naughty varlet!' said Tressilian; 'I will have thee at my mercy in a moment.'

'Aha, Master Traveller,' said the boy, 'there is a marsh hard by would swallow all the horses of the Queen's Guard—I will into it, and see where you will go then.—You shall hear the bittern bump, and the wild-drake quack, ere you get hold of me without my consent, I promise you.'

Tressilian looked out, and, from the appearance of the ground behind the hillock, believed it might be as the boy said, and accordingly determined to strike up a peace with so light-footed and ready-witted an enemy—'Come down,' he said, 'thou mischievous brat!—leave thy moping and mowing, and come hither; I will do thee no harm, as I am a gentleman.'

The boy answered his invitation with the utmost confidence, and danced down from his stance with a galliard sort of step, keeping his eye at the same time fixed on Tressilian's, who, once more dismounted, stood with his horse's bridle in his hand, breathless, and half exhausted with his fruitless exercise, though not one drop of moisture appeared on the freckled forehead of the urchin, which looked like a piece of dry and discoloured parchment, drawn tight across the brow of a fleshless skull.

'And tell me,' said Tressilian, 'why you use me thus, thou mischievous imp? or what your meaning is by telling me so absurd a legend as you wished but now to put on me? Or rather show me in good earnest this smith's forge, and I will give thee what will buy thee apples through the whole winter.'

'Were you to give me an orchard of apples,' said Dickie Sludge, 'I can guide thee no better than I have done. Lay down the silver token on the flat stone—whistle three times—then come sit down on the western side of the thicket of gorse; I will sit by you, and give you free leave to wring my head off, unless you hear the smith at work within two minutes after we are seated.'

'I may be tempted to take thee at thy word,' said Tressilian, 'if you make me do aught half so ridiculous for your own mischievous sport—however, I will prove your spell.—Here, then, I tie my horse to this upright stone—I must lay my silver groat here, and whistle three times, sayest thou?'

'Ay, but thou must whistle louder than an unfledged ousel,' said the boy, as Tressilian, having laid down his money, and, half ashamed of the folly he practised, made a careless whistle —'You must whistle louder than that, for who knows where the smith is that you call for?—He may be in the King of France's stables for what I know.'

'Why, you said but now he was no devil,' replied Tressilian.

'Man or devil,' said Dickie, 'I see that I must summon him for you;' and therewithal he whistled sharp and shrill, with an acuteness of sound that almost thrilled through Tressilian's brain—'That is what I call whistling,' said he, after he had repeated the signal thrice; 'and now to cover, to cover, or Whitefoot will not be shod this day.'

Tressilian, musing what the upshot of this mummery was to be, yet satisfied there was to be some serious result, by the confidence with which the boy had put himself in his power, suffered himself to be conducted to that side of the little thicket of gorse and brushwood, which was farthest from the circle of stones, and there sat down; and as it occurred to him that, after all, this might be a trick for stealing his horse, he kept his hand on the boy's collar, determined to make him hostage for its safety.

'Now, hush and listen,' said Dickie, in a low whisper; 'you will soon hear the tack of a hammer that was never forged of earthly iron, for the stone it was made of was shot from the moon.' And in effect Tressilian did immediately hear the light stroke of a hammer, as when a farrier is at work. The singularity of such a sound, in so very lonely a place, made him involuntarily start; but, looking at the boy, and discovering, by the arch, malicious expression of

his countenance, that the urchin saw and enjoyed his slight tremor, he became convinced that the whole was a concerted stratagem, and determined to know by whom, or for what purpose, the trick was played off.

Accordingly, he remained perfectly quiet all the time that the hammer continued to sound, being about the space usually employed in fixing a horse-shoe. But the instant the sound ceased, Tressilian, instead of interposing the space of time which his guide had requested, started up with his sword in his hand, ran round the thicket, and confronted a man in a farrier's leathern apron, but otherwise fantastically attired in a bear-skin dressed with the fur on, and a cap of the same, which almost hid the sooty and begrimed features of the wearer—'Come back, come back!' cried the boy to Tressilian, 'or you will be torn to pieces—no man lives that looks on him.'—In fact, the invisible smith (now fully visible) heaved up his hammer, and showed symptoms of doing battle.

But when the boy observed that neither his own entreaties, nor the menaces of the farrier, appeared to change Tressilian's purpose, but that, on the contrary, he confronted the hammer with his drawn sword, he exclaimed to the smith, in turn, 'Wayland, touch him not, or you will come by the worse!--the gentleman is a true gentleman, and a bold.'

'So thou hast betrayed me, Flibbertigibbet?' said the smith; 'it shall be the worse for thee!'

'Be who thou wilt,' said Tressilian, 'thou art in no danger from me, so thou tell me the meaning of this practice, and why thou drivest thy trade in this mysterious fashion.'

The smith, however, turning to Tressilian, exclaimed, in a threatening tone, 'Who questions the Keeper of the Crystal Castle of Light, the Lord of the Green Lion, the Rider of the Red Dragon?—Hence!—avoid thee, ere I summon Talpack with his fiery lance, to quell, crush, and consume!' These words he uttered with violent gesticulation, mouthing, and flourishing his hammer.

'Peace, thou vile cozener, with thy gipsy cant!' replied Tressilian scornfully, 'and follow me to the next magistrate, or I will cut thee over the pate.'

'Peace, I pray thee, good Wayland!' said the boy; 'credit me, the swaggering vein will not pass here, you must cut boon whids!' *

'I think, worshipful sir,' said the smith, sinking his hammer, and assuming a more gentle and submissive tone of voice, 'that when so poor a man does his day's job, he might be permitted to work it out after his own fashion. Your horse is shod and your farrier paid—What need you cumber yourself further than to mount and pursue your journey?'

'Nay, friend, you are mistaken,' replied Tressilian, 'every man has the right to take the mask from the face of a cheat and a juggler; and your mode of living raises suspicion that you are both.'

'If you are so determined, sir,' said the smith, 'I cannot help myself save by force, which I were unwilling to use towards you, Master Tressilian; not that I fear your weapon, but because I know you to be a worthy, kind, and well-accomplished gentleman, who would rather help than harm a poor man that is in a strait.'

'Well said, Wayland,' said the boy, who had anxiously awaited the issue of their conference. 'But let us to thy den, man, for it is ill for thy health to stand here talking in the open air.'

'Thou art right, Hobgoblin,' replied the smith; and, going to the little thicket of gorse on the side nearest to the circle, and opposite to that at which his customer had so lately couched, he discovered a trap-door curiously covered with bushes, raised it, and, descending into the earth, vanished from their eyes. Notwithstanding Tressilian's curiosity, he had some hesitation at following the fellow into what might be a den of robbers, especially when he heard the smith's voice, issuing from the bowels of the earth, call out, 'Flibbertigibbet, do you come last, and be sure to fasten the trap!'

'Have you seen enough of Wayland Smith now?' whispered the urchin to Tressilian, with an arch sneer, as if marking his companion's uncertainty.

'Not yet,' said Tressilian firmly; and, shaking off his momentary irresolution, he descended into the narrow staircase, to which the entrance led, and was followed by Dickie Sludge, who made fast the trap-door behind him, and thus excluded every glimmer of daylight. The descent, however, was only a few steps, and led to a level passage of a few yards' length, at the end of which appeared the reflection of a lurid and red light. Arrived at this point, with his drawn sword in his hand, Tressilian found that a turn to the left admitted him and Hobgoblin, who followed closely, into a small square vault, containing a smith's forge, glowing with charcoal, the vapour of which filled the apartment with an oppressive smell, which would have been altogether suffocating, but that by some concealed vent the smithy communicated with the upper air. The light afforded by the red fuel, and by a lamp suspended in an iron chain, served to show that, besides an anvil, bellows, tongs, hammers, a quantity of ready-made horse-shoes, and other articles proper to the profession of a farrier, there were also stoves, alembics, crucibles, retorts, and other instruments of alchemy. The grotesque figure of the smith, and the ugly but whimsical features of the boy, seen by the gloomy and imperfect light of the charcoal fire and the dying lamp, accorded very well with all this mystical apparatus, and in that age of superstition would have made some impression on the courage of most men.

But nature had endowed Tressilian with firm nerves, and his education, originally good, had been too sedulously improved by subsequent study to give way to any imaginary terrors; and, after giving a glance around him, he again demanded of the artist who he was, and by what accident he came to know and address him by his name.

'Your worship cannot but remember,' said the smith, 'that about three years since, upon Saint Lucy's Eve, there came a travelling juggler to a certain hall in Devonshire, and exhibited his skill before a worshipful knight and a fair com-

* 'Give good words.'—*Slang dialect.*

pany—I see from your worship's countenance, dark as this place is, that my memory has not done me wrong.'

'Thou hast said enough,' said Tressilian, turning away, as wishing to hide from the speaker the painful train of recollections which his discourse had unconsciously awakened.

'The juggler,' said the smith, 'played his part so bravely, that the clowns and clown-like squires in the company held his art to be little less than magical; but there was one maiden of fifteen, or thereby, with the fairest face I ever looked upon, whose rosy cheek grew pale, and her bright eyes dim, at the sight of the wonders exhibited.'

'Peace, I command thee, peace!' said Tressilian.

'I mean your worship no offence,' said the fellow; 'but I have cause to remember how, to relieve the young maiden's fears, you condescended to point out the mode in which these deceptions were practised, and to baffle the poor juggler by laying bare the mysteries of his art, as ably as if you had been a brother of his order.—She was indeed so fair a maiden, that to win a smile of her a man might well'——

'Not a word more of her, I charge thee!' said Tressilian; 'I do well remember the night you speak of—one of the few happy evenings my life has known.'

'She is gone, then,' said the smith, interpreting after his own fashion the sigh with which Tressilian uttered these words—'She is gone, young, beautiful, and beloved as she was!—I crave your worship's pardon—I would have hammered on another theme—I see I have unwarily driven the nail to the quick.'

This speech was made with a mixture of rude feeling which inclined Tressilian favourably to the poor artisan, of whom before he was inclined to judge very harshly. But nothing can so soon attract the unfortunate, as real or seeming sympathy with their sorrows.

'I think,' proceeded Tressilian, after a minute's silence, 'thou wert in those days a jovial fellow, who could keep a company merry by song, and tale, and rebeck, as well as by thy juggling tricks—why do I find thee a laborious handicraftsman, plying thy trade in so melancholy a dwelling, and under such extraordinary circumstances?'

'My story is not long,' said the artist; 'but your honour had better sit while you listen to it.' So saying, he approached to the fire a three-footed stool, and took another himself, while Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, as he called the boy, drew a cricket to the smith's feet, and looked up in his face with features which, as illuminated by the glow of the forge, seemed convulsed with intense curiosity—'Thou too,' said the smith to him, 'shalt learn, as thou well deservest at my hand, the brief history of my life, and, in troth, it were as well tell it thee as leave thee to ferret it out, since Nature never packed a shrewder wit into a more ungainly casket.—Well, sir, if my poor story may pleasure you, it is at your command:—But will you not taste a stoup of liquor? I promise you that even in this poor cell I have some in store.'

'Speak not of it,' said Tressilian, 'but go on with thy story, for my leisure is brief.'

'You shall have no cause to rue the delay,' said the smith, 'for your horse shall be better fed in the meantime than he hath been this morning, and made fitter for travel.'

With that the artist left the vault, and returned after a few minutes' interval. Here, also, we pause, that the narrative may commence in another chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

I say, my lord, can such a subtilty,
(But all his craft ye must not wot of me,
And somewhat help I yet to his working),
That all the ground on which we ben riding,
Till that we come to Canterbury town,
He can all clean turnen so up so down,
And pave it all of silver and of gold.
THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S PROLOGUE—
CANTERBURY TALES.

THE artist commenced his narrative in the following terms:—

'I was bred a blacksmith, and knew my art as well as e'er a black-thumbed, leathern-aproned swart-faced knave of that noble mystery. But I tired of ringing hammer-tunes on iron stithies, and went out into the world, where I became acquainted with a celebrated juggler, whose fingers had become rather too stiff for legerdemain, and who wished to have the aid of an apprentice in his noble mystery. I served him for six years, until I was master of my trade.—I refer myself to your worship, whose judgment cannot be disputed, whether I did not learn to ply the craft indifferently well?'

'Excellently,' said Tressilian; 'but be brief.'

'It was not long after I had performed at Sir Hugh Robsart's in your worship's presence,' said the artist, 'that I took myself to the stage, and have swaggered with the bravest of them all, both at the Black Bull, the Globe, the Fortune, and elsewhere; but I know not how—apples were so plenty that year, that the lads in the twopenny gallery never took more than one bite out of them, and threw the rest of the pippin at whatever actor chanced to be on the stage. So I tired of it—renounced my half share in the company—gave my foil to my comrade—my buskins to the wardrobe, and showed the theatre a clean pair of heels.'

'Well, friend, and what,' said Tressilian, 'was your next shift?'

'I became,' said the smith, 'half partner, half domestic, to a man of much skill and little substance, who practised the trade of a physicianer.'

'In other words,' said Tressilian, 'you were Jack Pudding to a quacksalver?'

'Something beyond that, let me hope, my good Master Tressilian,' replied the artist; 'and yet, to say truth, our practice was of an adventurous description, and the pharmacy which I had acquired in my first studies for the benefit of horses was frequently applied to our human patients. But the seeds of all maladies are the same; and if turpentine, tar, pitch, and beef-suet, mingled with turmeric, gum-mastic, and one head of garlic, can cure the horse that hath been grieved with a nail, I see not but what it may benefit the man that hath been pricked

with a sword. But my master's practice, as well as his skill, went far beyond mine, and dealt in more dangerous concerns. He was not only a bold and adventurous practitioner in physic, but also, if your pleasure so chanced to be, an adept, who read the stars, and expounded the fortunes of mankind, genethliacally, as he called it, or otherwise. He was a learned distiller of simples, and a profound chemist—made several efforts to fix mercury, and judged himself to have made a fair hit at the philosopher's stone. I have yet a programme of his on that subject, which, if your honour understandeth, I believe you have the better, not only of all who read, but also of him who wrote it.'

He gave Tressilian a scroll of parchment, bearing at top and bottom, and down the margin, the signs of the seven planets, curiously intermingled with talismanical characters and scraps of Greek and Hebrew. In the midst were some Latin verses from a cabalistical author, written out so fairly, that even the gloom of the place did not prevent Tressilian from reading them. The tenor of the original ran as follows :—

'Si fixum solvas, faciasque volare solutum,
Et volucrem figas, facient te vivere tutum ;
Si pariat ventum, valet auri pondere centum ;
Ventus ubi vult spirat—Capiat qui capere potest.' *

'I protest to you,' said Tressilian, 'all I understand of this jargon is, that the last words seem to mean, "Catch who catch can."'

'That,' said the smith, 'is the very principle that my worthy friend and master, Doctor Doboobie, always acted upon ; until, being besotted with his own imaginations, and conceited of his high chemical skill, he began to spend, in cheating himself, the money which he had acquired in cheating others, and either discovered or built for himself, I could never know which, this secret elaboratory, in which he used to seclude himself both from patients and disciples, who doubtless thought his long and mysterious absences from his ordinary residence in the town of Farringdon, were occasioned by his progress in the mystic sciences, and his intercourse with the invisible world. Me also he tried to deceive ; but though I contradicted him not, he saw that I knew too much of his secrets to be any longer a safe companion. Meanwhile, his name waxed famous, or rather infamous, and many of those who resorted to him did so under persuasion that he was a sorcerer. And yet his supposed advance in the occult sciences drew to him the secret resort of men too powerful to be named, for purposes too dangerous to be mentioned. Men cursed and threatened him, and bestowed on me, the innocent assistant of his studies, the nickname of the Devil's foot-post, which procured me a volley of stones as soon as ever I ventured to show my face in the street of the village. At length, my master suddenly disappeared, pretending to me that he was about to visit his elaboratory in this place, and forbidding me to disturb him till two days were past. When this period had elapsed, I became anxious, and resorted to this vault, where I found the fires extinguished and the utensils in confusion, with a note from the learned Doboobius, as he was wont to style himself, acquainting me that we should never meet again, bequeathing me his chemical apparatus and the parchment which I have just put into your hands, advising me strongly to prosecute the secret which it contained, which would infallibly lead me to the discovery of the grand magisterium.'

'And didst thou follow this sage advice?' said Tressilian.

'Worshipful sir, no,' replied the smith ; 'for, being by nature cautious and suspicious, from knowing with whom I had to do, I made so many perquisitions before I ventured even to light a fire, that I at length discovered a small barrel of gunpowder, carefully hid beneath the furnace, with the purpose, no doubt, that, as soon as I should commence the grand work of the transmutation of metals, the explosion should transmute the vault and all in it into a heap of ruins, which might serve at once for my slaughter-house and my grave. This cured me of alchemy, and fain would I have returned to the honest hammer and anvil ; but who would bring a horse to be shod by the Devil's post? Meantime I had won the regard of my honest Flibbertigibbet here, he being then at Farringdon with his master, the sage Erasmus Holiday, by teaching him a few secrets such as please youth at his age ; and, after much counsel together, we agreed that, since I could get no practice in the ordinary way, I should try how I could work out business among those ignorant boors, by practising upon their silly fears ; and, thanks to Flibbertigibbet, who hath spread my renown, I have not wanted custom. But it is won at too great risk, and I fear I shall be at length taken up for a wizard ; so that I seek but an opportunity to leave this vault when I can have the protection of some worshipful person against the fury of the populace, in case they chance to recognise me.'

'And art thou,' said Tressilian, 'perfectly acquainted with the roads in this country?'

'I could ride them every inch by midnight,' answered Wayland Smith, which was the name this adept had assumed.

'Thou hast no horse to ride upon,' said Tressilian.

'Pardon me,' replied Wayland ; 'I have as good a tit as ever yeoman bestrode ; and I forgot to say it was the best part of the medicinor's legacy to me, excepting one or two of the choicest of his medical secrets, which I picked up without his knowledge and against his will.'

'Get thyself washed and shaved, then,' said Tressilian ; 'reform thy dress as well as thou canst, and fling away those grotesque trappings ; and, so thou wilt be secret and faithful, thou shalt follow me for a short time, till thy pranks here are forgotten. Thou hast, I think, both address and courage, and I have matter to do that may require both.'

Wayland Smith eagerly embraced the proposal, and protested his devotion to his new master. In a very few minutes he had made so great an alteration in his original appearance, by change of dress, trimming his beard and hair, and so forth, that Tressilian could not help remarking, that he thought he would stand in little need of

* [This rhythmic gibberish refers to THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE. See the sequel and Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*.]

a protector, since none of his old acquaintance were likely to recognise him.

'My debtors would not pay me money,' said Wayland, shaking his head; 'but my creditors of every kind would be less easily blinded. And, in truth, I hold myself not safe, unless under the protection of a gentleman of birth and character, as is your worship.'

So saying, he led the way out of the cavern. He then called loudly for Hobgoblin, who, after lingering for an instant, appeared with the horse furniture, when Wayland closed and sedulously covered up the trap-door, observing, it might again serve him at his need, besides that the tools were worth somewhat. A whistle from the owner brought to his side a nag that fed quietly on the common, and was accustomed to the signal. While he accoutred him for the journey, Tressilian drew his own girths faster, and in a few minutes both were ready to mount.

At this moment Sludge approached to bid them farewell.

'You are going to leave me, then, my old playfellow?' said the boy; 'and there is an end of all our game at bo-peep with the cowardly lubbards whom I brought hither to have their broad-footed nags shod by the devil and his imps?'

'It is even so,' said Wayland Smith; 'the best friends must part, Flibbertigibbet; but thou, my boy, art the only thing in the Vale of Whitehorse which I shall regret to leave behind me.'

'Well, I bid thee not farewell,' said Dickie Sludge, 'for you will be at these revels, I judge, and so shall I; for if Dominie Holiday take me not thither, by the light of day, which we see not in yonder dark hole, I will take myself there!'

'In good time,' said Wayland; 'but I pray you to do nought rashly.'

'Nay, now you would make a child—a common child of me, and tell me of the risk of walking without leading-strings. But before you are a mile from these stones, you shall know, by a sure token, that I have more of the hobgoblin about me than you credit; and I will so manage, that if you take advantage, you may profit by my prank.'

'What dost thou mean, boy?' said Tressilian; but Flibbertigibbet only answered with a grin and a caper, and, bidding both of them farewell, and at the same time exhorting them to make the best of their way from the place, he set them the example by running homeward with the same uncommon velocity with which he had baffled Tressilian's former attempts to get hold of him.

'It is in vain to chase him,' said Wayland Smith; 'for unless your worship is expert in lark-hunting, we should never catch hold of him—and besides, what would it avail? Better make the best of our way hence, as he advises.'

They mounted their horses accordingly, and began to proceed at a round pace, as soon as Tressilian had explained to his guide the direction in which he desired to travel.

After they had trotted nearly a mile, Tressilian could not help observing to his companion that his horse felt more lively under him than even when he mounted in the morning.

'Are you avised of that?' said Wayland Smith, smiling. 'That is owing to a little secret of mine. I mixed that with an handful of oats which shall save your worship's heels the trouble of spurring those six hours at least. Nay, I have not studied medicine and pharmacy for nought.'

'I trust,' said Tressilian, 'your drugs will do my horse no harm?'

'No more than the mare's milk which foaled him,' answered the artist; and was proceeding to dilate on the excellence of his recipe, when he was interrupted by an explosion as loud and tremendous as the mine which blows up the rampart of a beleaguered city. The horses started, and the riders were equally surprised. They turned to gaze in the direction from which the thunder-clap was heard, and beheld, just over the spot they had left so recently, a huge pillar of dark smoke rising high into the clear blue atmosphere. 'My habitation is gone to wrack,' said Wayland, immediately conjecturing the cause of the explosion—'I was a fool to mention the doctor's kind intentions towards my mansion before that limb of mischief Flibbertigibbet—I might have guessed he would long to put so rare a frolic into execution. But let us hasten on, for the sound will collect the country to the spot.'

So saying, he spurred his horse, and Tressilian also quickening his speed, they rode briskly forward.

'This, then, was the meaning of the little imp's token which he promised us,' said Tressilian; 'had we lingered near the spot, we had found it a love-token with a vengeance.'

'He would have given us warning,' said the smith; 'I saw him look back more than once to see if we were off—'tis a very devil for mischief, yet not an ill-natured devil either. It were long to tell your honour how I became first acquainted with him, and how many tricks he played me. Many a good turn he did me too, especially in bringing me customers; for his great delight was to see them sit shivering behind the bushes when they heard the click of my hammer. I think Dame Nature, when she lodged a double quantity of brains in that misshapen head of his, gave him the power of enjoying other people's distresses, as she gave them the pleasure of laughing at his ugliness.'

'It may be so,' said Tressilian; 'those who find themselves severed from society by peculiarities of form, if they do not hate the common bulk of mankind, are at least not altogether indisposed to enjoy their mishaps and calamities.'

'But Flibbertigibbet,' answered Wayland, hath that about him which may redeem his turn for mischievous frolic; for he is as faithful when attached, as he is tricky and malignant to strangers; and, as I said before, I have cause to say so.'

Tressilian pursued the conversation no further; and they continued their journey towards Devonshire without further adventure, until they alighted at an inn in the town of Marlborough, since celebrated for having given title to the greatest general (excepting one) whom Britain ever produced. Here the travellers received, in the same breath, an example of the truth of two old proverbs, namely, that *Ill news fly fast*,

and that *Listeners seldom hear a good tale of themselves.*

The inn-yard was in a sort of combustion when they alighted; insomuch that they could scarce get man or boy to take care of their horses, so full were the whole household of some news which flew from tongue to tongue, the import of which they were for some time unable to discover. At length, indeed, they found it respected matters which touched them nearly.

'What is the matter, say you, master?' answered, at length, the head hostler, in reply to Tressilian's repeated questions—'Why, truly, I scarce know myself. But here was a rider but now, who says that the devil hath flown away with him they called Wayland Smith, that won'd about three miles from the Whitehorse of Berkshire, this very blessed morning, in a flash of fire and a pillar of smoke, and rooted up the place he dwelt in, near that old cockpit of upright stones, as cleanly as if it had all been delved up for a cropping.'

'Why, then,' said an old farmer, 'the more is the pity—for that Wayland Smith (whether he was the devil's crony or no I skill not) had a good notion of horse diseases, and it's to be thought the bots will spread in the country far and near, an Satan has not gien un time to leave his secret behind un.'

'You may say *that*, Gaffer Grimesby,' said the hostler in return; 'I have carried a horse to Wayland Smith myself, for he passed all farriers in this country.'

'Did you see him?' said Dame Alison Crane, mistress of the inn bearing that sign, and deigning to term *husband* the owner thereof, a mean-looking, hop-o'-my-thumb sort of person, whose halting gait and long neck, and meddling, hen-pecked insignificance, are supposed to have given origin to the celebrated old English tune of 'My dame hath a lame tame Crane.'

On this occasion he chirped out a repetition of his wife's question, 'Didst see the devil, Jack Hostler, I say?'

'And what if I did see un, Master Crane?' replied Jack Hostler,—for, like all the rest of the household, he paid as little respect to his master as his mistress herself did.

'Nay, nought, Jack Hostler,' replied the pacific Master Crane; 'only if you saw the devil, methinks I would like to know what un's like?'

'You will know that one day, Master Crane,' said his helpmate, 'an ye mend not your manners, and mind your business, leaving off such idle palabras.—But truly, Jack Hostler, I should be glad to know myself what like the fellow was.'

'Why, dame,' said the hostler, more respectfully, 'as for what he was like I cannot tell, nor no man else, for why I never saw un.'

'And how didst thou get thine errand done,' said Gaffer Grimesby, 'if thou seedst him not?'

'Why, I had schoolmaster to write down ailment o' nag,' said Jack Hostler; 'and I went wi' the ugliest slip of a boy for my guide as ever man cut out o' lime-tree root to please a child withal.'

'And what was it?—and did it cure your nag, Jack Hostler?'—was uttered and echoed by all who stood around.

'Why, how can I tell you what it was?' said the hostler; 'simply it smelled and tasted—for I did make bold to put a pea's substance into my mouth—like hartshorn and savin mixed with vinegar—but then no hartshorn and savin ever wrought so speedy a cure—And I am dreading that if Wayland Smith be gone, the bots will have more power over horse and cattle.'

The pride of art, which is certainly not inferior in its influence to any other pride whatever, here so far operated on Wayland Smith, that, notwithstanding the obvious danger of his being recognised, he could not help winking to Tressilian, and smiling mysteriously, as if triumphing in the undoubted evidence of his veterinary skill. In the meanwhile the discourse continued.

'E'en let it be so,' said a grave man in black, the companion of Gaffer Grimesby; 'e'en let us perish under the evil God sends us, rather than the devil be our doctor.'

'Very true,' said Dame Crane; 'and I marvel at Jack Hostler that he would peril his own soul to cure the bowels of a nag.'

'Very true, mistress,' said Jack Hostler; 'but the nag was my master's; and had it been yours, I think ye would ha' held me cheap enow an I had feared the devil when the poor beast was in such a taking.—For the rest, let the clergy look to it. Every man to his craft, says the proverb, the parson to the prayer-book, and the groom to his curry-comb.'

'I vow,' said Dame Crane, 'I think Jack Hostler speaks like a good Christian and a faithful servant, who will spare neither body nor soul in his master's service. However, the devil has lifted him in time, for a Constable of the Hundred came hither this morning to get old Gaffer Pinniewinks, the trier of witches, to go with him to the Vale of Whitehorse to comprehend Wayland Smith, and put him to his probation. I helped Pinniewinks to sharpen his pincers and his poking-awl, and I saw the warrant from Justice Blindas.'

'Pooh—pooh—the devil would laugh both at Blindas and his warrant, constable and witch-finder to boot,' said old Dame Crank, the papist laundress; 'Wayland Smith's flesh would mind Pinniewinks' awl no more than a cambric ruff minds a hot piccadilloe-needle. But tell me, gentlefolks, if the devil ever had such a hand among ye, as to snatch away your smiths and your artists from under your nose, when the good Abbots of Abingdon had their own? By Our Lady, no!—they had their hallowed tapers, and their holy water, and their relics, and what not, could send the foulest fiends a-packing.—Go ask a heretic parson to do the like—But ours were a comfortable people.'

'Very true, Dame Crank,' said the hostler, 'so said Simpkins of Simonburn when the curate kissed his wife,—"They are a comfortable people," said he.'

'Silence, thou foul-mouthed vermin,' said Dame Crank; 'is it fit for a heretic horse-boy like thee to handle such a text as the Catholic clergy?'

'In t[illegible]h, no, dame,' replied the man of oats; 'and as you yours[illegible] are now, no text for their handling, dame, [illegible]ever may have been the case in your [illegible] think we had e'en better leave un alo[illegible]

At this last exchange of sarcasm, Dame Crank set up her throat, and began a horrible exclamation against Jack Hostler, under cover of which Tressilian and his attendant escaped into the house.

They had no sooner entered a private chamber, to which Goodman Crane himself had condescended to usher them, and despatched their worthy and obsequious host on the errand of procuring wine and refreshment, than Wayland Smith began to give vent to his self-importance.

'You see, sir,' said he, addressing Tressilian, 'that I nothing fabled in asserting that I possessed fully the mighty mystery of a farrier, or mareschal, as the French more honourably term us. These dog hostlers, who, after all, are the better judges in such a case, know what credit they should attach to my medicaments. I call you to witness, worshipful Master Tressilian, that nought, save the voice of calumny and the hand of malicious violence, hath driven me forth from a station in which I held a place alike useful and honoured.'

'I bear witness, my friend, but will reserve my listening,' answered Tressilian, 'for a safer time; unless, indeed, you deem it essential to your reputation, to be translated, like your late dwelling, by the assistance of a flash of fire. For you see your best friends reckon you no better than a mere sorcerer.'

'Now, Heaven forgive them,' said the artist, 'who confound learned skill with unlawful magic! I trust a man may be as skilful, or more so, than the best chirurgeon ever meddled with horse-flesh, and yet may be upon the matter little more than other ordinary men, or at the worst no conjuror.'

'God forbid else!' said Tressilian. 'But be silent just for the present, since here comes mine host with an assistant, who seems something of the least.'

Everybody about the inn, Dame Crane herself included, had been indeed so interested and agitated by the story they had heard of Wayland Smith, and by the new, varying, and more marvellous editions of the incident, which arrived from various quarters, that mine host, in his righteous determination to accommodate his guests, had been able to obtain the assistance of none of his household, saving that of a little boy, a junior tapster, of about twelve years old, who was called Sampson.

'I wish,' he said, apologising to his guests, as he set down a flagon of sack, and promised some food immediately,—'I wish the devil had flown away with my wife and my whole family instead of this Wayland Smith, who, I daresay, after all said and done, was much less worthy of the distinction which Satan has done him.'

'I hold opinion with you, good fellow,' replied Wayland Smith; 'and I will drink to you upon that argument.'

'Not that I would justify any man who deals with the devil,' said [illegible] host, after having pledged Wayland in a [illegible] draught of sack, 'but that—Saw ye ever [illegible] ck, my masters? —but that, I say, a man [illegible] ter deal with a dozen cheats and scoundre[illegible], such as this Wayland Smith, than wi[illegible] il incarnate, that takes possession of house and home, bed and board.'

The poor fellow's detail of grievances was here interrupted by the shrill voice of his helpmate, screaming from the kitchen, to which he instantly hobbled, craving pardon of his guests. He was no sooner gone than Wayland Smith expressed, by every contemptuous epithet in the language, his utter scorn for a nincompoop who stuck his head under his wife's apron-string; and intimated that, saving for the sake of the horses, which required both rest and food, he would advise his worshipful Master Tressilian to push on a stage farther, rather than pay a reckoning to such a mean-spirited, crow-trodden, henpecked coxcomb as Gaffer Crane.

The arrival of a large dish of good cow-heel and bacon something soothed the asperity of the artist, which wholly vanished before a choice capon, so delicately roasted, that the lard frothed on it, said Wayland, like May dew on a lily; and both Gaffer Crane and his good dame became, in his eyes, very painstaking, accommodating, obliging persons.

According to the manners of the times, the master and his attendant sat at the same table, and the latter observed, with regret, how little attention Tressilian paid to his meal. He recollected, indeed, the pain he had given by mentioning the maiden in whose company he had first seen him; but, fearful of touching upon a topic too tender to be tampered with, he chose to ascribe his abstinence to another cause.

'This fare is perhaps too coarse for your worship,' said Wayland, as the limbs of the capon disappeared before his own exertions; 'but had you dwelt as long as I have done in yonder dungeon, which Flibbertigibbet has translated to the upper element, a place where I dared hardly broil my food, lest the smoke should be seen without, you would think a fair capon a more welcome dainty.'

'If you are pleased, friend,' said Tressilian, 'it is well. Nevertheless, hasten thy meal if thou canst, for this place is unfriendly to thy safety, and my concerns crave travelling.'

Allowing, therefore, their horses no more rest than was absolutely necessary for them, they pursued their journey by a forced march as far as Bradford, where they reposed themselves for the night.

The next morning found them early travellers. And, not to fatigue the reader with unnecessary particulars, they traversed without adventure the counties of Wiltshire and Somerset, and, about noon of the third day after Tressilian's leaving Cumnor, arrived at Sir Hugh Robsart's seat, called Lidcote Hall, on the frontiers of Devonshire.

CHAPTER XII.

Ah me! the flower and blossom of your house,
The wind hath blown away to other towers.
JOANNA BAILLIE'S FAMILY LEGEND.

THE ancient seat of Lidcote Hall was situated near the village of the same name, and adjoined the wild and extensive forest of Exmoor, plenti-

fully stocked with game, in which some ancient rights, belonging to the Robsart family, entitled Sir Hugh to pursue his favourite amusement of the chase. The old mansion was a low, venerable building, occupying a considerable space of ground, which was surrounded by a deep moat. The approach and drawbridge were defended by an octagonal tower, of ancient brick-work, but so clothed with ivy and other creepers, that it was difficult to discover of what materials it was constructed. The angles of this tower were each decorated with a turret, whimsically various in form and in size, and therefore very unlike the monotonous stone pepper-boxes, which, in modern Gothic architecture, are employed for the same purpose. One of these turrets was square, and occupied as a clock-house. But the clock was now standing still; a circumstance peculiarly striking to Tressilian, because the good old knight, among other harmless peculiarities, had a fidgety anxiety about the exact measurement of time, very common to those who have a great deal of that commodity to dispose of, and find it lie heavy upon their hands,—just as we see shopkeepers amuse themselves with taking an exact account of their stock at the time there is least demand for it.

The entrance to the court-yard of the old mansion lay through an archway, surmounted by the aforesaid tower, but the drawbridge was down, and one leaf of the iron-studded folding-doors stood carelessly open. Tressilian hastily rode over the drawbridge, entered the court, and began to call loudly on the domestics by their names. For some time he was only answered by the echoes and the howling of the hounds, whose kennel lay at no great distance from the mansion, and was surrounded by the same moat. At length Will Badger, the old and favourite attendant of the knight, who acted alike as squire of his body and superintendent of his sports, made his appearance. The stout, weather-beaten forester showed great signs of joy when he recognised Tressilian.

'Lord love you,' he said, 'Master Edmund, be it thou in flesh and fell?—Then thou mayest do some good on Sir Hugh, for it passes the wit of man, that is, of mine own, and the curate's, and Master Mumblazen's, to do aught wi' un.'

'Is Sir Hugh then worse since I went away, Will?' demanded Tressilian.

'For worse in body—no—he is much better,' replied the domestic; 'but he is clean mazed as it were—eats and drinks as he was wont—but sleeps not, or rather wakes not, for he is ever in a sort of twilight, that is neither sleeping nor waking. Dame Swineford thought it was like the dead palsy.—But no, no, dame, said I, it is the heart, it is the heart.'

'Can ye not stir his mind to any pastimes?' said Tressilian.

'He is clean and quite off his sports,' said Will Badger; 'hath neither touched backgammon or shovel-board—nor looked on the big book of harrowtry wi' Master Mumblazen. I let the clock run down, thinking the missing the bell might somewhat move him, for you know, Master Edmund, he was particular in counting time; but he never said a word on't, so I may e'en set the old chime-towling again. I made bold to tread on Bungay's tail too, and you know what a round rating that would ha' cost me once-a-day—but he minded the poor tyke's whine no more than a madge howlet whooping down the chimney—so the case is beyond me.'

'Thou shalt tell me the rest within doors, Will.—Meanwhile, let this person be ta'en to the buttery, and used with respect—He is a man of art.'

'White art or black art, I would,' said Will Badger, 'that he had any art which could help us.—Here, Tom Butler, look to the man of art—and see that he steals none of thy spoons, lad,' he added in a whisper to the butler, who showed himself at a low window. 'I have known as honest a faced fellow have art enough to do that.'

He then ushered Tressilian into a low parlour, and went, at his desire, to see in what state his master was, lest the sudden return of his darling pupil, and proposed son-in-law, should affect him too strongly. He returned immediately, and said that Sir Hugh was dozing in his elbow-chair, but that Master Mumblazen would acquaint Master Tressilian the instant he awaked.

'But it is chance if he knows you,' said the huntsman, 'for he has forgotten the name of every hound in the pack. I thought about a week since he had gotten a favourable turn:—"Saddle me old Sorrel," said he suddenly, after he had taken his usual night-draught out of the great silver grace-cup, "and take the hounds to Mount Hazelhurst to-morrow." Glad men were we all, and out we had him in the morning, and he rode to cover as usual, with never a word spoken but that the wind was south, and the scent would lie. But ere we had uncoupled the hounds he began to stare round him, like a man that wakes suddenly out of a dream—turns bridle and walks back to Hall again, and leaves us to hunt at leisure by ourselves, if we listed.'

'You tell a heavy tale, Will,' replied Tressilian; 'but God must help us—there is no aid in man.'

'Then you bring us no news of young Mistress Amy?—But what need I ask—your brow tells the story. Ever I hoped, that if any man could or would track her, it must be you. All's over and lost now. But if ever I have that Varney within reach of a flight-shot, I will bestow a forked shaft on him; and that I swear by salt and bread.'

As he spoke the door opened, and Master Mumblazen appeared; a withered, thin, elderly gentleman, with a cheek like a winter apple, and his grey hair partly concealed by a small high hat, shaped like a cone, or rather like such a strawberry-basket as London fruiterers exhibit at their windows. He was too sententious a person to waste words on mere salutation; so, having welcomed Tressilian with a nod and a shake of the hand, he beckoned him to follow to Sir Hugh's great chamber, which the good knight usually inhabited. Will Badger followed, unasked, anxious to see whether his master w[illegible] be[illegible] from his state of apathy by the ar[illegible]l o[illegible]n.

[illegible] long low [illegible], amply furnished with [illegible]ents of th[illegible], and with sylvan trophies, by a massiv[illegible]mney, over which hung a

sword and suit of armour, somewhat obscured by neglect, sat Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote, a man of large size, which had been only kept within moderate compass by the constant use of violent exercise. It seemed to Tressilian that the lethargy under which his old friend appeared to labour, had, even during his few weeks' absence, added bulk to his person, at least it had obviously diminished the vivacity of his eye, which, as they entered, first followed Master Mumblazen slowly to a large oaken desk, on which a ponderous volume lay open, and then rested, as if in uncertainty, on the stranger who had entered along with him. The curate, a grey-headed clergyman, who had been a confessor in the days of Queen Mary, sat with a book in his hand in another recess in the apartment. He too signed a mournful greeting to Tressilian, and laid his book aside, to watch the effect his appearance should produce on the afflicted old man.

As Tressilian, his own eyes filling fast with tears, approached more and more nearly to the father of his betrothed bride, Sir Hugh's intelligence seemed to revive. He sighed heavily, as one who awakens from a state of stupor, a slight convulsion passed over his features, he opened his arms without speaking a word, and, as Tressilian threw himself into them, he folded him to his bosom.

'There is something left to live for yet,' were the first words he uttered; and, while he spoke, he gave vent to his feelings in a paroxysm of weeping, the tears chasing each other down his sunburnt cheeks and long white beard.

'I ne'er thought to have thanked God to see my master weep,' said Will Badger; 'but now I do, though I am like to weep for company.'

'I will ask thee no questions,' said the old knight; 'no questions—none, Edmund—thou hast not found her, or so found her, that she were better lost.'

Tressilian was unable to reply otherwise than by putting his hands before his face.

'It is enough—it is enough. But do not thou weep for her, Edmund. I have cause to weep, for she was my daughter,—thou hast cause to rejoice, that she did not become thy wife.—Great God! thou knowest best what is good for us—It was my nightly prayer that I should see Amy and Edmund wedded,—had it been granted, it had now been gall added to bitterness.'

'Be comforted, my friend,' said the curate, addressing Sir Hugh; 'it cannot be that the daughter of all our hopes and affections is the vile creature you would bespeak her.'

'O no,' replied Sir Hugh impatiently, 'I were wrong to name broadly the base thing she is become—there is some new court name for it, I warrant me. It is honour enough for the daughter of an old De'nshire clown to be the leman of a gay courtier,—of [illegible]arney, too,—of Varney, whose grandsire was relieved by my father, when his fortune [illegible] at the battle of—the battle of—w[illegible] slain—out on my memory!—an[illegible] [illegible]f you will help me'——

'The battle of Boswo[illegible] [illegible]ter Mumblazen, 'stricken betwe[illegible] [illegible]Crookback and Henry Tudor, grandsire of the Queen that now is, *primo Henrici Septimi*; and in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-five *post Christum natum*.'

'Ay, even so,' said the old knight, 'every child knows it—But my poor head forgets all it should remember, and remembers only what it would most willingly forget. My brain has been at fault, Tressilian, almost ever since thou hast been away, and even yet it hunts counter.'

'Your worship,' said the good clergyman, 'had better retire to your apartment, and try to sleep for a little space,—the physician left a composing draught,—and our Great Physician has commanded us to use earthly means, that we may be strengthened to sustain the trials he sends us.'

'True, true, old friend,' said Sir Hugh, 'and we will bear our trials manfully—We have lost but a woman.—See, Tressilian,'—he drew from his bosom a long ringlet of fair hair,—'see this lock!—I tell thee, Edmund, the very night she disappeared, when she bid me good even, as she was wont, she hung about my neck, and fondled me more than usual; and I, like an old fool, held her by this lock, until she took her scissors, severed it, and left it in my hand,—as all I was ever to see more of her.'

Tressilian was unable to reply, well judging what a complication of feelings must have crossed the bosom of the unhappy fugitive at that cruel moment. The clergyman was about to speak, but Sir Hugh interrupted him.

'I know what you would say, Master Curate—after all, it is but a lock of woman's tresses,—and by woman shame and sin and death came into an innocent world.—And learned Master Mumblazen, too, can say scholarly things of their inferiority.'

'*C'est l'homme*,' said Master Mumblazen, '*qui se bast, et qui conseille.*'

'True,' said Sir Hugh, 'and we will bear us, therefore, like men who have both mettle and wisdom in us.—Tressilian, thou art as welcome as if thou hadst brought better news. But we have spoken too long dry-lipped.—Amy, fill a cup of wine to Edmund, and another to me.' Then, instantly recollecting that he had called upon her who could not hear, he shook his head, and said to the clergyman, 'This grief is to my bewildered mind what the church of Lidcote is to our park: we may lose ourselves among the briars and thickets for a little space, but from the end of each avenue we see the old grey steeple and the grave of my forefathers. I would I were to travel that road to-morrow.'

Tressilian and the curate joined in urging the exhausted old man to lay himself to rest, and at length prevailed. Tressilian remained by his pillow till he saw that slumber at length sunk down on him, and then returned to consult with the curate, what steps should be adopted in these unhappy circumstances.

They could not exclude from these deliberations Master Michael Mumblazen; and they admitted him the more readily, that, besides what hopes they entertained from his sagacity, they knew him to be so great a friend to taciturnity, that there was no doubt of his keeping counsel. He was an old bachelor of good family, but small fortune,

and distantly related to the House of Robsart in virtue of which connection, Lidcote Hall had been honoured with his residence for the last twenty years. His company was agreeable to Sir Hugh, chiefly on account of his profound learning, which, though it only related to heraldry and genealogy, with such scraps of history as connected themselves with these subjects, was precisely of a kind to captivate the good old knight; besides the convenience which he found in having a friend to appeal to, when his own memory, as frequently happened, proved infirm and played him false concerning names and dates, which, and all similar deficiencies, Master Michael Mumblazen supplied with due brevity and discretion. And, indeed, in matters concerning the modern world, he often gave, in his enigmatical and heraldic phrase, advice which was well worth attending to, or, in Bill Badger's language, started the game while others beat the bush.

'We have had an unhappy time of it with the good knight, Master Edmund,' said the curate. 'I have not suffered so much since I was torn away from my beloved flock, and compelled to abandon them to the Romish wolves.'

'That was *in tertio Mariæ*,' said Master Mumblazen.

'In the name of Heaven,' continued the curate, 'tell us, has your time been better spent than ours, or have you any news of that unhappy maiden, who, being for so many years the principal joy of this broken-down house, is now proved our greatest unhappiness? Have you not at least discovered her place of residence?'

'I have,' replied Tressilian. 'Know you Cumnor Place, near Oxford?'

'Surely,' said the clergyman; 'it was a house of removal for the monks of Abingdon.'

'Whose arms,' said Master Michael, 'I have seen over a stone chimney in the hall—a cross patonce betwixt four martlets.'

'There,' said Tressilian, 'this unhappy maiden resides, in company with the villain Varney. But for a strange mishap, my sword had revenged all our injuries, as well as hers, on his worthless head.'

'Thank God, that kept thine hand from bloodguiltiness, rash young man!' answered the curate. 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it. It were better study to free her from the villain's nets of infamy.'

'They are called in heraldry, *laquei amoris*, or *lacs d'amour*,' said Mumblazen.

'It is in that I require your aid, my friends,' said Tressilian; 'I am resolved to accuse this villain, at the very foot of the throne, of falsehood, seduction, and breach of hospitable laws. The Queen shall hear me, though the Earl of Leicester, the villain's patron, stood at her right hand.'

'Her Grace,' said the curate, 'hath set a comely example of continence to her subjects, and will doubtless do justice on this inhospitable robber. But wert thou not better apply to the Earl of Leicester, in the first place, for justice on his servant? If he grants it, thou dost save the risk of making thyself a powerful adversary, which will certainly chance, if, in the first instance, you accuse his master of the horse and prime favourite before the Queen.'

'My mind revolts from your counsel,' said Tressilian. 'I cannot brook to plead my noble patron's cause—the unhappy Amy's cause—before any one save my lawful sovereign. Leicester, thou wilt say, is noble—be it so—he is but a subject like ourselves, and I will not carry my plaint to him, if I can do better. Still, I will think on what thou hast said,—but I must have your assistance to persuade the good Sir Hugh to make me his commissioner and fiduciary in this matter, for it is in his name I must speak, and not in my own. Since she is so far changed, as to dote upon this empty, profligate courtier, he shall at least do her the justice which is yet in his power.'

'Better she died *cœlebs* and *sine prole*,' said Mumblazen, with more animation than he usually expressed, 'than part, *per pale*, the noble coat of Robsart with that of such a miscreant!'

'If it be your object, as I cannot question,' said the clergyman, 'to save, as much as is yet possible, the credit of this unhappy young woman, I repeat, you should apply, in the first instance, to the Earl of Leicester. He is as absolute in his household as the Queen in her kingdom, and if he expresses to Varney that such is his pleasure, her honour will not stand so publicly committed.'

'You are right, you are right,' said Tressilian eagerly, 'and I thank you for pointing out what I overlooked in my haste. I little thought ever to have besought grace of Leicester; but I could kneel to the proud Dudley, if doing so could remove one shade of shame from this unhappy damsel. You will assist me, then, to procure the necessary powers from Sir Hugh Robsart?'

The curate assured him of his assistance, and the herald nodded assent.

'You must hold yourselves also in readiness to testify, in case you are called upon, the open-hearted hospitality which our good patron exercised towards this deceitful traitor, and the solicitude with which he laboured to seduce his unhappy daughter.'

'At first,' said the clergyman, 'she did not, as it seemed to me, much affect his company, but latterly I saw them often together.'

'*Sciant* in the parlour,' said Michael Mumblazen, 'and *passant* in the garden.'

'I once came on them by chance,' said the priest, 'in the South wood, in a spring evening—Varney was muffled in a russet cloak, so that I saw not his face,—they separated hastily, as they heard me rustle among the leaves, and I observed she turned her head and looked long after him.'

'With neck *reguardant*,' said the herald—'and on the day of her flight, and that was on Saint Austen's Eve, I saw Varney's groom, attired in his liveries, hold his master's horse and Mistress Amy's palfrey, bridled and saddled *proper*, behind the wall of the churchyard.'

'And now is she found mewed up in his secret place of retirement,' said Tressilian. 'The villain is taken in the manner; and I well wish he may deny his crime, that I may thrust conviction down his f[illegible] [illegible]. But I must prepare for my journ[illegible] be[illegible] [illegible]ntlemen, dispose my patron to [illegible] o[illegible] powers as are needful to act in his [illegible] low[illegible]

So say[illegible] of [illegible] left the room.

'He is [illegible] the curate; 'and I pray

to God that he may grant him the patience to deal with Varney as is fitting.'

'Patience and Varney,' said Mumblazen, 'is worse heraldry than metal upon metal. He is more false than a siren, more rapacious than a griffin, more poisonous than a wyvern, and more cruel than a lion rampant.'

'Yet I doubt much,' said the curate, 'whether we can with all right ask from Sir Hugh Robsart, being in his present condition, any deed deputing his paternal right in Mistress Amy to whomsoever'——

'Your reverence need not doubt that,' said Will Badger, who entered as he spoke, 'for I will lay my life he is another man when he wakes, than he has been these thirty days past.'

'Ay, Will,' said the curate, 'hast thou then so much confidence in Dr. Diddleum's draught?'

'Not a whit,' said Will, 'because master ne'er tasted a drop on't, seeing it was emptied out by the housemaid. But here's a gentleman, who came attending on Master Tressilian, has given Sir Hugh a draught that is worth twenty of yon un. I have spoken cunningly with him, and a better farrier, or one who hath a more just notion of horse and dog ailment, I have never seen; and such a one would never be unjust to a Christian man.'

'A farrier! you saucy groom—And by whose authority, pray?' said the curate, rising in surprise and indignation; 'or who will be warrant for this new physician?'

'For authority, an it like your reverence, he had mine; and for warrant, I trust I have not been five-and-twenty years in this house, without having right to warrant the giving of a draught to beast or body—I who can gie a drench and a ball, and bleed, or blister, if need, to my very self.'

The counsellors of the house of Robsart thought it meet to carry this information instantly to Tressilian, who as speedily summoned before him Wayland Smith, and demanded of him (in private, however) by what authority he had ventured to administer any medicine to Sir Hugh Robsart?

'Why,' replied the artist, 'your worship cannot but remember that I told you I had made more progress into my master's—I mean the learned Doctor Doboobie's—mystery than he was willing to own; and indeed half of his quarrel and malice against me was, that, besides that I got something too deep into his secrets, several discerning persons, and particularly a buxom young widow of Abingdon, preferred my prescriptions to his.'

'None of thy buffoonery, sir,' said Tressilian sternly. 'If thou hast trifled with us—much more, if thou hast done aught that may prejudice Sir Hugh Robsart's health, thou shalt find thy grave at the bottom of a tin-mine.'

'I know too little of the great *arcanum* to convert the ore to gold,' said Wayland firmly. 'But truce to your apprehensions, Master Tressilian—I understood the good knight's case, from what Master Will[illegible] Badger told me; and I hope I am a[illegible] administer a poor dose of mandra[illegible] the sleep that must needs follo[illegible] Sir Hugh Robsart requires to settl[illegible] brains.'

'I trust thou dealest [illegible] e, Wayland?' said Tressilian.

'Most fairly and honestly, as the event shall show,' replied the artist. 'What would it avail me to harm the poor old man for whom you are interested? you to whom I owe it that Gaffer Pinniewinks is not even now rending my flesh and sinews with his accursed pincers, and probing every mole in my body with his sharpened awl (a murrain on the hands which forged it!) in order to find out the witch's mark! I trust to yoke myself as a humble follower to your worship's train, and I only wish to have my faith judged of by the result of the good knight's slumbers.'

Wayland Smith was right in his prognostication. The sedative draught which his skill had prepared, and Will Badger's confidence had administered, was attended with the most beneficial effects. The patient's sleep was long and healthful; and the poor old knight awoke, humbled indeed in thought, and weak in frame, yet a much better judge of whatever was subjected to his intellect than he had been for some time past. He resisted for a while the proposal made by his friends, that Tressilian should undertake a journey to court, to attempt the recovery of his daughter, and the redress of her wrongs, in so far as they might yet be repaired. 'Let her go,' he said; 'she is but a hawk that goes down the wind; I would not bestow even a whistle to reclaim her.' But though he for some time maintained this argument, he was at length convinced it was his duty to take the part to which natural affection inclined him, and consent that such efforts as could yet be made should be used by Tressilian in behalf of his daughter. He subscribed, therefore, a warrant of attorney, such as the curate's skill enabled him to draw up; for in those simple days the clergy were often the advisers of their flock in law as well as in gospel.

All matters were prepared for Tressilian's second departure, within twenty-four hours after he had returned to Lidcote Hall; but one material circumstance had been forgotten, which was first called to the remembrance of Tressilian by Master Mumblazen. 'You are going to court, Master Tressilian,' said he; 'you will please remember that your blazonry must be *argent* and *or*—no other tinctures will pass current.' The remark was equally just and embarrassing. To prosecute a suit at court, ready money was as indispensable even in the golden days of Elizabeth as at any succeeding period; and it was a commodity little at the command of the inhabitants of Lidcote Hall. Tressilian was himself poor; the revenues of good Sir Hugh Robsart were consumed, and even anticipated, in his hospitable mode of living; and it was finally necessary that the herald who started the doubt should himself solve it. Master Michael Mumblazen did so by producing a bag of money, containing nearly three hundred pounds in gold and silver of various coinage, the savings of twenty years; which he now, without speaking a syllable upon the subject, dedicated to the service of the patron whose shelter and protection had given him the means of making this little hoard. Tressilian accepted it without affecting

a moment's hesitation, and a mutual grasp of the hand was all that passed betwixt them, to express the pleasure which the one felt in dedicating his all to such a purpose, and that which the other received from finding so material an obstacle to the success of his journey so suddenly removed, and in a manner so unexpected.

While Tressilian was making preparations for his departure early the ensuing morning, Wayland Smith desired to speak with him; and, expressing his hope that he had been pleased with the operation of his medicine in behalf of Sir Hugh Robsart, added his desire to accompany him to court. This was indeed what Tressilian himself had several times thought of; for the shrewdness, alertness of understanding, and variety of resource, which this fellow had exhibited during the time they had travelled together, had made him sensible that his assistance might be of importance. But then Wayland was in danger from the grasp of law; and of this Tressilian reminded him, mentioning something, at the same time, of the pincers of Pinniewinks, and the warrant of Master Justice Blindas. Wayland Smith laughed both to scorn.

'See you, sir!' said he, 'I have changed my garb from that of a farrier to a serving-man, but were it still as it was, look at my moustaches —they now hang down—I will but turn them up, and dye them with a tincture that I know of, and the devil will scarce know me again'

He accompanied these words with the appropriate action; and in less than a minute, by setting up his moustaches and his hair, he seemed a different person from him that had but now entered the room. Still, however, Tressilian hesitated to accept his services, and the artist became proportionably urgent.

'I owe you life and limb,' he said, 'and I would fain pay a part of the debt, especially as I know from Will Badger on what dangerous service your worship is bound. I do not, indeed, pretend to be what is called a man of mettle, one of those ruffling tear-cats, who maintain their master's quarrel with sword and buckler. Nay, I am even one of those who hold the end of a feast better than the beginning of a fray. But I know that I can serve your worship better in such quest as yours than any of these sword-and-dagger men, and that my head will be worth an hundred of their hands.'

Tressilian still hesitated. He knew not much of this strange fellow, and was doubtful how far he could repose in him the confidence necessary to render him a useful attendant upon the present emergency. Ere he had come to a determination the trampling of a horse was heard in the court-yard, and Master Mumblazen and Will Badger both entered hastily into Tressilian's chamber, speaking almost at the same moment.

'Here is a serving-man on the bonniest grey titt I ever see'd in my life,' said Will Badger, who got the start;—'having on his arm a silver cognisance, being a fire-drake holding in his mouth a brick-bat, under a coronet of an earl's degree,' said Master Mumblazen, 'and bearing a letter sealed of the same.'

Tressilian took the letter, which was addressed 'To the worshipful Master Edmund Tressilian, our loving kinsman--These—ride, ride, ride—for thy life, for thy life, for thy life.' He then opened it, and found the following contents:—

'MASTER TRESSILIAN, OUR GOOD FRIEND AND COUSIN,

'We are at present so ill at ease, and otherwise so unhappily circumstanced, that we are desirous to have around us those of our friends on whose loving-kindness we can most especially repose confidence; amongst whom we hold our good Master Tressilian one of the foremost and nearest, both in good will and good ability. We therefore pray you, with your most convenient speed, to repair to our poor lodging, at Saye's Court, near Deptford, where we will treat further with you of matters which we deem it not fit to commit unto writing. And so we bid you heartily farewell, being your loving kinsman to command,

'RATCLIFFE, EARL OF SUSSEX'

'Send up the messenger instantly, Will Badger,' said Tressilian; and, as the man entered the room, he exclaimed, 'Aha, Stevens, is it you? How does my good lord?'

'Ill, Master Tressilian,' was the messenger's reply, 'and having therefore the more need of good friends around him.'

'But what is my lord's malady?' said Tressilian anxiously. 'I heard nothing of his being ill.'

'I know not, sir,' replied the man; 'he is very ill at ease. The leeches are at a stand, and many of his household suspect foul practice—witchcraft, or worse.'

'What are the symptoms?' said Wayland Smith, stepping forward hastily.

'Anan?' said the messenger, not comprehending his meaning.

'What does he ail?' said Wayland; 'where lies his disease?'

The man looked at Tressilian, as if to know whether he should answer these inquiries from a stranger, and receiving a sign in the affirmative, he hastily enumerated gradual loss of strength, nocturnal perspiration, and loss of appetite, faintness, etc.

'Joined,' said Wayland, 'to a gnawing pain in the stomach, and a low fever?'

'Even so,' said the messenger, somewhat surprised.

'I know how the disease is caused,' said the artist, 'and I know the cause. Your master has eaten of the manna of Saint Nicholas. I know the cure too—my master shall not say I studied in his laboratory for nothing.'

'How mean you?' said Tressilian, frowning; 'we speak of one of the first nobles of England. Bethink you, this is no subject for buffoonery.'

'God forbi[illegible]' said Wayland Smith. 'I say that I know [illegible] disease and can cure him. Rememb[illegible] asked [illegible] for Sir Hugh Robsart.'

'We [illegible] be[illegible]ntly,' said Tressilian. 'God ca[illegible] of [illegible]'

Accor[illegible] low[illegible] mentioning this new motive f[illegible] of th[illegible] departure, though without alluding [illegible] suspicions of Stevens or

the assurances of Wayland Smith, he took the kindest leave of Sir Hugh and the family at Lidcote Hall, who accompanied him with prayers and blessings, and, attended by Wayland and the Earl of Sussex's domestic, travelled with the utmost speed towards London.

CHAPTER XIII.

> ——— Ay, I know you have arsenic,
> Vitriol, sal-tartre, argaile, alkaly,
> Cinoper: I know all.—This fellow, Captain,
> Will come in time to be a great distiller,
> And give a say (I will not say directly,
> But very near) at the philosopher's stone.
>
> THE ALCHEMIST.

TRESSILIAN and his attendants pressed their route with all despatch. He had asked the smith, indeed, when their departure was resolved on, whether he would not rather choose to avoid Berkshire, in which he had played a part so conspicuous? But Wayland returned a confident answer. He had employed the short interval they passed at Lidcote Hall in transforming himself in a wonderful manner. His wild and overgrown thicket of beard was now restrained to two small moustaches on the upper lip, turned up in a military fashion. A tailor from the village of Lidcote (well paid) had exerted his skill, under his customer's directions, so as completely to alter Wayland's outward man, and take off from his appearance almost twenty years of age. Formerly, besmeared with soot and charcoal—overgrown with hair, and bent double with the nature of his labour—disfigured too by his odd and fantastic dress, he seemed a man of fifty years old. But now, in a handsome suit of Tressilian's livery, with a sword by his side, and a buckler on his shoulder, he looked like a gay ruffling serving-man, whose age might be betwixt thirty and thirty-five, the very prime of human life. His loutish, savage-looking demeanour seemed equally changed into a forward, sharp, and impudent alertness of look and action.

When challenged by Tressilian, who desired to know the cause of a metamorphosis so singular and so absolute, Wayland only answered by singing a stave from a comedy, which was then new, and was supposed, among the more favourable judges, to augur some genius on the part of the author. We are happy to preserve the couplet, which ran exactly thus,—

> 'Ban, 'Ban, ca Caliban—
> Get a new master- Be a new man.

Although Tressilian did not recollect the verses, yet they reminded him that Wayland had once been a stage-player, a circumstance which, of itself, accounted indifferently well for the readiness with which he could [illegible]e so total a change of personal appe[illegible] The artist himself was so confident [illegible]uise being completely changed, [illegible]mpletely changed his disguise, [illegible]e more correct mode of speakin[illegible] [illegible]ted they were not to pass near his [illegible]reat.

'I could venture,' he [illegible] present dress, and with your wor[illegible], to face Master Justice Blindas, even on a day of Quarter Sessions; and I would like to know what is become of Hobgoblin, who is like to play the devil in the world, if he can once slip the string, and leave his granny and his dominie.—Ay, and the scathed vault!' he said; 'I would willingly have seen what havoc the explosion of so much gunpowder has made among Dr. Demetrius Doboobie's retorts and phials. I warrant me, my fame haunts the Vale of the Whitehorse long after my body is rotten; and that many a lout ties up his horse, lays down his silver groat, and pipes like a sailor whistling in a calm, for Wayland Smith to come and shoe his titt for him. But the horse will catch the founders ere the smith answers the call.'

In this particular, indeed, Wayland proved a true prophet; and so easily do fables rise, that an obscure tradition of his extraordinary practice in farriery prevails in the Vale of Whitehorse even unto this day; and neither the tradition of Alfred's Victory, nor of the celebrated Pusey Horn, are better preserved in Berkshire than the wild legend of Wayland Smith.*

The haste of the travellers admitted their making no stay upon their journey, save what the refreshment of the horses required; and as many of the places through which they passed were under the influence of the Earl of Leicester, or persons immediately dependent on him, they thought it prudent to disguise their names, and the purpose of their journey. On such occasions the agency of Wayland Smith (by which name we shall continue to distinguish the artist, though his real name was Lancelot Wayland) was extremely serviceable. He seemed, indeed, to have a pleasure in displaying the alertness with which he could baffle investigation, and amuse himself by putting the curiosity of tapsters and innkeepers on a false scent. During the course of their brief journey, three different and inconsistent reports were circulated by him on their account; namely, first, that Tressilian was the Lord Deputy of Ireland, come over in disguise to take the queen's pleasure concerning the great rebel, Rory Oge MacCarthy MacMahon; secondly, that the said Tressilian was an agent of Monsieur, coming to urge his suit to the hand of Elizabeth; thirdly, that he was the Duke of Medina, come over, incognito, to adjust the quarrel betwixt Philip and that princess.

Tressilian was angry, and expostulated with the artist on the various inconveniences, and, in particular, the unnecessary degree of attention to which they were subjected by the figments he thus circulated; but he was pacified (for who could be proof against such an argument?) by Wayland's assuring him that a general importance was attached to his own (Tressilian's) striking presence, which rendered it necessary to give an extraordinary reason for the rapidity and secrecy of his journey.

At length they approached the metropolis, where, owing to the more general recourse of strangers, their appearance excited neither observation nor inquiry, and finally they entered London itself.

It was Tressilian's purpose to go down directly

* Note C. Legend of Wayland Smith.

to Deptford, where Lord Sussex resided, in order to be near the court, then held at Greenwich, the favourite residence of Elizabeth, and honoured as her birthplace. Still a brief halt in London was necessary; and it was somewhat prolonged by the earnest entreaties of Wayland Smith, who desired permission to take a walk through the city.

'Take thy sword and buckler, and follow me, then,' said Tressilian; 'I am about to walk myself, and we will go in company.'

This he said, because he was not altogether so secure of the fidelity of his new retainer, as to lose sight of him at this interesting moment, when rival factions at the court of Elizabeth were running so high. Wayland Smith willingly acquiesced in the precaution, of which he probably conjectured the motive, but only stipulated, that his master should enter the shops of such chemists or apothecaries as he should point out, in walking through Fleet Street, and permit him to make some necessary purchases. Tressilian agreed, and, obeying the signal of his attendant, walked successively into more than four or five shops, where he observed that Wayland purchased in each only one single drug, in various quantities. The medicines which he first asked for were readily furnished, each in succession, but those which he afterwards required were less easily supplied—and Tressilian observed, that Wayland more than once, to the surprise of the shopkeeper, returned the gum or herb that was offered to him, and compelled him to exchange it for the right sort, or else went on to seek it elsewhere. But one ingredient, in particular, seemed almost impossible to be found. Some chemists plainly admitted they had never seen it—others denied that such a drug existed, excepting in the imagination of crazy alchemists—and most of them attempted to satisfy their customer by producing some substitute, which, when rejected by Wayland, as not being what he had asked for, they maintained possessed, in a superior degree, the self-same qualities. In general, they all displayed some curiosity concerning the purpose for which he wanted it. One old, meagre chemist, to whom the artist put the usual question, in terms which Tressilian neither understood nor could recollect, answered frankly, there was none of that drug in London, unless Yoglan the Jew chanced to have some of it upon hand.

'I thought as much,' said Wayland. And as soon as they left the shop, he said to Tressilian, 'I crave your pardon, sir, but no artist can work without his tools. I must needs go to this Yoglan's; and I promise you, that if this detains you longer than your leisure seems to permit, you shall, nevertheless, be well repaid, by the use I will make of this rare drug. Permit me,' he added, 'to walk before you, for we are now to quit the broad street, and we will make double speed if I lead the way.'

Tressilian acquiesced, and, following the smith down a lane which turned to the left hand towards the river, he found that his guide walked on with great speed, and apparently perfect knowledge of the town, through a labyrinth of by-streets, courts, and blind alleys, until at length Wayland paused in the midst of a very narrow lane, the termination of which showed a peep of the Thames looking misty and muddy, which background was crossed saltierwise, as Master Mumblazen might have said, by the masts of two lighters that lay waiting for the tide. The shop under which he halted had not, as in modern days, a glazed window—but a paltry canvas screen surrounded such a stall as a cobbler now occupies, having the front open, much in the manner of a fishmonger's booth of the present day. A little old smock-faced man, the very reverse of a Jew in complexion, for he was very soft-haired as well as beardless, appeared, and with many courtesies asked Wayland what he pleased to want. He had no sooner named the drug, than the Jew started and looked surprised. 'And vat might your worship vant with that drug, which is not named, mein God, in forty years as I have been chemist here?'

'These questions it is no part of my commission to answer,' said Wayland; 'I only wish to know if you have what I want, and, having it, are willing to sell it?'

'Ay, mein God, for having it, that I have, and for selling it, I am a chemist, and sell every drug.' So saying, he exhibited a powder, and then continued, 'But it will cost much moneys—Vat I ave cost its weight in gold—ay, gold well refined—I vill say six times—It comes from Mount Sinai, where we had our blessed Law given forth, and the plant blossoms but once in one hundred year.'

'I do not know how often it is gathered on Mount Sinai,' said Wayland, after looking at the drug offered him with great disdain, 'but I will wager my sword and buckler against your gaberdine, that this trash you offer me instead of what I asked for, may be had for gathering any day of the week in the castle-ditch of Aleppo.'

'You are a rude man,' said the Jew; 'and, besides, I ave no better than that—or if I ave, I will not sell it without order of a physician—or without you tell me vat you make of it.'

The artist made brief answer in a language of which Tressilian could not understand a word, and which seemed to strike the Jew with the utmost astonishment. He stared upon Wayland like one who has suddenly recognised some mighty hero or dreaded potentate, in the person of an unknown and unmarked stranger. 'Holy Elias!' he exclaimed, when he had recovered the first stunning effects of his surprise; and then passing from his former suspicious and surly manner to the very extremity of obsequiousness, he cringed low to the artist, and besought him to enter his poor house, to bless his miserable threshold by crossing it.

'Vill you not taste a cup with the poor Jew, Zacharias Yoglan?—Vill you Tokay ave?—vill you Lachrymæ taste?—vill you'——

'You offend in your proffers,' said Wayland; 'minister to [illegible] in what I require of you, and forbear furth[illegible]rse.'

The reb[illegible]ked, [illegible] took his bunch of keys, and, ope[illegible] be[illegible]ction a cabinet which seemed [illegible] o[illegible]ared than the other cases of [illegible] low[illegible]lines amongst which it stood, he [illegible] secret drawer, having a glass li[illegible]ning a small portion of a black po[illegible] offered to Wayland, his

manner conveying the deepest devotion towards him, though an avaricious and jealous expression, which seemed to grudge every grain of which his customer was about to possess himself, disputed ground in his countenance with the obsequious deference which he desired it should exhibit.

'Have you scales?' said Wayland.

The Jew pointed to those which lay ready for common use in the shop, but he did so with a puzzled expression of doubt and fear, which did not escape the artist.

'They must be other than these,' said Wayland sternly; 'know you not that holy things lose their virtue if weighed in an unjust balance?'

The Jew hung his head, took from a steel-plated casket a pair of scales beautifully mounted, and said, as he adjusted them for the artist's use,—'With these I do mine own experiment—one hair of the high-priest's beard would turn them.'

'It suffices,' said the artist; and weighed out two drachms for himself of the black powder, which he very carefully folded up and put into his pouch with the other drugs. He then demanded the price of the Jew, who answered, shaking his head and bowing,

'No price—no, nothing at all from such as you. But you will see the poor Jew again? you will look into his laboratory, where, God help him, he hath dried himself to the substance of the withered gourd of Jonah the holy prophet—You will ave pity on him, and show him one little step on the great road?'

'Hush!' said Wayland, laying his finger mysteriously on his mouth; 'it may be we shall meet again—thou hast already the *Schahmajm*, as thine own Rabbis call it—the general creation; watch, therefore, and pray, for thou must attain the knowledge of Alchahest Elixir, Samech, ere I may commune further with thee.' Then returning with a slight nod the reverential congees of the Jew, he walked gravely up the lane, followed by his master, whose first observation on the scene he had just witnessed was, that Wayland ought to have paid the man for his drug, whatever it was.

'I pay him?' said the artist; 'may the foul fiend pay me if I do!—Had it not been that I thought it might displease your worship, I would have had an ounce or two of gold out of him, in exchange for the same just weight of brick-dust.'

'I advise you to practise no such knavery while waiting upon me,' said Tressilian.

'Did I not say,' answered the artist, 'that for that reason alone I forbore him for the present?—Knavery, call you it?—why, yonder wretched skeleton hath wealth sufficient to pave the whole lane he lives in with dollars, and scarce miss them out of his own iron chest; yet he goes mad after the philosopher's stone—and besides, he would have cheated a poor servi[illegible]g-man, as he thought me at first, with [illegible]at was not worth a penny—Match f[illegible]oth the devil to the collier; i[illegible]ine was worth my good crowns[illegible]st is as well worth his good gold[illegible]

'It may be so for aught [illegible]ssilian, 'in dealing amongst Jews [illegible]ies; but understand that to have [illegible]f leger-

demain practised by one attending on me, diminishes my honour, and that I will not permit them. I trust thou hast made up thy purchases?'

'I have, sir,' replied Wayland; 'and with these drugs will I, this very day, compound the true orvietan, that noble medicine which is so seldom found genuine and effective within these realms of Europe, for want of that most rare and precious drug which I got but now from Yoglan.'*

'But why not have made all your purchases at one shop?' said his master; 'we have lost nearly an hour in running from one pounder of simples to another.'

'Content you, sir,' said Wayland. 'No man shall learn my secret; and it would not be mine long, were I to buy all my materials from one chemist.'

They now returned to their inn (the famous Bell-Savage), and while the Lord Sussex's servant prepared the horses for their journey, Wayland, obtaining from the cook the service of a mortar, shut himself up in a private chamber, where he mixed, pounded, and amalgamated the drugs which he had bought, each in its own proportion, with a readiness and address that plainly showed him well practised in all the manual operations of pharmacy.

By the time Wayland's electuary was prepared the horses were ready, and a short hour's riding brought them to the present habitation of Lord Sussex, an ancient house, called Saye's Court,† near Deptford, which had long pertained to a family of that name, but had, for upwards of a century, been possessed by the ancient and honourable family of Evelyn. The present representative of that ancient house took a deep interest in the Earl of Sussex, and had willingly accommodated both him and his numerous retinue in his hospitable mansion. Saye's Court was afterwards the residence of the celebrated Mr. Evelyn, whose *Silva* is still the manual of British planters, and whose life, manners, and principles, as illustrated in his Memoirs, ought equally to be the manual of English gentlemen.‡

CHAPTER XIV.

This is rare news thou tell'st me, my good fellow;
There are two bulls fierce battling on the green
For one fair heifer—if the one goes down,
The dale will be more peaceful, and the herd,
Which have small interest in their brulziement,
May pasture there in peace.

OLD PLAY.

SAYE'S COURT was watched like a beleaguered fort; and so high rose the suspicions of the time, that Tressilian and his attendants were stopped

* Orvietan, or Venice treacle, as it was sometimes called, was understood to be a sovereign remedy against poison; and the reader must be contented, for the time he peruses these pages, to hold the same opinion which was once universally received by the learned as well as by the vulgar.

† [The Court has now entirely disappeared, and its site is occupied by a workhouse.]

‡ [Evelyn's name has also become familiar through his Memoirs, comprising a Diary from 1641 to 1705, and a Selection of Familiar Letters, published from his MSS., discovered at Saye's Court in 1818.]

and questioned repeatedly by sentinels, both on foot and horseback, as they approached the abode of the sick earl. In truth, the high rank which Sussex held in Queen Elizabeth's favour, and his known and avowed rivalry of the Earl of Leicester, caused the utmost importance to be attached to his welfare; for, at the period we treat of, men doubted whether he or the Earl of Leicester might ultimately have the higher rank in her regard.

Elizabeth, like many of her sex, was fond of governing by factions, so as to balance two opposing interests, and reserve in her own hand the power of making either predominate, as the interest of the state, or perhaps as her own female caprice (for to that foible even she was not superior), might finally determine. To finesse—to hold the cards—to oppose one interest to another—to bridle him who thought himself highest in her esteem, by the fears he must entertain of another equally trusted, if not equally beloved, were arts which she used throughout her reign, and which enabled her, though frequently giving way to the weakness of favouritism, to prevent most of its evil effects on her kingdom and government.

The two nobles who at present stood as rivals in her favour, possessed very different pretensions to share it; yet it might be in general said, that the Earl of Sussex had been most serviceable to the queen, while Leicester was most dear to the woman. Sussex was, according to the phrase of the times, a martialist; had done good service in Ireland and in Scotland, and especially in the great northern rebellion in 1569, which was quelled, in a great measure, by his military talents. He was, therefore, naturally surrounded and looked up to by those who wished to make arms their road to distinction. The Earl of Sussex, moreover, was of more ancient and honourable descent than his rival, uniting in his person the representation of the Fitz-Walters, as well as of the Ratcliffes, while the scutcheon of Leicester was stained by the degradation of his grandfather, the oppressive minister of Henry VII., and scarce improved by that of his father, the unhappy Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, executed on Tower Hill, August 22, 1553. But in person, features, and address, weapons so formidable in the court of a female sovereign, Leicester had advantages more than sufficient to counterbalance the military services, high blood, and frank bearing of the Earl of Sussex; and he bore, in the eye of the court and kingdom, the higher share in Elizabeth's favour, though (for such was her uniform policy) by no means so decidedly expressed as to warrant him against the final preponderance of his rival's pretensions. The illness of Sussex, therefore, happened so opportunely for Leicester, as to give rise to strange surmises among the public; while the followers of the one earl were filled with the deepest apprehensions, and those of the other with the highest hopes of its probable issue. Meanwhile,—for in that old time men never forget the probability that the matter might be determined by length of sword,—the retainers of each noble flocked around their patron, appeared well armed in the vicinity of the court itself, and disturbed the ear of the sovereign by their frequent and alarming debates, held even within the precincts of her palace. This preliminary statement is necessary, to render what follows intelligible to the reader.*

On Tressilian's arrival at Saye's Court, he found the place filled with the retainers of the Earl of Sussex, and of the gentlemen who came to attend their patron in his illness. Arms were in every hand, and a deep gloom on every countenance, as if they had apprehended an immediate and violent assault from the opposite faction. In the hall, however, to which Tressilian was ushered by one of the earl's attendants, while another went to inform Sussex of his arrival, he found only two gentlemen in waiting. There was a remarkable contrast in their dress, appearance, and manners. The attire of the elderly gentleman, a person as it seemed of quality, and in the prime of life, was very plain and soldierlike, his stature low, his limbs stout, his bearing ungraceful, and his features of that kind which express sound common sense, without a grain of vivacity or imagination. The younger, who seemed about twenty or upwards, was clad in the gayest habit used by persons of quality at the period, wearing a crimson velvet cloak richly ornamented with lace and embroidery, with a bonnet of the same, encircled with a gold chain turned three times round it, and secured by a medal. His hair was adjusted very nearly like that of some fine gentlemen of our own time, that is, it was combed upwards and made to stand as it were on end; and in his ears he wore a pair of silver ear-rings, having each a pearl of considerable size. The countenance of this youth, besides being regularly handsome, and accompanied by a fine person, was animated and striking in a degree that seemed to speak at once the firmness of a decided, and the fire of an enterprising character, the power of reflection and the promptitude of determination.

Both these gentlemen reclined nearly in the same posture on benches near each other; but each, seeming engaged in his own meditations, looked straight upon the wall which was opposite to them without speaking to his companion. The looks of the elder were of that sort which convinced the beholder that, in looking on the wall, he saw no more than the side of an old hall hung around with cloaks, antlers, bucklers, old pieces of armour, partisans, and the similar articles which were usually the furniture of such a place. The look of the younger gallant had in it something imaginative; he was sunk in reverie, and it seemed as if the empty space of air betwixt him and the wall were the stage of a theatre on which his fancy was mustering his own *dramatis personæ*, and treated him with sights far different from those which his awakened and earthly vision could have offered.

At the entrance of Tressilian both started from their musin[illegible] and bade him welcome; the younger, [illegible] so[illegible]r, with great appearance of animati[illegible] [illegible]lity.

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* Nau[illegible]ure[illegible]s and curious particulars of the jealo[illegible] [illegible]lines took place between Ratcliffe, Earl of [illegible]cle [illegible]sing favourite Leicester. The former, [illegible]bed, predicted to his followers, that, afte[illegible]ning gipsy (so he called Leicester, from his dark [illegible] [illegible] prove too many for them.

'Thou art welcome, Tressilian,' said the youth; 'thy philosophy stole thee from us when this household had objects of ambition to offer—it is an honest philosophy, since it returns thee to us when there are only dangers to be shared.'

'Is my lord, then, so dangerously indisposed?' said Tressilian.

'We fear the very worst,' answered the elder gentleman, 'and by the worst practice.'

'Fie,' replied Tressilian, 'my Lord of Leicester is honourable.'

'What doth he with such attendants, then, as he hath about him?' said the younger gallant. 'The man who raises the devil may be honest, but he is answerable for the mischief which the fiend does, for all that.'

'And is this all that are of you, my mates,' said Tressilian, 'that are about my lord in his utmost straits?'

'No, no,' replied the elder gentleman, 'there are Tracy, Markham, and several more, but we keep watch here by two at once, and some are weary and are sleeping in the gallery above.'

'And some,' said the young man, 'are gone down to the dock yonder at Deptford, to look out such a hulk as they may purchase by clubbing their broken fortunes, and so soon as all is over, we will lay our noble lord in a noble green grave, have a blow at those who have hurried him thither, if opportunity suits, and then sail for the Indies, with heavy hearts and light purses.'

'It may be,' said Tressilian, 'that I will embrace the same purpose, so soon as I have settled some business at court.'

'Thou business at court!' they both exclaimed at once; 'and thou make the Indian voyage!'

'Why, Tressilian,' said the younger man, 'art thou not wedded, and beyond these flaws of fortune, that drive folks out to sea when their bark bears fairest for the haven?—What has become of the lovely Indamora that was to match my Amoret for truth and beauty?'

'Speak not of her!' said Tressilian, averting his face.

'Ay, stands it so with you?' said the youth, taking his hand very affectionately; 'then fear not I will again touch the green wound—But it is strange as well as sad news. Are none of our fair and merry fellowship to escape shipwreck of fortune and happiness in this sudden tempest? I had hoped thou wert in harbour, at least, my dear Edmund—But truly says another dear friend of thy name,

> What man that sees the ever-whirling wheel
> Of Chance, the which all mortal things doth sway;
> But that thereby doth find and plainly feel
> How Mutability in them doth play
> Her cruel sports to many men's decay.'

The elder gentleman had risen from his bench, and was pacing the hall with s[illegible]e impatience, while the youth, with muc[illegible]ess and feeling, recited these lines. [illegible] done, the other wrapped hims[illegible]nd again stretched himself do[illegible]vel, Tressilian, you will feed th[illegible] humour. If there were aught to [illegible]ent upon a virtuous and honoura[illegible] like my lord's, renounce me if [illegible]were this piping, whining, childish trick of poetry, that came among us with Master Walter Wittypate here and his comrades, twisting into all manner of uncouth and incomprehensible forms of speech the honest plain English phrase which God gave us to express our meaning withal.'

'Blount believes,' said his comrade, laughing, 'the devil woo'd Eve in rhyme, and that the mystic meaning of the Tree of Knowledge refers solely to the art of clashing rhymes and meting out hexameters.' *

At this moment the earl's chamberlain entered, and informed Tressilian that his lord required to speak with him.

He found Lord Sussex dressed, but unbraced, and lying on his couch, and was shocked at the alteration disease had made in his person. The earl received him with the most friendly cordiality, and inquired into the state of his courtship. Tressilian evaded his inquiries for a moment, and, turning his discourse on the earl's own health, he discovered, to his surprise, that the symptoms of his disorder corresponded minutely with those which Wayland had predicated concerning it. He hesitated not, therefore, to communicate to Sussex the whole history of his attendant, and the pretensions he set up to cure the disorder under which he laboured. The earl listened with incredulous attention until the name of Demetrius was mentioned, and then suddenly called to his secretary to bring him a certain casket which contained papers of importance. 'Take out from thence,' he said, 'the declaration of the rascal cook whom we had under examination, and look heedfully if the name of Demetrius be not there mentioned.'

The secretary turned to the passage at once, and read, 'And said declarant being examined, saith, That he remembers having made the sauce to the said sturgeon-fish, after eating of which the said noble lord was taken ill; and he put the usual ingredients and condiments therein, namely'——

'Pass over his trash,' said the earl, 'and see whether he had not been supplied with his materials by a herbalist called Demetrius.'

'It is even so,' answered the secretary. 'And he adds, he has not since seen the said Demetrius.'

'This accords with thy fellow's story, Tressilian,' said the earl; 'call him hither.'

On being summoned to the earl's presence, Wayland Smith told his former tale with firmness and consistency.

'It may be,' said the earl, 'thou art sent by those who have begun this work, to end it for them; but bethink, if I miscarry under thy medicine, it may go hard with thee.'

'That were severe measures,' said Wayland, 'since the issue of medicine, and the end of life, are in God's disposal. But I will stand the risk. I have not lived so long under ground to be afraid of a grave.'

'Nay, if thou be'st so confident,' said the Earl of Sussex, 'I will take the risk too, for the learned can do nothing for me. Tell me how this medicine is to be taken.'

'That will I do presently,' said Wayland; but allow me to condition that, since I incur

* Note D. Sir Walter Raleigh.

all the risk of this treatment, no other physician shall be permitted to interfere with it.'

'That is but fair,' replied the earl; 'and now prepare your drug.'

While Wayland obeyed the earl's commands, his servants, by the artist's direction, undressed their master, and placed him in bed.

'I warn you,' he said, 'that the first operation of this medicine will be to produce a heavy sleep, during which time the chamber must be kept undisturbed; as the consequences may otherwise be fatal. I myself will watch by the earl, with any of the gentlemen of his chamber.'

'Let all leave the room save Stanley and this good fellow,' said the earl.

'And saving me also,' said Tressilian. 'I too am deeply interested in the effects of this potion.'

'Be it so, good friend,' said the earl; 'and now for our experiment; but first call my secretary and chamberlain.'

'Bear witness,' he continued, when these officers arrived, 'bear witness for me, gentlemen, that our honourable friend Tressilian is in no way responsible for the effects which this medicine may produce upon me, the taking it being my own free action and choice, in regard I believe it to be a remedy which God has furnished me by unexpected means, to recover me of my present malady. Commend me to my noble and princely mistress; and say that I live and die her true servant, and wish to all about her throne the same singleness of heart and will to serve her, with more ability to do so than hath been assigned to poor Thomas Ratcliffe.'

He then folded his hands, and seemed for a second or two absorbed in mental devotion, then took the potion in his hand, and, pausing, regarded Wayland with a look that seemed designed to penetrate his very soul, but which caused no anxiety or hesitation in the countenance or manner of the artist.

'Here is nothing to be feared,' said Sussex to Tressilian, and swallowed the medicine without further hesitation.

'I am now to pray your lordship,' said Wayland, 'to dispose yourself to rest as commodiously as you can; and of you, gentlemen, to remain as still and mute as if you waited at your mother's deathbed.'

The chamberlain and secretary then withdrew, giving orders that all doors be bolted, and all noise in the house strictly prohibited. Several gentlemen were voluntary watchers in the hall, but none remained in the chamber of the sick earl, save his groom of the chamber Stanley, the artist, and Tressilian.—Wayland Smith's predictions were speedily accomplished, and a sleep fell upon the earl, so deep and sound, that they who watched his bedside began to fear that, in his weakened state, he might pass away without awakening from his lethargy. Wayland Smith himself appeared anxious, and felt the temples of the earl slightly, from time to time, attending particularly to the state of respiration, which was full and deep, but at the same time easy and uninterrupted.

CHAPTER XV.

> You loggerheaded and unpolish'd grooms,
> What, no attendance, no regard, no duty?
> Where is the foolish knave I sent before?
> TAMING OF THE SHREW.

THERE is no period at which men look worse in the eyes of each other, or feel more uncomfortable, than when the first dawn of daylight finds them watchers. Even a beauty of the first order, after the vigils of a ball are interrupted by the dawn, would do wisely to withdraw herself from the gaze of her fondest and most partial admirers. Such was the pale, inauspicious, and ungrateful light, which began to beam upon those who kept watch all night in the hall at Saye's Court, and which mingled its cold, pale, blue diffusion with the red, yellow, and smoky beams of expiring lamps and torches. The young gallant, whom we noticed in our last chapter, had left the room for a few minutes, to learn the cause of a knocking at the outward gate, and, on his return, was so struck with the forlorn and ghastly aspects of his companions of the watch, that he exclaimed, 'Pity of my heart, my masters, how like owls you look! Methinks, when the sun rises, I shall see you flutter off with your eyes dazzled, to stick yourselves into the next ivy-tod or ruined steeple.'

'Hold thy peace, thou gibing fool,' said Blount; 'hold thy peace. Is this a time for jeering, when the manhood of England is perchance dying within a wall's breadth of thee?'

'There thou liest,' replied the gallant.

'How, lie!' exclaimed Blount, starting up; 'lie, and to me?'

'Why, so thou didst, thou peevish fool,' answered the youth; 'thou didst lie on that bench even now, didst thou not? But art thou not a hasty coxcomb, to pick up a wry word so wrathfully? Nevertheless, loving and honouring my lord as truly as thou, or any one, I do say that, should Heaven take him from us, all England's manhood dies not with him.'

'Ay,' replied Blount, 'a good portion will survive with thee, doubtless.'

'And a good portion with thyself, Blount, and with stout Markham here, and Tracy, and all of us. But I am he will best employ the talent Heaven has given to us all.'

'As how, I prithee?' said Blount; 'tell us your mystery of multiplying.'

'Why, sirs,' answered the youth, 'ye are like goodly land, which bears no crop because it is not quickened by manure; but I have that rising spirit in me, which will make my poor faculties labour to keep pace with it. My ambition will keep my brain at work, I warrant thee.'

'I pray to God it does not drive thee mad,' said Blount; [illegible]y part, if we lose our noble lord, I bid [illegible] the court and to the camp both. I [illegible]dred foul acres in Norfolk, and [illegible] [illegible]nd change the court pantoufle [illegible] hobnail.'

'O ba[illegible]n!' exclaimed his antagonist [illegible] ready got the true rustic slouch—t[illegible] stoop, as if thine hands were at t[illegible] plough, and thou hast a

kind of earthy smell about thee, instead of being perfumed with essence, as a gallant and courtier should. On my soul, thou hast stolen out to roll thyself on a hay mow! Thy only excuse will be to swear by thy hilts, that the farmer had a fair daughter.'

'I pray thee, Walter,' said another of the company, 'cease thy raillery, which suits neither time nor place, and tell us who was at the gate just now.'

'Doctor Masters, physician to her Grace in ordinary, sent by her special orders to inquire after the earl's health,' answered Walter.

'Ha! what!' exclaimed Tracy, 'that was no slight mark of favour; if the earl can but come through, he will match with Leicester yet. Is Masters with my lord at present?'

'Nay,' replied Walter, 'he is half-way back to Greenwich by this time, and in high dudgeon.'

'Thou didst not refuse him admittance?' exclaimed Tracy.

'Thou wert not surely so mad?' ejaculated Blount.

'I refused him admittance as flatly, Blount, as you would refuse a penny to a blind beggar; as obstinately, Tracy, as thou didst ever deny access to a dun.'

'Why, in the fiend's name, didst thou trust him to go to the gate?' said Blount to Tracy.

'It suited his years better than mine,' answered Tracy; 'but he has undone us all now thoroughly. My lord may live or die, he will never have a look of favour from her Majesty again.'

'Nor the means of making fortunes for his followers,' said the young gallant, smiling contemptuously;—'there lies the sore point, that will brook no handling. My good sirs, I sounded my lamentations over my lord somewhat less loudly than some of you; but when the point comes of doing him service, I will yield to none of you. Had this learned leech entered, think'st thou not there had been such a coil betwixt him and Tressilian's mediciner, that not the sleeper only, but the very dead might have awakened? I know what larum belongs to the discord of doctors.'

'And who is to take the blame of opposing the Queen's orders?' said Tracy; 'for undeniably Doctor Masters came with her Grace's positive commands to cure the earl.'

'I, who have done the wrong, will bear the blame,' said Walter.

'Thus, then, off fly the dreams of court favour thou hast nourished,' said Blount; 'and despite all thy boasted art and ambition, Devonshire will see thee shine a true younger brother, fit to sit low at the board, carve turn about with the chaplain, look that the hounds be fed, and see the squire's girths drawn when he goes a-hunting.'

'Not so,' said the young man, colouring, 'not while Ireland and the Netherlands have wars, and not while the se[illegible]th pathless waves. The rich west hat[illegible]dreamed of, and Britain contains h[illegible]enture on the quest of them[illegible]ce, my masters. I go to walk [illegible] look to the sentinels.'

'The lad hath quicksil[illegible]s, that is certain,' said Blount, loo[illegible]ham.

'He hath that both in [illegible]d,' said Markham, 'which may either make or mar him. But, in closing the door against Masters, he hath done a daring and loving piece of service; for Tressilian's fellow hath ever averred, that to wake the earl were death, and Masters would wake the Seven Sleepers themselves, if he thought they slept not by the regular ordinance of medicine.'

Morning was well advanced, when Tressilian, fatigued and overwatched, came down to the hall, with the joyful intelligence that the earl had awakened of himself, that he found his internal complaints much mitigated, and spoke with a cheerfulness, and looked round with a vivacity, which of themselves showed a material and favourable change had taken place. Tressilian at the same time commanded the attendance of one or two of his followers, to report what had passed during the night, and to relieve the watchers in the earl's chamber.

When the message of the queen was communicated to the Earl of Sussex, he at first smiled at the repulse which the physician had received from his zealous young follower, but, instantly recollecting himself, he commanded Blount, his master of the horse, instantly to take boat, and go down the river to the Palace of Greenwich, taking young Walter and Tracy with him, and make a suitable compliment, expressing his grateful thanks to his sovereign, and mentioning the cause why he had not been enabled to profit by the assistance of the wise and learned Doctor Masters.

'A plague on it!' said Blount, as he descended the stairs; 'had he sent me with a cartel to Leicester, I think I should have done his errand indifferently well. But to go to our gracious sovereign, before whom all words must be lackered over either with gilding or with sugar, is such a confectionery matter as clean baffles my poor old English brain.—Come with me, Tracy, and come you too, Master Walter Wittypate, that art the cause of our having all this ado. Let us see if thy neat brain, that frames so many flashy fireworks, can help out a plain fellow at need with some of thy shrewd devices.'

'Never fear, never fear,' exclaimed the youth, 'it is I will help you through—let me but fetch my cloak.'

'Why, thou hast it on thy shoulders,' said Blount,—'the lad is mazed.'

'No, this is Tracy's old mantle,' answered Walter; 'I go not with thee to court unless as a gentleman should.'

'Why,' said Blount, 'thy braveries are like to dazzle the eyes of none but some poor groom or porter.'

'I know that,' said the youth; 'but I am resolved I will have my own cloak, ay, and brush my doublet to boot, ere I stir forth with you.'

'Well, well,' said Blount, 'here is a coil about a doublet and a cloak—get thyself ready, a God's name!'

They were soon launched on the princely bosom of the broad Thames, upon which the sun now shone forth in all its splendour.

'There are two things scarce matched in the universe,' said Walter to Blount—'the sun in heaven, and the Thames on the earth.'

'The one will light us to Greenwich well

enough,' said Blount, 'and the other would take us there a little faster, if it were ebb tide.'

'And this is all thou think'st—all thou carest—all thou deem'st the use of the King of Elements, and the King of Rivers, to guide three such poor caitiffs as thyself, and me, and Tracy, upon an idle journey of courtly ceremony!'

'It is no errand of my seeking, faith,' replied Blount, 'and I could excuse both the sun and the Thames the trouble of carrying me where I have no great mind to go, and where I expect but dog's wages for my trouble—and, by my honour,' he added, looking out from the head of the boat, 'it seems to me as if our message were a sort of labour in vain; for see, the Queen's barge lies at the stairs, as if her Majesty were about to take water.'

It was even so. The royal barge, manned with the queen's watermen, richly attired in the regal liveries, and having the banner of England displayed, did indeed lie at the great stairs which ascended from the river, and along with it two or three other boats for transporting such part of her retinue as were not in immediate attendance on the royal person. The yeomen of the guard, the tallest and most handsome men whom England could produce, guarded with their halberds the passage from the palace-gate to the river-side, and all seemed in readiness for the queen's coming forth, although the day was yet so early.

'By my faith, this bodes us no good,' said Blount; 'it must be some perilous cause puts her Grace in motion thus untimeously. By my counsel, we were best put back again, and tell the Earl what we have seen.'

'Tell the Earl what we have seen!' said Walter; 'why, what have we seen but a boat, and men with scarlet jerkins, and halberds in their hands? Let us do his errand, and tell him what the Queen says in reply.'

So saying, he caused the boat to be pulled towards a landing-place at some distance from the principal one, which it would not, at that moment, have been thought respectful to approach, and jumped on shore, followed, though with reluctance, by his cautious and timid companions. As they approached the gate of the palace, one of the sergeant porters told them they could not at present enter, as her Majesty was in the act of coming forth. The gentlemen used the name of the Earl of Sussex; but it proved no charm to subdue the officer, who alleged in reply, that it was as much as his post was worth, to disobey in the least tittle the commands which he had received.

'Nay, I told you as much before,' said Blount; 'do, I pray you, my dear Walter, let us take boat and return.'

'Not till I see the Queen come forth,' returned the youth composedly.

'Thou art mad, stark mad, by the mass!' answered Blount.

'And thou,' said Walter, 'art turned coward of the sudden. I have seen thee face half a score of shag-headed Irish kernes to thy own share of them, and now thou wouldst blink and go back to shun the frown of a fair lady!'

At this moment the gates opened, and ushers began to issue forth in array, preceded and flanked by the band of Gentlemen Pensioners. After this, amid a crowd of lords and ladies, yet so disposed around her that she could see and be seen on all sides, came Elizabeth herself, then in the prime of womanhood, and in the full glow of what in a sovereign was called beauty, and who would in the lowest rank of life have been truly judged a noble figure, joined to a striking and commanding physiognomy. She leant on the arm of Lord Hunsdon, whose relation to her by her mother's side often procured him such distinguished marks of Elizabeth's intimacy.

The young cavalier we have so often mentioned had probably never yet approached so near the person of his sovereign, and he pressed forward as far as the line of warders permitted, in order to avail himself of the present opportunity. His companion, on the contrary, cursing his imprudence, kept pulling him backwards, till Walter shook him off impatiently, and letting his rich cloak drop carelessly from one shoulder; a natural action, which served, however, to display to the best advantage his well-proportioned person. Unbonneting at the same time, he fixed his eager gaze on the queen's approach, with a mixture of respectful curiosity, and modest yet ardent admiration, which suited so well with his fine features, that the warders, struck with his rich attire and noble countenance, suffered him to approach the ground over which the queen was to pass, somewhat closer than was permitted to ordinary spectators. Thus the adventurous youth stood full in Elizabeth's eye—an eye never indifferent to the admiration which she deservedly excited among her subjects, or to the fair proportions of external form which chanced to distinguish any of her courtiers. Accordingly, she fixed her keen glance on the youth, as she approached the place where he stood, with a look in which surprise at his boldness seemed to be unmingled with resentment, while a trifling accident happened which attracted her attention towards him yet more strongly. The night had been rainy, and just where the young gentleman stood, a small quantity of mud interrupted the queen's passage. As she hesitated to pass on, the gallant, throwing his cloak from his shoulders, laid it on the miry spot, so as to insure her stepping over it dryshod. Elizabeth looked at the young man, who accompanied this act of devoted courtesy with a profound reverence and a blush that overspread his whole countenance. The queen was confused, and blushed in her turn, nodded her head, hastily passed on, and embarked in her barge without saying a word.

'Come along, Sir Coxcomb,' said Blount; 'your gay cloak will need the brush to-day, I wot. Nay, if you had meant to make a foot-cloth of your mantle, better have kept Tracy's old drap-de-bure, which despises all colours.'

'This cloak,' said the youth, taking it up and folding it, '[illegible] never be brushed while in my possessio[illegible]

'An[illegible]e long, if you learn not a little [illegible]hall have you in *cuerpo* soon, a[illegible]ys.'

Thei[illegible]ere interrupted by one of the Ba[illegible]es.

'I w[illegible] he, after looking at them attenti[illegible]tleman who hath no cloak,

or a muddy one.—You, sir, I think,' addressing the younger cavalier, 'are the man; you will please to follow me.'

'He is in attendance on me,' said Blount,—'on me, the noble Earl of Sussex's master of horse.'

'I have nothing to say to that,' answered the messenger; 'my orders are directly from her Majesty, and concern this gentleman only.'

So saying, he walked away, followed by Walter, leaving the others behind, Blount's eyes almost starting from his head with the excess of his astonishment. At length he gave vent to it in an exclamation—'Who the good jere would have thought this!' And, shaking his head with a mysterious air, he walked to his own boat, embarked, and returned to Deptford.

The young cavalier was, in the meanwhile, guided to the water-side by the Pensioner, who showed him considerable respect; a circumstance which, to persons in his situation, may be considered as an augury of no small consequence. He ushered him into one of the wherries which lay ready to attend the queen's barge, which was already proceeding up the river, with the advantage of that flood-tide of which, in the course of their descent, Blount had complained to his associates.

The two rowers used their oars with such expedition at the signal of the Gentleman Pensioner, that they very soon brought their little skiff under the stern of the queen's boat, where she sat beneath an awning, attended by two or three ladies, and the nobles of her household. She looked more than once at the wherry in which the young adventurer was seated, spoke to those around her, and seemed to laugh. At length one of the attendants, by the queen's order, apparently, made a sign for the wherry to come alongside, and the young man was desired to step from his own skiff into the queen's barge, which he performed with graceful agility at the fore part of the boat, and was brought aft to the queen's presence, the wherry at the same time dropping into the rear. The youth underwent the gaze of majesty, not the less gracefully that his self-possession was mingled with embarrassment. The muddied cloak still hung upon his arm, and formed the natural topic with which the queen introduced the conversation.

'You have this day spoiled a gay mantle in our service, young man. We thank you for your service, though the manner of offering it was unusual, and something bold.'

'In a sovereign's need,' answered the youth, 'it is each liegeman's duty to be bold.'

'God's pity! that was well said, my lord,' said the queen, turning to a grave person who sat by her, and answered with a grave inclination of the head, and something of a mumbled assent. 'Well, young man, your gallantry shall not go unrewarded. Go to the wardrobe keeper, and he shall have orders to supply the suit which you have cast [illegible] our service. Thou shalt have a suit, a [illegible] the newest cut, I promise thee, on [illegible] incess.'

'May it please [illegible] Walter, hesitating, 'it is not f[illegible] ervant of your Majesty to measure[illegible] ies; but if it became me to choose [illegible]

'Thou wouldst have go[illegible] me,' said the queen, interrupting him; 'fie, young man! I take shame to say that, in our capital, such and so various are the means of thriftless folly, that to give gold to youth is giving fuel to fire, and furnishing them with the means of self-destruction. If I live and reign, these means of unchristian excess shall be abridged. Yet thou mayest be poor,' she added, 'or thy parents may be—It shall be gold, if thou wilt, but thou shalt answer to me for the use on't.'

Walter waited patiently until the queen had done, and then modestly assured her that gold was still less in his wish than the raiment her Majesty had before offered.

'How, boy!' said the queen, 'neither gold nor garment? What is it thou wouldst have of me, then?'

'Only permission, madam—if it is not asking too high an honour—permission to wear the cloak which did you this trifling service.'

'Permission to wear thine own cloak, thou silly boy?' said the queen.

'It is no longer mine,' said Walter; 'when your Majesty's foot touched it, it became a fit mantle for a prince, but far too rich a one for its former owner.'

The queen again blushed; and endeavoured to cover, by laughing, a slight degree of not unpleasing surprise and confusion.

'Heard you ever the like, my lords? The youth's head is turned with reading romances.—I must know something of him, that I may send him safe to his friends.—What art thou?'

'A gentleman of the household of the Earl of Sussex, so please your Grace, sent hither with his master of horse, upon a message to your Majesty.'

In a moment the gracious expression which Elizabeth's face had hitherto maintained, gave way to an expression of haughtiness and severity.

'My Lord of Sussex,' she said, 'has taught us how to regard his messages, by the value he places upon ours. We sent but this morning the physician in ordinary of our chamber, and that at no usual time, understanding his lordship's illness to be more dangerous than we had before apprehended. There is at no court in Europe a man more skilled in this holy and most useful science than Doctor Masters, and he came from Us to our subject. Nevertheless, he found the gate of Saye's Court defended by men with culverins, as if it had been on the Borders of Scotland, not in the vicinity of our court; and when he demanded admittance in our name, it was stubbornly refused. For this slight of a kindness, which had but too much of condescension in it, we will receive, at present at least, no excuse; and some such we suppose to have been the purport of my Lord of Sussex's message.'

This was uttered in a tone, and with a gesture, which made Lord Sussex's friends who were within hearing tremble. He to whom the speech was addressed, however, trembled not; but with great deference and humility, as soon as the queen's passion gave him an opportunity, he replied,—'So please your most gracious Majesty, I was charged with no apology from the Earl of Sussex.'

'With what were you then charged, sir?' said the queen, with the impetuosity which,

amid nobler qualities, strongly marked her character; 'was it with a justification?—or, God's death, with a defiance?'

'Madam,' said the young man, 'my Lord of Sussex knew the offence approached towards treason, and could think of nothing save of securing the offender, and placing him in your Majesty's hands, and at your mercy. The noble Earl was fast asleep when your most gracious message reached him, a potion having been administered to that purpose by his physician; and his lordship knew not of the ungracious repulse your Majesty's royal and most comfortable message had received, until after he awoke this morning.'

'And which of his domestics, then, in the name of Heaven, presumed to reject my message, without even admitting my own physician to the presence of him whom I sent him to attend?' said the queen, much surprised.

'The offender, madam, is before you,' replied Walter, bowing very low; 'the full and sole blame is mine; and my lord has most justly sent me to abye the consequences of a fault, of which he is as innocent as a sleeping man's dreams can be of a waking man's actions.'

'What! was it thou?—thou thyself, that repelled my messenger and my physician from Saye's Court?' said the queen. 'What could occasion such boldness in one who seems devoted —that is, whose exterior bearing shows devotion —to his sovereign?'

'Madam,' said the youth,—who, notwithstanding an assumed appearance of severity, thought that he saw something in the queen's face that resembled not implacability,—'we say in our country, that the physician is for the time the liege sovereign of his patient. Now, my noble master was then under dominion of a leech, by whose advice he had greatly profited, who had issued his commands that his patient should not that night be disturbed, on the very peril of his life.'

'Thy master hath trusted some false varlet of an empiric,' said the queen.

'I know not, madam, but by the fact that he is now—this very morning—awakened much refreshed and strengthened, from the only sleep he hath had for many hours.'

The nobles looked at each other, but more with the purpose to see what each thought of this news, than to exchange any remarks on what had happened. The queen answered hastily, and without affecting to disguise her satisfaction, 'By my word, I am glad he is better. But thou wert over bold to deny the access of my Doctor Masters. Know'st thou not that Holy Writ saith, "in the multitude of counsel there is safety"?'

'Ay, madam,' said Walter; 'but I have heard learned men say, that the safety spoken of is for the physicians, not for the patient.'

'By my faith, child, thou hast pushed me home,' said the queen, laughing; 'for my Hebrew learning does not come quite at a call. —How say you, my Lord of Lincoln? Hath the lad given a just interpretation of the text?'

'The word *safety*, my most gracious madam,' said the Bishop of Lincoln, 'for so hath been translated, it may be somewhat hastily, the Hebrew word, being'——

"My lord,' said the queen, interrupting him, 'we said we had forgotten our Hebrew.—But for thee, young man, what is thy name and birth?'

'Raleigh is my name, most gracious Queen, the youngest son of a large but honourable family of Devonshire.'

'Raleigh?' said Elizabeth, after a moment's recollection; 'have we not heard of your service in Ireland?'

'I have been so fortunate as to do some service there, madam,' replied Raleigh, 'scarce, however, of consequence sufficient to reach your Grace's ears.'

'They hear farther than you think of,' said the queen graciously, 'and have heard of a youth who defended a ford in Shannon against a whole band of wild Irish rebels, until the stream ran purple with their blood and his own.'

'Some blood I may have lost,' said the youth, looking down, 'but it was where my best is due; and that is in your Majesty's service.'

The queen paused, and then said hastily, 'You are very young to have fought so well, and to speak so well. But you must not escape your penance for turning back Masters—the poor man hath caught cold on the river; for our order reached him when he was just returned from certain visits in London, and he held it matter of loyalty and conscience instantly to set forth again. So hark ye, Master Raleigh, see thou fail not to wear thy muddy cloak, in token of penitence, till our pleasure be further known. And here,' she added, giving him a jewel of gold, in the form of a chessman, 'I give thee this to wear at the collar.'

Raleigh, to whom nature had taught intuitively, as it were, those courtly arts which many scarce acquire from long experience, knelt, and, as he took from her hand the jewel, kissed the fingers which gave it. He knew, perhaps, better than almost any of the courtiers who surrounded her, how to mix the devotion claimed by the queen, with the gallantry due to her personal beauty—and in this, his first attempt to unite them, he succeeded so well, as at once to gratify Elizabeth's personal vanity and her love of power.*

His master, the Earl of Sussex, had the full advantage of the satisfaction which Raleigh had afforded Elizabeth on their first interview.

'My lords and ladies,' said the queen, looking around to the retinue by whom she was attended, 'methinks, since we are upon the river, it were well to renounce our present purpose of going to the city, and surprise this poor Earl of Sussex with a visit. He is ill, and suffering doubtless under the fear of our displeasure, from which he hath been honestly cleared by the frank avowal of this malapert boy. What think ye? were it not an act of charity to give him such consolation as the thanks of a queen, much bound to him for his [illegible] service, may perchance best minister? [illegible]

It may [illegible]posed that none to whom this spee[illegible] [illegible] purport.

'Your [illegible] Bishop of Lincoln, 'is

Note [illegible]ur of Sir Walter Raleigh.

the breath of our nostrils.' The men of war averred that the face of the sovereign was a whetstone to the soldier's sword; while the men of state were not less of opinion that the light of the queen's countenance was a lamp to the paths of her councillors; and the ladies agreed, with one voice, that no noble in England so well deserved the regard of England's royal mistress as the Earl of Sussex—the Earl of Leicester's right being reserved entire; so some of the more politic worded their assent—an exception to which Elizabeth paid no apparent attention. The barge had, therefore, orders to deposit its royal freight at Deptford, at the nearest and most convenient point of communication with Saye's Court, in order that the queen might satisfy her royal and maternal solicitude, by making personal inquiries after the health of the Earl of Sussex.

Raleigh, whose acute spirit foresaw and anticipated important consequences from the most trifling events, hastened to ask the queen's permission to go in the skiff, and announce the royal visit to his master, ingeniously suggesting that the joyful surprise might prove prejudicial to his health, since the richest and most generous cordials may sometimes be fatal to those who have been long in a languishing state.

But whether the queen deemed it too presumptuous in so young a courtier to interpose his opinion unasked, or whether she was moved by a recurrence of the feeling of jealousy, which had been instilled into her, by reports that the earl kept armed men about his person, she desired Raleigh, sharply, to reserve his counsel till it was required of him, and repeated her former orders, to be landed at Deptford, adding, 'We will ourselves see what sort of household my Lord of Sussex keeps about him.'

'Now the Lord have pity on us!' said the young courtier to himself. 'Good hearts, the Earl hath many a one round him; but good heads are scarce with us—and he himself is too ill to give direction. And Blount will be at his morning meal of Yarmouth herrings and ale; and Tracy will have his beastly black puddings and Rhenish;—those thorough-paced Welshmen, Thomas ap Rice and Evan Evans, will be at work on their leek porridge and toasted cheese—and she detests, they say, all coarse meats, evil smells, and strong wines. Could they but think of burning some rosemary in the great hall! but *vogue la galère*, all must now be trusted to chance. Luck hath done indifferent well for me this morning, for I trust I have spoiled a cloak and made a court fortune—May she do as much for my gallant patron!'

The royal barge soon stopped at Deptford, and, amid the loud shouts of the populace, which her presence never failed to excite, the queen, with a canopy borne over her head, walked, accompanied by her retinue, towards Saye's Court, where the distant acclamati[illegible] f the people gave the first notice of [illegible] Sussex, who was in the act of [illegible] essilian how he should mak[illegible] breach in the queen's favour, [illegible] urprised at learning her immedi[illegible] ot that the queen's custom of vi[illegible] distinguished nobility, whether [illegible] sickness, could be unknown to him; but the suddenness of the communication left no time for those preparations with which he well knew Elizabeth loved to be greeted, and the rudeness and confusion of his military household, much increased by his late illness, rendered him altogether unprepared for her reception.

Cursing internally the chance which thus brought her gracious visitation on him unaware, he hastened down with Tressilian, to whose eventful and interesting story he had just given an attentive ear.

'My worthy friend,' he said, 'such support as I can give your accusation of Varney, you have a right to expect alike from justice and gratitude. Chance will presently show whether I can do aught with our sovereign, or whether, in very deed, my meddling in your affair may not rather prejudice than serve you.'

Thus spoke Sussex, while hastily casting around him a loose robe of sables, and adjusting his person in the best manner he could to meet the eye of his sovereign. But no hurried attention bestowed on his apparel could remove the ghastly effects of long illness on a countenance which nature had marked with features rather strong than pleasing. Besides, he was of low stature, and though broad-shouldered, athletic, and fit for martial achievements, his presence in a peaceful hall was not such as ladies love to look upon; a personal disadvantage, which was supposed to give Sussex, though esteemed and honoured by his sovereign, considerable disadvantage when compared with Leicester, who was alike remarkable for elegance of manners and for beauty of person.

The earl's utmost despatch only enabled him to meet the queen as she entered the great hall, and he at once perceived there was a cloud on her brow. Her jealous eye had noticed the martial array of armed gentlemen and retainers with which the mansion-house was filled, and her first words expressed her disapprobation.—'Is this a royal garrison, my Lord of Sussex, that it holds so many pikes and calivers? or have we by accident overshot Saye's Court, and landed at our Tower of London?'

Lord Sussex hastened to offer some apology.

'It needs not,' she said. 'My lord, we intend speedily to take up a certain quarrel between your lordship and another great lord of our household, and at the same time to reprehend this uncivilised and dangerous practice of surrounding yourselves with armed, and even with ruffianly followers, as if, in the neighbourhood of our capital, nay, in the very verge of our royal residence, you were preparing to wage civil war with each other. We are glad to see you so well recovered, my lord, though without the assistance of the learned physician whom we sent to you—Urge no excuse—we know how that matter fell out, and we have corrected for it the wild slip, young Raleigh.—By the way, my lord, we will speedily relieve your household of him, and take him into our own. Something there is about him which merits to be better nurtured than he is like to be amongst your very military followers.'

To this proposal Sussex, though scarce understanding how the queen came to make it, could

only bow and express his acquiescence. He then entreated her to remain till refreshment could be offered; but in this he could not prevail. And, after a few compliments of a much colder and more commonplace character than might have been expected from a step so decidedly favourable as a personal visit, the queen took her leave of Saye's Court, having brought confusion thither along with her, and leaving doubt and apprehension behind.

CHAPTER XVI.

> Then call them to our presence. Face to face,
> And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear
> The accuser, and the accused, freely speak;—
> High-stomach'd are they both, and full of ire,
> In rage deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.
>
> RICHARD II.

'I AM ordered to attend court to-morrow,' said Leicester, speaking to Varney, 'to meet, as they surmise, my Lord of Sussex. The Queen intends to take up matters betwixt us. This comes of her visit to Saye's Court, of which you must needs speak so lightly.'

'I maintain it was nothing,' said Varney; 'nay, I know from a sure intelligencer, who was within ear-shot of much that was said, that Sussex has lost rather than gained by that visit. The Queen said, when she stepped into the boat, that Saye's Court looked like a guard-house, and smelt like an hospital. "Like a cook's shop in Ram Alley,* rather," said the Countess of Rutland, who is ever your lordship's good friend. And then my Lord of Lincoln must needs put in his holy oar, and say that my Lord of Sussex must be excused for his rude and old-world housekeeping, since he had as yet no wife.'

'And what said the Queen?' asked Leicester hastily.

'She took him up roundly,' said Varney, 'and asked what my Lord Sussex had to do with a wife, or my Lord Bishop to speak on such a subject. If marriage is permitted, she said, I nowhere read that it is enjoined.'

'She likes not marriages, or speech of marriage, among churchmen,' said Leicester.

'Nor among courtiers neither,' said Varney; but, observing that Leicester changed countenance, he instantly added, 'that all the ladies who were present had joined in ridiculing Lord Sussex's housekeeping, and in contrasting it with the reception her Grace would have assuredly received at my Lord of Leicester's.'

'You have gathered much tidings,' said Leicester, 'but you have forgotten or omitted the most important of all. She hath added another to those dangling satellites, whom it is her pleasure to keep revolving around her.'

'Your lordship meaneth that Raleigh, the Devonshire youth,' said Varney, 'the Knight of the Cloak, as they call him at court?'

'He may be Knight of the Garter one day, for aught I know,' said Leicester, 'for he advances rapidly—She hath capped verses with him, and such fooleries. I would gladly abandon, of my own free will, the part I have in her fickle favour; but I will not be elbowed out of it by the clown Sussex, or this new upstart. I hear Tressilian is with Sussex also, and high in his favour—I would spare him for considerations, but he will thrust himself on his fate—Sussex, too, is almost as well as ever in his health.'

'My lord,' replied Varney, 'there will be rubs in the smoothest road, specially when it leads up hill. Sussex's illness was to us a god-send, from which I hoped much. He has recovered, indeed, but he is not now more formidable than ere he fell ill, when he received more than one foil in wrestling with your lordship. Let not your heart fail you, my lord, and all shall be well.'

'My heart never failed me, sir,' replied Leicester.

'No, my lord,' said Varney; 'but it has betrayed you right often. He that would climb a tree, my lord, must grasp by the branches, not by the blossom.'

'Well, well, well!' said Leicester impatiently; 'I understand thy meaning—My heart shall neither fail me nor seduce me. Have my retinue in order—see that their array be so splendid as to put down not only the rude companions of Ratcliffe, but the retainers of every other nobleman and courtier. Let them be well armed withal, but without any outward display of their weapons, wearing them as if more for fashion's sake than for use. Do thou thyself keep close to me, I may have business for you.'

The preparations of Sussex and his party were not less anxious than those of Leicester.

'Thy Supplication, impeaching Varney of seduction,' said the earl to Tressilian, 'is by this time in the Queen's hand—I have sent it through a sure channel. Methinks your suit should succeed, being, as it is, founded in justice and honour, and Elizabeth being the very muster of both. But I wot not how—the gipsy' (so Sussex was wont to call his rival on account of his dark complexion) 'hath much to say with her in these holiday times of peace—Were war at the gates I should be one of her white boys; but soldiers, like their bucklers and Bilboa blades, get out of fashion in peace-time, and satin sleeves and walking rapiers bear the bell. Well, we must be gay, since such is the fashion.—Blount, hast thou seen our household put into their new braveries?—But thou know'st as little of these toys as I do—thou wouldst be ready enough at disposing a stand of pikes.'

'My good lord,' answered Blount, 'Raleigh hath been here, and taken that charge upon him —Your train will glitter like a May morning.—Marry, the cost is another question. One might keep an hospital of old soldiers at the charge of ten modern lackeys.'

'We must not count cost to-day, Nicholas,' said the earl in reply; 'I am beholden to Raleigh for his care—I trust, though, he has remembered that I am [illegible]-soldier, and would have no more of [illegible] than needs must.'

'Nay [illegible] nought about it,' said Blount; [illegible] honourable lordship's brave ki[illegible] coming in by scores to wait upo[illegible] there, methinks, we shall bear as [illegible] Leicester, let him ruffle it as he [illegible]

* [Ram Alley, London, one of the avenues to the Temple from Fleet Street, and a resort of sharpers and necessitous persons, was noted for its numerous cook-shops.]

'Give them the strictest charges,' said Sussex, 'that they suffer no provocation short of actual violence to provoke them into quarrel—they have hot bloods, and I would not give Leicester the advantage over me by any imprudence of theirs.'

The Earl of Sussex ran so hastily through these directions, that it was with difficulty Tressilian at length found opportunity to express his surprise that he should have proceeded so far in the affair of Sir Hugh Robsart as to lay his petition at once before the queen—'It was the opinion of the young lady's friends,' he said, 'that Leicester's sense of justice should be first appealed to, as the offence had been committed by his officer, and so he had expressly told to Sussex.'

'This could have been done without applying to me,' said Sussex, somewhat haughtily. '*I*, at least, ought not to have been a counsellor when the object was a humiliating reference to Leicester; and I am surprised that you, Tressilian, a man of honour and my friend, would assume such a mean course. If you said so, I certainly understood you not in a matter which sounded so unlike yourself.'

'My lord,' said Tressilian, 'the course I would prefer, for my own sake, is that you have adopted; but the friends of this most unhappy lady'——

'Oh, the friends—the friends,' said Sussex, interrupting him; 'they must let us manage this cause in the way which seems best. This is the time and the hour to accumulate every charge against Leicester and his household, and yours the Queen will hold a heavy one. But at all events she hath the complaint before her.'

Tressilian could not help suspecting that, in his eagerness to strengthen himself against his rival, Sussex had purposely adopted the course most likely to throw odium on Leicester, without considering minutely whether it were the mode of proceeding most likely to be attended with success. But the step was irrevocable, and Sussex escaped from further discussing it by dismissing his company, with the command, 'Let all be in order at eleven o'clock; I must be at court and in the presence by high noon precisely.'

While the rival statesmen were thus anxiously preparing for their approaching meeting in the queen's presence, even Elizabeth herself was not without apprehension of what might chance from the collision of two such fiery spirits, each backed by a strong and numerous body of followers, and dividing betwixt them, either openly or in secret, the hopes and wishes of most of her court. The band of Gentlemen Pensioners were all under arms, and a reinforcement of the Yeomen of the Guard was brought down the Thames from London. A royal proclamation was sent forth, strictly prohibiting nobles, of whatever degree, to approach the palace with retainers or followers, armed with short, or with long weapons; and it was even whispered that [illegible]h Sheriff of Kent had secret instructio[illegible]art of the array of the county [illegible]t notice.

The eventful hou[illegible]prepared for on all sides, at len[illegible]nd, each followed by his long [illegible] train of friends and followers, [illegible] entered the palace-yard of Green[illegible]recisely.

As if by previous arrangement, or perhaps by intimation that such was the queen's pleasure, Sussex and his retinue came to the palace from Deptford by water, while Leicester arrived by land; and thus they entered the court-yard from opposite sides. This trifling circumstance gave Leicester a certain ascendency in the opinion of the vulgar, the appearance of his cavalcade of mounted followers showing more numerous and more imposing than those of Sussex's party, who were necessarily upon foot. No show or sign of greeting passed between the earls, though each looked full at the other, both expecting perhaps an exchange of courtesies, which neither was willing to commence. Almost in the minute of their arrival the castle-bell tolled, the gates of the palace were opened, and the earls entered, each numerously attended by such gentlemen of their train whose rank gave them that privilege. The yeomen and inferior attendants remained in the court-yard, where the opposite parties eyed each other with looks of eager hatred and scorn, as if waiting with impatience for some cause of tumult, or some apology for mutual aggression. But they were restrained by the strict commands of their leaders, and overawed, perhaps, by the presence of an armed guard of unusual strength.

In the meanwhile, the more distinguished persons of each train followed their patrons into the lofty halls and ante-chambers of the royal palace, flowing on in the same current, like two streams which are compelled into the same channel, yet shun to mix their waters. The parties arranged themselves, as it were instinctively, on the different sides of the lofty apartment, and seemed eager to escape from the transient union which the narrowness of the crowded entrance had for an instant compelled them to submit to. The folding-doors at the upper end of the long gallery were immediately afterwards opened, and it was announced in a whisper that the queen was in her presence-chamber, to which these gave access. Both earls moved slowly and stately towards the entrance; Sussex followed by Tressilian, Blount, and Raleigh, and Leicester by Varney. The pride of Leicester was obliged to give way to court-forms, and, with a grave and formal inclination of the head, he paused until his rival, a peer of older creation than his own, passed before him. Sussex returned the reverence with the same formal civility, and entered the presence-room. Tressilian and Blount offered to follow him, but were not permitted, the usher of the black rod alleging in excuse, that he had precise orders to look to all admissions that day. To Raleigh, who stood back on the repulse of his companions, he said, 'You, sir, may enter,' and he entered accordingly.

'Follow me close, Varney,' said the Earl of Leicester, who had stood aloof for a moment to mark the reception of Sussex; and, advancing to the entrance, he was about to pass on, when Varney, who was close behind him, dressed out in the utmost bravery of the day, was stopped by the usher, as Tressilian and Blount had been before him. 'How is this, Master Bowyer?' said the Earl of Leicester. 'Know you who I am, and that this is my friend and follower?'

'Your lordship will pause me,' replied Bow-

yer stoutly; 'my orders are precise, and limit me to a strict discharge of my duty.'

'Thou art a partial knave,' said Leicester, the blood mounting to his face, 'to do me this dishonour, when you but now admitted a follower of my Lord of Sussex.'

'My lord,' said Bowyer, 'Master Raleigh is newly admitted a sworn servant of her Grace, and to him my orders did not apply.'

'Thou art a knave—an ungrateful knave,' said Leicester; 'but he that hath done, can undo—thou shalt not prank thee in thy authority long.'

This threat he uttered aloud, with less than his usual policy and discretion, and, having done so, he entered the presence-chamber, and made his reverence to the queen, who, attired with even more than her usual splendour, and surrounded by those nobles and statesmen whose courage and wisdom have rendered her reign immortal, stood ready to receive the homage of her subjects. She graciously returned the obeisance of the favourite earl, and looked alternately at him and at Sussex, as if about to speak, when Bowyer, a man whose spirit could not brook the insult he had so openly received from Leicester in the discharge of his office, advanced with his black rod in his hand, and knelt down before her.

'Why, how now, Bowyer?' said Elizabeth; 'thy courtesy seems strangely timed!'

'My liege sovereign,' he said, while every courtier around trembled at his audacity, 'I come but to ask whether, in the discharge of my office, I am to obey your Highness' commands, or those of the Earl of Leicester, who has publicly menaced me with his displeasure, and treated me with disparaging terms, because I denied entry to one of his followers, in obedience to your Grace's precise orders?'

The spirit of Henry VIII. was instantly aroused in the bosom of his daughter, and she turned on Leicester with a severity which appalled him, as well as all his followers.

'God's death, my lord!' such was her emphatic phrase, 'what means this? We have thought well of you, and brought you near to our person; but it was not that you might hide the sun from our faithful subjects. Who gave you licence to contradict our orders, or control our officers? I will have in this court, ay, and in this realm, but one mistress, and no master. Look to it that Master Bowyer sustains no harm for his duty to me faithfully discharged; for, as I am Christian woman and crowned queen, I will hold you dearly answerable.—Go, Bowyer, you have done the part of an honest man and true subject. We will brook no mayor of the palace here.'

Bowyer kissed the hand which she extended towards him, and withdrew to his post, astonished at the success of his own audacity. A smile of triumph pervaded the faction of Sussex; that of Leicester seemed proportionally dismayed, and the favourite himself, assuming an aspect of the deepest humility, did not even attempt a word in his own exculpation.

He acted wisely; for it was the policy of Elizabeth to humble, not to disgrace him, and it was prudent to suffer her, without opposition or reply, to glory in the exertion of her authority. The dignity of the queen was gratified, and the woman began soon to feel for the mortification which she had imposed on her favourite. Her keen eye also observed the secret looks of congratulation exchanged amongst those who favoured Sussex, and it was no part of her policy to give either party a decisive triumph.

'What I say to my Lord of Leicester,' she said, after a moment's pause, 'I say also to you, my Lord of Sussex. You also must needs ruffle in the court of England, at the head of a faction of your own?'

'My followers, gracious princess,' said Sussex, 'have indeed ruffled in your cause, in Ireland, in Scotland, and against yonder rebellious earls in the north. I am ignorant that'——

'Do you bandy looks and words with me, my lord?' said the queen, interrupting him; 'methinks you might learn of my Lord of Leicester the modesty to be silent, at least, under our censure. I say, my lord, that my grandfather and father, in their wisdom, debarred the nobles of this civilised land from travelling with such disorderly retinues; and think you that because I wear a coif, their sceptre has in my hand been changed into a distaff? I tell you, no king in Christendom will less brook his court to be cumbered, his people oppressed, and his kingdom's peace disturbed, by the arrogance of overgrown power, than she who now speaks with you.—My Lord of Leicester, and you my Lord of Sussex, I command you both to be friends with each other; or, by the crown I wear, you shall find an enemy who will be too strong for both of you!'

'Madam,' said the Earl of Leicester, 'you who are yourself the fountain of honour, know best what is due to mine. I place it at your disposal, and only say, that the terms on which I have stood with my Lord of Sussex have not been of my seeking; nor had he cause to think me his enemy, until he had done me gross wrong.'

'For me, madam,' said the Earl of Sussex, 'I cannot appeal from your sovereign pleasure; but I were well content my Lord of Leicester should say in what I have, as he terms it, wronged him, since my tongue never spoke the word that I would not willingly justify either on foot or horseback.'

'And for me,' said Leicester, 'always under my gracious sovereign's pleasure, my hand shall be as ready to make good my words as that of any man who ever wrote himself Ratcliffe.'

'My lords,' said the queen, 'these are no terms for this presence; and if you cannot keep your temper, we will find means to keep both that and you close enough. Let me see you join hands, my lords, and forget your idle animosities.'

The two ri[illegible]ls looked at each other with reluctant [illegible] unwilling to make the first advance [illegible] queen's will.

'Su[illegible] 'I entreat—Leicester, I com[illegible]

Yet, [illegible]rds accented, that the entreat[illegible]ommand, and the command [illegible] They remained still and stubborn[illegible]ised her voice to a height

which argued at once impatience and absolute command.

'Sir Henry Lee,' she said to an officer in attendance, 'have a guard in present readiness, and man a barge instantly.—My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, I bid you once more to join hands—and, God's death! he that refuses shall taste of our Tower fare ere he see our face again. I will lower your proud hearts ere we part, and that I promise, on the word of a queen.'

'The prison,' said Leicester, 'might be borne, but to lose your Grace's presence were to lose light and life at once.—Here, Sussex, is my hand.'

'And here,' said Sussex, 'is mine in truth and honesty; but'——

'Nay, under favour, you shall add no more,' said the queen. 'Why, this is as it should be,' she added, looking on them more favourably; 'and when you, the shepherds of the people, unite to protect them, it shall be well with the flock we rule over. For, my lords, I tell you plainly, your follies and your brawls lead to strange disorders among your servants.—My Lord of Leicester, you have a gentleman in your household called Varney?'

'Yes, gracious madam,' replied Leicester; 'I presented him to kiss your royal hand when you were last at Nonsuch.'

'His outside was well enough,' said the queen, 'but scarce so fair, I should have thought, as to have caused a maiden of honourable birth and hopes to barter her fame for his good looks, and become his paramour. Yet so it is—this fellow of yours hath seduced the daughter of a good old Devonshire knight, Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall, and she hath fled with him from her father's house like a castaway.—My Lord of Leicester, are you ill, that you look so deadly pale?'

'No, gracious madam,' said Leicester; and it required every effort he could make to bring forth these few words.

'You are surely ill, my lord?' said Elizabeth, going towards him with hasty speech and hurried step, which indicated the deepest concern. 'Call Masters—call our surgeon in ordinary—Where be these loitering fools?—We lose the pride of our court through their negligence.—Or is it possible, Leicester,' she continued, looking on him with a very gentle aspect, 'can fear of my displeasure have wrought so deeply on thee? Doubt not for a moment, noble Dudley, that we could blame *thee* for the folly of thy retainer—thee, whose thoughts we know to be far otherwise employed! He that would climb the eagle's nest, my lord, cares not who are catching linnets at the foot of the precipice.'

'Mark you that?' said Sussex, aside to Raleigh. 'The devil aids him, surely; for all that would sink another ten fathom deep, seems but to make him float the more easily. Had a follower of mine acted thus'——

'Peace, my good lord [illegible] 'for God's sake, peace. Wait t[illegible] tide; it is even now on the tu[illegible]

The acute observat[illegible] [illegible]rhaps, did not deceive him; for [illegible] [illegible]ion was so great, and, indeed, for t[illegible] [illegible] irresistibly overwhelming, that Eli[illegible] looking at him with a wondering eye, and receiving no intelligible answer to the unusual expressions of grace and affection which had escaped from her, shot her quick glance around the circle of courtiers, and reading, perhaps, in their faces, something that accorded with her own awakened suspicions, she said suddenly, 'Or is there more in this than we see—or that you, my lord, wish that we should see? Where is this Varney? Who saw him?'

'An it please your Grace,' said Bowyer, 'it is the same against whom I this instant closed the door of the presence-room.'

'An it please me?' repeated Elizabeth sharply, not at that moment in the humour of being pleased with anything,—'It does *not* please me that he should pass saucily into my presence, or that you should exclude from it one who came to justify himself from an accusation.'

'May it please you,' answered the perplexed usher, 'if I knew, in such case, how to bear myself, I would take heed'——

'You should have reported the fellow's desire to us, Master Usher, and taken our directions. You think yourself a great man, because but now we chid a nobleman on your account—yet, after all, we hold you but as the lead-weight that keeps the door fast. Call this Varney hither instantly—there is one Tressilian also mentioned in this petition—let them both come before us.'

She was obeyed, and Tressilian and Varney appeared accordingly. Varney's first glance was at Leicester, his second at the queen. In the looks of the latter there appeared an approaching storm, and in the downcast countenance of his patron he could read no directions in what way he was to trim his vessel for the encounter—he then saw Tressilian, and at once perceived the peril of the situation in which he was placed. But Varney was as bold-faced and ready-witted as he was cunning and unscrupulous,—a skilful pilot in extremity, and fully conscious of the advantages which he would obtain, could he extricate Leicester from his present peril, and of the ruin that yawned for himself should he fail in doing so.

'Is it true, sirrah,' said the queen, with one of those searching looks which few had the audacity to resist, 'that you have seduced to infamy a young lady of birth and breeding, the daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?'

Varney kneeled down, and replied, with a look of the most profound contrition, 'There had been some love passages betwixt him and Mistress Amy Robsart.'

Leicester's flesh quivered with indignation as he heard his dependent make this avowal, and for one moment he manned himself to step forward, and, bidding farewell to the court and the royal favour, confess the whole mystery of the secret marriage. But he looked at Sussex, and the idea of the triumphant smile which would clothe his cheek upon hearing the avowal, sealed his lips. 'Not now, at least,' he thought, 'or in this presence, will I afford him so rich a triumph.' And, pressing his lips close together, he stood firm and collected, attentive to each word which Varney uttered, and determined to hide to the last the secret on which his court-

favour seemed to depend. Meanwhile, the queen proceeded in her examination of Varney.

'Love passages!' said she, echoing his last words; 'what passages, thou knave? and why not ask the wench's hand from her father, if thou hadst any honesty in thy love for her?'

'An it please your Grace,' said Varney, still on his knees, 'I dared not do so, for her father had promised her hand to a gentleman of birth and honour—I will do him justice, though I know he bears me ill will—one Master Edmund Tressilian, whom I now see in the presence.'

'Soh!' replied the queen; 'and what was your right to make the simple fool break her worthy father's contract, through your love *passages*, as your conceit and assurance term them?'

'Madam,' replied Varney, 'it is in vain to plead the cause of human frailty before a judge to whom it is unknown, or that of love, to one who never yields to the passion'—He paused an instant, and then added, in a very low and timid tone, 'which she inflicts upon all others.'

Elizabeth tried to frown, but smiled in her own despite, as she answered, 'Thou art a marvellously impudent knave. Art thou married to the girl?'

Leicester's feelings became so complicated and so painfully intense, that it seemed to him as if his life was to depend on the answer made by Varney, who, after a moment's real hesitation, answered, 'Yes.'

'Thou false villain!' said Leicester, bursting forth into rage, yet unable to add another word to the sentence, which he had begun with such emphatic passion.

'Nay, my lord,' said the queen, 'we will, by your leave, stand between this fellow and your anger. We have not yet done with him. Knew your master, my Lord of Leicester, of this fair work of yours? Speak truth, I command thee, and I will be thy warrant from danger on every quarter.'

'Gracious madam,' said Varney, 'to speak Heaven's truth, my lord was the cause of the whole matter.'

'Thou villain, wouldst thou betray me?' said Leicester.

'Speak on,' said the queen hastily, her cheek colouring, and her eyes sparkling, as she addressed Varney; 'speak on—here no commands are heard but mine.'

'They are omnipotent, gracious madam,' replied Varney; 'and to you there can be no secrets. Yet I would not,' he added, looking around him, 'speak of my master's concerns to other ears.'

'Fall back, my lords,' said the queen to those who surrounded her, 'and do you speak on.—What hath the earl to do with this guilty intrigue of thine? See, fellow, that thou beliest him not!'

'Far be it from me to traduce my noble patron,' replied Varney; 'yet I am compelled to own that some deep, overwhelming, yet secret feeling, hath of late dwelt in my lord's mind, hath abstracted him from the cares of the household, which he was wont to govern with such religious strictness, and hath left us opportunities to do follies, of which the shame, as in this case, partly falls upon our patron. Without this, I had not had means or leisure to commit the folly which has drawn on me his displeasure; the heaviest to endure by me, which I could by any means incur,—saving always the yet more dreaded resentment of your Grace.'

'And in this sense, and no other, hath he been accessory to thy fault?' said Elizabeth.

'Surely, madam, in no other,' replied Varney; 'but since somewhat hath chanced to him, he can scarce be called his own man. Look at him, madam, how pale and trembling he stands—how unlike his usual majesty of manner—yet what has he to fear from aught I can say to your Highness? Ah, madam! since he received that fatal packet!'

'What packet, and from whence?' said the queen eagerly.

'From whence, madam, I cannot guess; but I am so near to his person, that I know he has ever since worn, suspended around his neck, and next to his heart, that lock of hair which sustains a small golden jewel shaped like a heart—he speaks to it when alone—he parts not from it when he sleeps—no heathen ever worshipped an idol with such devotion.'

'Thou art a prying knave to watch thy master so closely,' said Elizabeth, blushing, but not with anger; 'and a tattling knave to tell over again his fooleries. What colour might the braid of hair be that thou pratest of?'

Varney replied, 'A poet, madam, might call it a thread from the golden web wrought by Minerva; but, to my thinking, it was paler than even the purest gold—more like the last parting sunbeam of the softest day of spring.'

'Why, you are a poet yourself, Master Varney,' said the queen, smiling; 'but I have not genius quick enough to follow your rare metaphors. Look round these ladies—is there'—(she hesitated, and endeavoured to assume an air of great indifference)—'Is there here, in this presence, any lady, the colour of whose hair reminds thee of that braid? Methinks, without prying into my Lord of Leicester's amorous secrets, I would fain know what kind of locks are like the thread of Minerva's web, or the—what was it?—the last rays of the Mayday sun.'

Varney looked round the presence-chamber, his eye travelling from one lady to another, until at length it rested upon the queen herself, but with an aspect of the deepest veneration. 'I see no tresses,' he said, 'in this presence, worthy of such similes, unless where I dare not look on them.'

'How, sir knave,' said the queen, 'dare you intimate'——

'Nay, madam,' replied Varney, shading his eyes with his hand, 'it was the beams of the Mayday sun that dazzled my weak eyes.'

'Go to—go to,' said the queen; 'thou art a foolish fellow [illegible] turning quickly from him, she walked [illegible] der.

Intense [illegible] with all the various hopes, fea[illegible] which influence court faction, ha[illegible] presence-chamber during the q[illegible] ce with Varney, as if with the st[illegible] Eastern talisman. Men suspended [illegible] the slightest external

motion, and would have ceased to breathe, had Nature permitted such an intermission of her functions. The atmosphere was contagious, and Leicester, who saw all around wishing or fearing his advancement or his fall, forgot all that love had previously dictated, and saw nothing for the instant but the favour or disgrace, which depended on the nod of Elizabeth and the fidelity of Varney. He summoned himself hastily, and prepared to play his part in the scene which was like to ensue, when, as he judged from the glances which the Queen threw towards him, Varney's communications, be they what they might, were operating in his favour. Elizabeth did not long leave him in doubt; for the more than favour with which she accosted him decided his triumph in the eyes of his rival, and of the assembled court of England—'Thou hast a prating servant of this same Varney, my lord,' she said; 'it is lucky you trust him with nothing that can hurt you in our opinion, for, believe me, he would keep no counsel.'

'From your Highness,' said Leicester, dropping gracefully on one knee, 'it were treason he should. I would that my heart itself lay before you, barer than the tongue of any servant could strip it.'

'What, my lord,' said Elizabeth, looking kindly upon him, 'is there no one little corner over which you would wish to spread a veil? Ah! I see you are confused at the question, and your Queen knows she should not look too deeply into her servants' motives for their faithful duty, lest she see what might, or at least ought to, displease her.'

Relieved by these last words, Leicester broke out into a torrent of expressions of deep and passionate attachment, which, perhaps, at that moment, were not altogether fictitious. The mingled emotions which had at first overcome him, had now given way to the energetic vigour with which he had determined to support his place in the queen's favour; and never did he seem to Elizabeth more eloquent, more handsome, more interesting, than while, kneeling at her feet, he conjured her to strip him of all his power, but to leave him the name of her servant. —'Take from the poor Dudley,' he exclaimed, 'all that your bounty has made him, and bid him be the poor gentleman he was when your Grace first shone on him; leave him no more than his cloak and his sword, but let him still boast he has—what in word or deed he never forfeited—the regard of his adored Queen and mistress!'

'No, Dudley!' said Elizabeth, raising him with one hand, while she extended the other that he might kiss it; 'Elizabeth hath not forgotten that, whilst you were a poor gentleman, despoiled of your hereditary rank, she was as poor a princess, and that in her cause you then ventured all that oppression had left you,—your life and honour.—R[illegible], my lord, and let my hand go!—Rise, [illegible] you have ever been, the grace of o[illegible] support of our throne. You[illegible] forced to chide your misdeme[illegible] without owning your merits.—[illegible] God,' she added, turning to the au[illegible]ch various feelings witnessed this [illegible]ene,—'So help me God, gentlemen [illegible]ever sovereign had a truer servant than I have in this noble Earl!'

A murmur of assent rose from the Leicesterian faction, which the friends of Sussex dared not oppose. They remained with their eyes fixed upon the ground, dismayed as well as mortified by the public and absolute triumph of their opponents. Leicester's first use of the familiarity to which the queen had so publicly restored him, was to ask her commands concerning Varney's offence. 'Although,' he said, 'the fellow deserves nothing from me but displeasure, yet, might I presume to intercede'——

'In truth, we had forgotten this matter,' said the queen; 'and it was ill done of us, who owe justice to our meanest, as well as to our highest subject. We are pleased, my lord, that you were the first to recall the matter to our memory. —Where is Tressilian, the accuser?—let him come before us.'

Tressilian appeared, and made a low and beseeming reverence. His person, as we have elsewhere observed, had an air of grace and even of nobleness, which did not escape Queen Elizabeth's critical observation. She looked at him with attention, as he stood before her unabashed, but with an air of the deepest dejection.

'I cannot but grieve for this gentleman,' she said to Leicester. 'I have inquired concerning him, and his presence confirms what I heard, that he is a scholar and a soldier, well accomplished both in arts and arms. We women, my lord, are fanciful in our choice—I had said now, to judge by the eye, there was no comparison to be held betwixt your follower and this gentleman. But Varney is a well-spoken fellow, and, to say truth, that goes far with us of the weaker sex.—Look you, Master Tressilian, a bolt lost is not a bow broken. Your true affection, as I will hold it to be, hath been, it seems, but ill requited; but you have scholarship, and you know there have been false Cressidas to be found, from the Trojan war downward. Forget, good sir, this Lady Light-o'-love—teach your affection to see with a wiser eye. This we say to you, more from the writings of learned men, than our own knowledge, being, as we are, far removed by station and will from the enlargement of experience in such idle toys of humorous passion. For this dame's father, we can make his grief the less, by advancing his son-in-law to such station as may enable him to give an honourable support to his bride. Thou shalt not be forgotten thyself, Tressilian—follow our court, and thou shalt see that a true Troilus hath some claim in our grace. Think of what that arch-knave Shakespeare says—a plague on him, his toys come into my head when I should think of other matter—Stay, how goes it?—

> Cressid was yours, tied with the bonds of heaven:
> These bonds of heaven are slipt, dissolved, and loosed,
> And with another knot five fingers tied,
> The fragments of her faith are bound to Diomed.

You smile, my Lord of Southampton—perchance I make your player's verse halt through my bad memory—but let it suffice—let there be no more of this mad matter.'

And as Tressilian kept the posture of one who would willingly be heard, though, at the same time, expressive of the deepest reverence, the

queen added with some impatience, — 'What would the man have? The wench cannot wed both of you!—She has made her election—not a wise one, perchance—but she is Varney's wedded wife.'

'My suit should sleep there, most gracious sovereign,' said Tressilian, 'and with my suit my revenge. But I hold this Varney's word no good warrant for the truth.'

'Had that doubt been elsewhere urged,' answered Varney, 'my sword'——

'*Thy* sword!' interrupted Tressilian scornfully; 'with her Grace's leave, my sword shall show'——

'Peace, you knaves both!' said the queen; 'know you where you are?—This comes of your feuds, my lords,' she added, looking towards Leicester and Sussex; 'your followers catch your own humour, and must bandy and brawl in my court, and in my very presence, like so many Matamoros.—Look you, sirs, he that speaks of drawing swords in any other quarrel than mine or England's, by mine honour, I'll bracelet him with iron both on wrist and ankle!' She then paused a minute, and resumed in a milder tone, 'I must do justice betwixt the bold and mutinous knaves notwithstanding.—My Lord of Leicester, will you warrant with your honour—that is, to the best of your belief—that your servant speaks truth in saying he hath married this Amy Robsart?'

This was a home-thrust, and had nearly staggered Leicester. But he had now gone too far to recede, and answered, after a moment's hesitation, 'To the best of my belief—indeed, on my certain knowledge—she is a wedded wife.'

'Gracious madam,' said Tressilian, 'may I yet request to know when and under what circumstances this alleged marriage'——

'Out, sirrah,' answered the queen; '*alleged* marriage!—Have you not the word of this illustrious Earl to warrant the truth of what his servant says? But thou art a loser—think'st thyself such at least—and thou shalt have indulgence—we will look into the matter ourself more at leisure.—My Lord of Leicester, I trust you remember we mean to taste the good cheer of your Castle of Kenilworth on this week ensuing—we will pray you to bid our good and valued friend the Earl of Sussex to hold company with us there.'

'If the noble Earl of Sussex,' said Leicester, bowing to his rival with the easiest and with the most graceful courtesy, 'will so far honour my poor house, I will hold it an additional proof of the amicable regard it is your Grace's desire we should entertain towards each other.'

Sussex was more embarrassed—'I should,' said he, 'madam, be but a clog on your gayer hours since my late severe illness.'

'And have you been indeed so very ill?' said Elizabeth, looking on him with more attention than before; 'you are in faith strangely altered, and deeply am I grieved to see it. But be of good cheer—we will ourselves look after the health of so valued a servant, and to whom we owe so much. Masters shall order your diet; and that we ourselves may see that he is obeyed, you must attend us in this progress to Kenilworth.'

This was said so peremptorily, and at the same time with so much kindness, that Sussex, however unwilling to become the guest of his rival, had no resource but to bow low to the queen in obedience to her commands, and to express to Leicester, with blunt courtesy, though mingled with embarrassment, his acceptance of his invitation. As the earls exchanged compliments on the occasion, the queen said to her high treasurer, 'Methinks, my lord, the countenances of these our two noble peers resemble those of the two famed classic streams, the one so dark and sad, the other so fair and noble—My old Master Ascham would have chid me for forgetting the author—It is Cæsar, as I think.—See what majestic calmness sits on the brow of the noble Leicester, while Sussex seems to greet him as if he did our will indeed, but not willingly.'

'The doubt of your Majesty's favour,' answered the lord treasurer, 'may perchance occasion the difference, which does not—as what does?—escape your Grace's eye.'

'Such doubt were injurious to us, my lord,' replied the queen. 'We hold both to be near and dear to us, and will with impartiality employ both in honourable service for the weal of our kingdom. But we will break up their further conference at present.—My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, we have a word more with you. Tressilian and Varney are near your persons—you will see that they attend you at Kenilworth—And as we shall then have both Paris and Menelaus within our call, so we will have this same fair Helen also, whose fickleness has caused this broil. Varney, thy wife must be at Kenilworth, and forthcoming at my order.—My Lord of Leicester, we expect you will look to this.'

The earl and his follower bowed low, and raised their heads, without daring to look at the queen, or at each other; for both felt at the instant as if the nets and toils which their own falsehood had woven, were in the act of closing around them. The queen, however, observed not their confusion, but proceeded to say, 'My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, we require your presence at the privy council to be presently held, where matters of importance are to be debated. We will then take the water for our divertisement, and you, my lords, will attend us.—And that reminds us of a circumstance—Do you, Sir Squire of the Soiled Cassock' (distinguishing Raleigh by a smile), 'fail not to observe that you are to attend us on our progress. You shall be supplied with suitable means to reform your wardrobe.'

And so terminated this celebrated audience, in which, as throughout her life, Elizabeth united the occasional caprice of her sex, with that sense and sound policy, in which neither man nor woman ever excelled her.

[illegible]HAPTER XVII.

Well, then [illegible] the [illegible]hosen—spread the sail—
Heave oft[illegible] [illegible]ark the soundings well—
Look to t[illegible] [illegible]—many a shoal
Marks t[illegible] [illegible]ks, where sits the Siren,
Who, like [illegible] to their ruin.

THE SHIPWRECK.

DURIN[illegible] [illegible]nterval that took place betwixt [illegible] of the audience and the

sitting of the privy council, Leicester had time to reflect that he had that morning sealed his own fate. 'It was impossible for him now,' he thought, 'after having, in the face of all that was honourable in England, pledged his truth (though in an ambiguous phrase) for the statement of Varney, to contradict or disavow it, without exposing himself not merely to the loss of court favour, but to the highest displeasure of the Queen, his deceived mistress, and to the scorn and contempt at once of his rival and of all his compeers.' This certainly rushed at once on his mind, together with all the difficulties which he would necessarily be exposed to in preserving a secret, which seemed now equally essential to his safety, to his power, and to his honour. He was situated like one who walks upon ice, ready to give way around him, and whose only safety consists in moving onwards, by firm and unvacillating steps. The queen's favour, to preserve which he had made such sacrifices, must now be secured by all means and at all hazards—it was the only plank which he could cling to in the tempest. He must settle himself, therefore, to the task of not only preserving, but augmenting, the queen's partiality—He must be the favourite of Elizabeth, or a man utterly shipwrecked in fortune and in honour. All other considerations must be laid aside for the moment, and he repelled the intrusive thoughts which forced on his mind the image of Amy, by saying to himself, there would be time to think hereafter how he was to escape from the labyrinth ultimately, since the pilot who sees a Scylla under his bows, must not for the time think of the more distant dangers of Charybdis.

In this mood the Earl of Leicester that day assumed his chair at the council table of Elizabeth; and when the hours of business were over, in this same mood did he occupy an honoured place near her, during her pleasure excursion on the Thames. And never did he display to more advantage his powers as a politician of the first rank, or his parts as an accomplished courtier.

It chanced that in that day's council matters were agitated touching the affairs of the unfortunate Mary, the seventh year of whose captivity in England was now in doleful currency. There had been opinions in favour of this unhappy princess laid before Elizabeth's council, and supported with much strength of argument by Sussex and others, who dwelt more upon the law of nations and the breach of hospitality, than, however softened or qualified, was agreeable to the queen's ear. Leicester adopted the contrary opinion with great animation and eloquence, and described the necessity of continuing the severe restraint of the Queen of Scots, as a measure essential to the safety of the kingdom, and particularly of Elizabeth's sacred person, the lightest hair of whos[illegible] head, he maintained, ought, in their lo[illegible]imation, to be matter of more dee[illegible] concern than the life and fort[illegible]who, after setting up a vain a[illegible]ce to the throne of England, w[illegible]ile in the bosom of her country, [illegible] hope and theme of encouragement[illegible]s to Elizabeth, whether at home o[illegible]e ended by craving pardon of their lordships, if in the zeal of speech he had given any offence; but the queen's safety was a theme which hurried him beyond his usual moderation of debate.

Elizabeth chid him, but not severely, for the weight which he attached unduly to her personal interest; yet she owned, that since it had been the pleasure of Heaven to combine those interests with the weal of her subjects, she did only her duty when she adopted such measures of self-preservation as circumstances forced upon her; and if the council in their wisdom should be of opinion that it was needful to continue some restraint on the person of her unhappy sister of Scotland, she trusted they would not blame her if she requested of the Countess of Shrewsbury to use her with as much kindness as might be consistent with her safe keeping. And with this intimation of her pleasure, the council was dismissed.

Never was more anxious and ready way made for 'my Lord of Leicester,' than as he passed through the crowded anterooms to go towards the river-side, in order to attend her Majesty to her barge—Never was the voice of the ushers louder, to 'make room—make room for the noble Earl'—Never were these signals more promptly and reverentially obeyed—Never were more anxious eyes turned on him to obtain a glance of favour, or even of mere recognition, while the heart of many a humble follower throbbed betwixt the desire to offer his congratulations, and the fear of intruding himself on the notice of one so infinitely above him. The whole court considered the issue of this day's audience, expected with so much doubt and anxiety, as a decisive triumph on the part of Leicester, and felt assured that the orb of his rival satellite, if not altogether obscured by his lustre, must revolve hereafter in a dimmer and more distant sphere. So thought the court and courtiers, from high to low, and they acted accordingly.

On the other hand, never did Leicester return the general greeting with such ready and condescending courtesy, or endeavour more successfully to gather (in the words of one who at that moment stood at no great distance from him) 'golden opinions from all sorts of men.'

For all the favourite earl had a bow, a smile at least, and often a kind word. Most of these were addressed to courtiers whose names have long gone down the tide of oblivion; but some, to such as sound strangely in our ears, when connected with the ordinary matters of human life, above which the gratitude of posterity has long elevated them. A few of Leicester's interlocutory sentences ran as follows:—

'Poynings, good-morrow, and how does your wife and fair daughter? Why come they not to court?—Adams, your suit is naught—the Queen will grant no more monopolies—but I may serve you in another matter.—My good Alderman Aylford, the suit of the city, affecting Queenhithe, shall be forwarded as far as my poor interest can serve.—Master Edmund Spenser, touching your Irish petition, I would willingly aid you, from my love to the Muses; but thou hast nettled the lord treasurer.'

'My lord,' said the poet, 'were I permitted to explain'——

'Come to my lodging, Edmund,' answered the earl—'not to-morrow, or next day, but soon.—Ha, Will Shakespeare—wild Will!—thou hast given my nephew, Philip Sydney, love-powder—he cannot sleep without thy Venus and Adonis under his pillow! We will have thee hanged for the veriest wizard in Europe. Hark thee, mad wag, I have not forgotten thy matter of the patent, and of the bears.'

The *player* bowed, and the earl nodded and passed on—so that age would have told the tale—in ours, perhaps, we might say the immortal had done homage to the mortal. The next whom the favourite accosted was one of his own zealous dependents.

'How now, Sir Francis Denning,' he whispered, in answer to his exulting salutation, 'that smile hath made thy face shorter by one-third than when I first saw it this morning.—What, Master Bowyer, stand you back, and think you I bear malice? You did but your duty this morning; and if I remember aught of the passage betwixt us, it shall be in thy favour.'

Then the earl was approached, with several fantastic congees, by a person quaintly dressed in a doublet of black velvet, curiously slashed and pinked with crimson satin. A long cock's feather in the velvet bonnet, which he held in his hand, and an enormous ruff, stiffened to the extremity of the absurd taste of the times, joined with a sharp, lively, conceited expression of countenance, seemed to body forth a vain, harebrained coxcomb, and small wit; while the rod he held, and an assumption of royal authority, appeared to express some sense of official consequence, which qualified the natural pertness of his manner. A perpetual blush, which occupied rather the sharp nose than the thin cheek of this personage, seemed to speak more of 'good life,' as it was called, than of modesty; and the manner in which he approached to the earl confirmed that suspicion.

'Good even to you, Master Robert Laneham,' said Leicester, and seemed desirous to pass forward without further speech.

'I have a suit to your noble lordship,' said the figure, boldly following him.

'And what is it, good master keeper of the council chamber door?'

'*Clerk* of the council chamber door,' said Master Robert Laneham, with emphasis, by way of reply and of correction.

'Well, qualify thine office as thou wilt, man,' replied the earl; 'what wouldst thou have with me?'

'Simply,' answered Laneham, 'that your lordship would be, as heretofore, my good lord, and procure me licence to attend the Summer Progress unto your lordship's most beautiful and all-to-be-unmatched Castle of Kenilworth.'

'To what purpose, good Master Laneham?' replied the earl; 'bethink you my guests must needs be many.'

'Not so many,' replied the petitioner, 'but that your nobleness will willingly spare your old servitor his crib and his mess. Bethink you, my lord, how necessary is this rod of mine, to fright away all those listeners, who else would play at bo-peep with the honourable council, and be searching for key-holes and crannies in the door of the chamber, so as to render my staff as needful as a fly-flap in a butcher's shop.'

'Methinks you have found out a fly-blown comparison for the honourable council, Master Laneham,' said the earl; 'but seek not about to justify it. Come to Kenilworth, if you list; there will be store of fools there besides, and so you will be fitted.'

'Nay, an there be fools, my lord,' replied Laneham, with much glee, 'I warrant I will make sport among them; for no greyhound loves to cote a hare, as I to turn and course a fool. But I have another singular favour to beseech of your honour.'

'Speak it, and let me go,' said the earl; 'I think the Queen comes forth instantly.'

'My very good lord, I would fain bring a bed-fellow with me.'

'How, you irreverent rascal!' said Leicester.

'Nay, my lord, my meaning was within the canons,' answered his unblushing, or rather his ever-blushing petitioner. 'I have a wife as curious as her grandmother, who ate the apple. Now, take her with me I may not, her Highness's orders being so strict against the officers bringing with them their wives in a progress, and so lumbering the court with womankind. But what I would crave of your lordship is, to find room for her in some mummery, or pretty pageant, in disguise, as it were; so that, not being known for my wife, there may be no offence.'

'The foul fiend seize ye both!' said Leicester, stung into uncontrollable passion by the recollection which this speech excited—'Why stop you me with such follies?'

The terrified clerk of the chamber door, astonished at the burst of resentment he had so unconsciously produced, dropped his staff of office from his hand, and gazed on the incensed earl with a foolish face of wonder and terror, which instantly recalled Leicester to himself.

'I meant but to try if thou hadst the audacity which befits thine office,' said he hastily. 'Come to Kenilworth, and bring the devil with thee, if thou wilt.'

'My wife, sir, hath played the devil ere now, in a mystery, in Queen Mary's time—but we shall want a trifle for properties.'

'Here is a crown for thee,' said the earl,—'make me rid of thee—the great bell rings.'

Master Robert Laneham stared a moment at the agitation which he had excited, and then said to himself, as he stooped to pick up his staff of office, 'The noble Earl runs wild humours to-day; but they who give crowns, expect us witty fellows to wink at their unsettled starts; and, by my faith, if they paid not for mercy, we would finger them tightly!'*

Leicester moved hastily on, neglecting the courtesies he had hitherto dispensed so liberally, and hurrying through the courtly crowd, until he paused [illegible] withdrawing-room, into which he [illegible] a moment's breath unobserved [illegible].

What [illegible] said to himself, 'that am thu[s] ja[illegible] [wo]rds of a mean, weather-beaten, go[illegible] gull!—Conscience, thou

* [illegible] Robert Laneham.

art a bloodhound, whose growl wakes as readily at the paltry stir of a rat or mouse, as at the step of a lion.—Can I not quit myself, by one bold stroke, of a state so irksome, so unhonoured? What if I kneel to Elizabeth, and, owning the whole, throw myself on her mercy?'

As he pursued this train of thought, the door of the apartment opened, and Varney rushed in.

'Thank God, my lord, that I have found you!' was his exclamation.

'Thank the devil, whose agent thou art,' was the earl's reply.

'Thank whom you will, my lord,' replied Varney; 'but hasten to the water-side. The Queen is on board, and asks for you.'

'Go, say I am taken suddenly ill,' replied Leicester; 'for, by Heaven, my brain can sustain this no longer!'

'I may well say so,' said Varney, with bitterness of expression, 'for your place, ay, and mine, who, as your master of the horse, was to have attended your lordship, is already filled up in the Queen's barge. The new minion Walter Raleigh, and our old acquaintance Tressilian, were called for to fill our places just as I hastened away to seek you.'

'Thou art a devil, Varney,' said Leicester hastily; 'but thou hast the mastery for the present—I follow thee.'

Varney replied not, but led the way out of the palace, and towards the river, while his master followed him, as if mechanically; until, looking back, he said, in a tone which savoured of familiarity at least, if not of authority, 'How is this, my lord?—your cloak hangs on one side,—your hose are unbraced—permit me'——

'Thou art a fool, Varney, as well as a knave,' said Leicester, shaking him off, and rejecting his officious assistance; 'we are best thus, sir—when we require you to order our person, it is well, but now we want you not.'

So saying, the earl resumed at once his air of command, and with it his self-possession—shook his dress into yet wilder disorder—passed before Varney with the air of a superior and master, and in his turn led the way to the river-side.

The queen's barge was on the very point of putting off; the seat allotted to Leicester in the stern, and that to his master of the horse on the bow of the boat, being already filled up. But on Leicester's approach there was a pause, as if the bargemen anticipated some alteration in their company. The angry spot was, however, on the queen's cheek, as, in that cold tone with which superiors endeavour to veil their internal agitation, while speaking to those before whom it would be derogation to express it, she pronounced the chilling words—'We have waited, my Lord of Leicester.'

'Madam, and most gracious princess,' said Leicester, 'you, who can pardon so many weaknesses which your own heart never knows, can best bestow your commise[illegible] [illegible]itations of the bosom, which, [illegible] [illegible]ect both head and limbs.—I c[illegible] [illegible]sence a doubting and an accu[illegible] [illegible]goodness penetrated the clouds of [illegible] restored me to my honour, and, [illegible] [illegible]arer, to your favour—is it wonderf[illegible] me it is most unhappy, that my [illegible] the horse should have found me in a state which scarce permitted me to make the exertion necessary to follow him to this place, when one glance of your Highness, although, alas! an angry one, has had power to do that for me, in which Esculapius might have failed?'

'How is this?' said Elizabeth hastily, looking at Varney; 'hath your lord been ill?'

'Something of a fainting fit,' answered the ready-witted Varney, 'as your Grace may observe from his present condition. My lord's haste would not permit me leisure even to bring his dress into order.'

'It matters not,' said Elizabeth, as she gazed on the noble face and form of Leicester, to which even the strange mixture of passions by which he had been so lately agitated gave additional interest; 'make room for my noble lord.—Your place, Master Varney, has been filled up; you must find a seat in another barge.'

Varney bowed, and withdrew.

'And you, too, our young Squire of the Cloak,' added she, looking at Raleigh, 'must, for the time, go to the barge of our ladies of honour. As for Tressilian, he hath already suffered too much by the caprice of women, that I should aggrieve him by my change of plan, so far as he is concerned.'

Leicester seated himself in his place in the barge, and close to the sovereign; Raleigh rose to retire, and Tressilian would have been so ill-timed in his courtesy as to offer to relinquish his own place to his friend, had not the acute glance of Raleigh himself, who seemed now in his native element, made him sensible that so ready a disclamation of the royal favour might be misinterpreted. He sat silent, therefore, whilst Raleigh, with a profound bow, and a look of the deepest humiliation, was about to quit his place.

A noble courtier, the gallant Lord Willoughby, read, as he thought, something in the queen's face, which seemed to pity Raleigh's real or assumed semblance of mortification.

'It is not for us old courtiers,' he said, 'to hide the sunshine from the young ones. I will, with her Majesty's leave, relinquish for an hour that which her subjects hold dearest, the delight of her Highness's presence, and mortify myself by walking in starlight, while I forsake for a brief season the glory of Diana's own beams. I will take place in the boat which the ladies occupy, and permit this young cavalier his hour of promised felicity.'

The queen replied, with an expression betwixt mirth and earnest, 'If you are so willing to leave us, my lord, we cannot help the mortification. But, under favour, we do not trust you—old and experienced as you may deem yourself—with the care of our young ladies of honour. Your venerable age, my lord,' she continued, smiling, 'may be better assorted with that of my lord treasurer, who follows in the third boat, and by whose experience even my Lord Willoughby's may be improved.'

Lord Willoughby hid his disappointment under a smile—laughed, was confused, bowed, and left the queen's barge to go on board my Lord Burleigh's. Leicester, who endeavoured to divert his thoughts from all internal reflection, by fixing them on what was passing around, watched

this circumstance among others. But when the boat put off from the shore—when the music sounded from a barge which accompanied them—when the shouts of the populace were heard from the shore, and all reminded him of the situation in which he was placed, he abstracted his thoughts and his feelings by a strong effort from everything but the necessity of maintaining himself in the favour of his patroness, and exerted his talents of pleasing captivation with such success, that the queen, alternately delighted with his conversation, and alarmed for his health, at length imposed a temporary silence on him, with playful yet anxious care, lest his flow of spirits should exhaust him.

'My lords,' she said, 'having passed for a time our edict of silence upon our good Leicester, we will call you to counsel on a gamesome matter, more fitted to be now treated of, amidst mirth and music, than in the gravity of our ordinary deliberations.—Which of you, my lords,' said she, smiling, 'know aught of a petition from Orson Pinnit, the Keeper, as he qualifies himself, of our royal bears? Who stands godfather to his request?'

'Marry, with your Grace's good permission, that do I,' said the Earl of Sussex.—'Orson Pinnit was a stout soldier before he was so mangled by the skenes of the Irish clan MacDonough, and I trust your Grace will be, as you always have been, good mistress to your good and trusty servants.'

'Surely,' said the queen, 'it is our purpose to be so, and in especial to our poor soldiers and sailors, who hazard their lives for little pay. We would give,' she said, with her eyes sparkling, 'yonder royal palace of ours to be a hospital for their use, rather than they should call their mistress ungrateful.—But this is not the question,' she said, her voice, which had been awakened by her patriotic feelings, once more subsiding into the tone of gay and easy conversation; 'for this Orson Pinnit's request goes something further. He complains that, amidst the extreme delight with which men haunt the playhouses, and in especial their eager desire for seeing the exhibitions of one Will Shakespeare (whom, I think, my lords, we have all heard something of), the manly amusement of bear-baiting is falling into comparative neglect; since men will rather throng to see these roguish players kill each other in jest, than to see our royal dogs and bears worry each other in bloody earnest.—What say you to this, my Lord of Sussex?'

'Why, truly, gracious madam,' said Sussex, 'you must expect little from an old soldier like me in favour of battles in sport, when they are compared with battles in earnest; and yet, by my faith, I wish Will Shakespeare no harm. He is a stout man at quarter-staff and single falchion, though, as I am told, a halting fellow; and he stood, they say, a tough fight with the rangers of old Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot, when he broke his deer-park and kissed his keeper's daughter.'

'I cry you mercy, my Lord of Sussex,' said Queen Elizabeth, interrupting him; 'that matter was heard in council, and we will not have this fellow's offence exaggerated—there was no kissing in the matter, and the defendant hath put the denial on record. But what say you to his present practice, my lord, on the stage? for there lies the point, and not in any ways touching his former errors, in breaking parks, or the other follies you speak of.'

'Why, truly, madam,' replied Sussex, 'as I said before, I wish the gamesome mad fellow no injury. Some of his whoreson poetry (I crave your Grace's pardon for such a phrase) has rung in mine ears as if the lines sounded to boot and saddle.—But then it is all froth and folly—no substance or seriousness in it, as your Grace has already well touched.—What are half-a-dozen knaves, with rusty foils and tattered targets, making but a mere mockery of a stout fight, to compare to the royal game of bear-baiting, which hath been graced by your Highness's countenance, and that of your royal predecessors, in this your princely kingdom, famous for matchless mastiffs, and bold bearwards, over all Christendom? Greatly is it to be doubted that the race of both will decay, if men should throng to hear the lungs of an idle player belch forth nonsensical bombast, instead of bestowing their pence in encouraging the bravest image of war that can be shown in peace, and that is the sports of the bear-garden. There you may see the bear lying at guard with his red pinky eyes, watching the onset of the mastiff, like a wily captain, who maintains his defence that an assailant may be tempted to venture within his danger. And then comes Sir Mastiff, like a worthy champion, in full career at the throat of his adversary—and then shall Sir Bruin teach him the reward for those who, in their over-courage, neglect the policies of war, and, catching him in his arms, strain him to his breast like a lusty wrestler, until rib after rib crack like the shot of a pistolet. And then another mastiff, as bold, but with better aim and sounder judgment, catches Sir Bruin by the nether-lip, and hangs fast, while he tosses about his blood and slaver, and tries in vain to shake Sir Talbot from his hold. And then'——

'Nay, by my honour, my lord,' said the queen, laughing, 'you have described the whole so admirably, that, had we never seen a bear-baiting, as we have beheld many, and hope, with Heaven's allowance, to see many more, your words were sufficient to put the whole bear-garden before our eyes.—But come, who speaks next in this case?—My Lord of Leicester, what say you?'

'Am I then to consider myself as unmuzzled, please your Grace?' replied Leicester.

'Surely, my lord—that is, if you feel hearty enough to take part in our game,' answered Elizabeth; 'and yet, when I think of your cognisance of the bear and ragged staff, methinks we had better hear some less partial orator.'

'Nay, on my word, gracious princess,' said the earl, 'though my brother Ambrose of Warwick and I do [illegible]cient cognisance your Highness dei[illegible]er, I nevertheless desire nothing [illegible]n all sides; or, as they say, "fi[illegible] And in behalf of the playe[illegible]eds say that they are witty knaves, [illegible]s and jests keep the minds of the comm[illegible]busying themselves with state affairs, an[illegible]ng to traitorous speeches, idle

rumours, and disloyal insinuations. When men are agape to see how Marlowe, Shakespeare, and other play artificers, work out their fanciful plots, as they call them, the mind of the spectators is withdrawn from the conduct of their rulers.'

'We would not have the mind of our subjects withdrawn from the consideration of our own conduct, my lord,' answered Elizabeth; 'because, the more closely it is examined, the true motives by which we are guided will appear the more manifest.'

'I have heard, however, madam,' said the Dean of Saint Asaph's, an eminent puritan, 'that these players are wont, in their plays, not only to introduce profane and lewd expressions, tending to foster sin and harlotry, but even to bellow out such reflections on government, its origin and its object, as tend to render the subject discontented, and shake the solid foundations of civil society. And it seems to be, under your Grace's favour, far less than safe to permit these naughty foul-mouthed knaves to ridicule the godly for their decent gravity, and in blaspheming Heaven, and slandering its earthly rulers, to set at defiance the laws both of God and man.'

'If we could think this were true, my lord,' said Elizabeth, 'we should give sharp correction for such offences. But it is ill arguing against the use of anything from its abuse. And touching this Shakespeare, we think there is that in his plays that is worthy twenty bear-gardens; and that this new undertaking of his Chronicles, as he calls them, may entertain, with honest mirth, mingled with useful instruction, not only our subjects, but even the generation which may succeed to us.'

'Your Majesty's reign will need no such feeble aid to make it remembered to the latest posterity,' said Leicester. 'And yet, in his way, Shakespeare hath so touched some incidents of your Majesty's happy government, as may countervail what has been spoken by his reverence the Dean of Saint Asaph's. There are some lines, for example,—I would my nephew, Philip Sidney, were here, they are scarce ever out of his mouth—they are spoken in a mad tale of fairies, love-charms, and I wot not what besides; but beautiful they are, however short they may and must fall of the subject to which they bear a bold relation—and Philip murmurs them, I think, even in his dreams.'

'You tantalize us, my lord,' said the queen—'Master Philip Sidney is, we know, a minion of the Muses, and we are pleased it should be so. Valour never shines to more advantage than when united with the true taste and love of letters. But surely there are some others among our young courtiers who can recollect what your lordship has forgotten amid weightier affairs.—Master Tressilian, you are described to me as a worshipper of Minerva—remember you aught of these lines?'

Tressilian's heart was too [illegible] prospects in life too fatally blighted, [illegible] opportunity which the queen [illegible] him of attracting her attention, [illegible]ined to transfer the advantage to [illegible]mbitious young friend; and, excusing him[illegible] the score of want of recollection, he added [illegible] believed the beautiful verses, of which my [illegible] Leicester had spoken, were in the remembrance of Master Walter Raleigh.

At the command of the queen, that cavalier repeated, with accent and manner which even added to their exquisite delicacy of tact and beauty of description, the celebrated vision of Oberon:—

> 'That very time I saw—but thou couldst not—
> Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
> Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
> At a fair vestal throned by the west;
> And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
> As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
> Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
> And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
> In maiden meditation, fancy free.'

The voice of Raleigh, as he repeated the last lines, became a little tremulous, as if diffident how the sovereign to whom the homage was addressed might receive it, exquisite as it was. If this diffidence was affected, it was good policy; but if real, there was little occasion for it. The verses were not probably new to the queen, for when was ever such elegant flattery long in reaching the royal ear to which it was addressed? But they were not the less welcome when repeated by such a speaker as Raleigh. Alike delighted with the matter, the manner, and the graceful form and animated countenance of the gallant young reciter, Elizabeth kept time to every cadence, with look and with finger. When the speaker had ceased, she murmured over the last lines as if scarce conscious that she was overheard, and as she uttered the words,

> 'In maiden meditation, fancy free,

she dropped into the Thames the supplication of Orson Pinnit, keeper of the royal bears, to find more favourable acceptance at Sheerness, or wherever the tide might waft it.

Leicester was spurred to emulation by the success of the young courtier's exhibition, as the veteran racer is roused when a high-mettled colt passes him on the way. He turned the discourse on shows, banquets, pageants, and on the character of those by whom these gay scenes were then frequented. He mixed acute observation with light satire, in that just proportion which was free alike from malignant slander and insipid praise. He mimicked with ready accent the manners of the affected or the clownish, and made his own graceful tone and manner seem doubly such when he resumed it. Foreign countries,—their customs—their manners—the rules of their courts—the fashions, and even the dress of their ladies, were equally his theme; and seldom did he conclude without conveying some compliment, always couched in delicacy, and expressed with propriety, to the Virgin Queen, her court, and her government. Thus passed the conversation during this pleasure voyage, seconded by the rest of the attendants upon the royal person, in gay discourse, varied by remarks upon ancient classics and modern authors, and enriched by maxims of deep policy and sound morality, by the statesmen and sages who sat around, and mixed wisdom with the lighter talk of a female court.

When they returned to the palace, Elizabeth accepted, or rather selected, the arm of Leicester,

to support her from the stairs where they landed to the great gate. It even seemed to him (though that might arise from the flattery of his own imagination), that during this short passage, she leaned on him somewhat more than the slipperiness of the way necessarily demanded. Certainly her actions and words combined to express a degree of favour, which, even in his proudest days, he had not till then attained. His rival, indeed, was repeatedly graced by the queen's notice; but it was in a manner that seemed to flow less from spontaneous inclination, than as extorted by a sense of his merit. And, in the opinion of many experienced courtiers, all the favour she showed him was overbalanced, by her whispering in the ear of the Lady Derby, that 'now she saw sickness was a better alchemist than she before wotted of, seeing it had changed my Lord of Sussex's copper nose into a golden one.'

The jest transpired, and the Earl of Leicester enjoyed his triumph, as one to whom court favour had been both the primary and the ultimate motive of life, while he forgot, in the intoxication of the moment, the perplexities and dangers of his own situation. Indeed, strange as it may appear, he thought less at that moment of the perils arising from his secret union, than of the marks of grace which Elizabeth from time to time showed to young Raleigh. They were indeed transient, but they were conferred on one accomplished in mind and body, with grace, gallantry, literature, and valour. An accident occurred in the course of the evening which riveted Leicester's attention to this object.

The nobles and courtiers who had attended the queen on her pleasure expedition, were invited, with royal hospitality, to a splendid banquet in the hall of the palace. The table was not, indeed, graced by the presence of the sovereign; for, agreeable to her idea of what was at once modest and dignified, the Maiden Queen, on such occasions, was wont to take in private, or with one or two favourite ladies, her light and temperate meal. After a moderate interval, the court again met in the splendid gardens of the palace; and it was while thus engaged, that the queen suddenly asked a lady, who was near to her both in place and favour, what had become of the young Squire Lack-Cloak.

The Lady Paget answered, 'She had seen Master Raleigh but two or three minutes since, standing at the window of a small pavilion or pleasure-house, which looked out on the Thames, and writing on the glass with a diamond ring.'

'That ring,' said the queen, 'was a small token I gave him, to make amends for his spoiled mantle. Come, Paget, let us see what use he has made of it, for I can see through him already. He is a marvellously sharp-witted spirit.'

They went to the spot, within sight of which, but at some distance, the young cavalier still lingered, as the fowler watches the net which he has set. The queen approached the window, on which Raleigh had used her gift to inscribe the following line:—

Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall.

The queen smiled, read it twice over, once with deliberation to Lady Paget, and once again to herself. 'It is a pretty beginning,' she said, after the consideration of a moment or two; 'but methinks the Muse hath deserted the young wit, at the very outset of his task. It were good-natured—were it not, Lady Paget—to complete it for him? Try your rhyming faculties.'

Lady Paget, prosaic from her cradle upwards, as ever any lady of the bedchamber before or after her, disclaimed all possibility of assisting the young poet.

'Nay, then, we must sacrifice to the Muses ourselves,' said Elizabeth.

'The incense of no one can be more acceptable,' said Lady Paget; 'and your Highness will impose such obligation on the ladies of Parnassus'——

'Hush, Paget,' said the queen, 'you speak sacrilege against the immortal Nine—yet, virgins themselves, they should be exorable to a Virgin Queen—and therefore—let me see how runs his verse—

Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall.

Might not the answer (for fault of a better) run thus?—

If thy mind fail thee, do not climb at all.'

The dame of honour uttered an exclamation of joy and surprise at so happy a termination; and certainly a worse has been applauded, even when coming from a less distinguished author.

The queen, thus encouraged, took off a diamond ring, and saying, 'We will give this gallant some cause of marvel, when he finds his couplet perfected without his own interference,' she wrote her own line beneath that of Raleigh.

The queen left the pavilion—but retiring slowly, and often looking back, she could see the young cavalier steal, with the flight of a lapwing, towards the place where he had seen her make a pause;—'She stayed but to observe,' as she said, 'that her train had taken;' and then, laughing at the circumstance with the Lady Paget, she took the way slowly towards the palace. Elizabeth, as they returned, cautioned her companion not to mention to any one the aid which she had given to the young poet—and Lady Paget promised scrupulous secrecy. It is to be supposed that she made a mental reservation in favour of Leicester, to whom her ladyship transmitted without delay an anecdote so little calculated to give him pleasure.

Raleigh, in the meanwhile, stole back to the window, and read, with a feeling of intoxication, the encouragement thus given him by the queen in person to follow out his ambitious career, and returned to Sussex and his retinue, then on the point of embarking to go up the river, his heart beating high with gratified pride, and with hope of future distinction.

The reverence due to the person of the earl prevented any notice being taken of the reception he had met with at court, until they had landed, and the [illegible] were assembled in the great hall at [illegible] while that lord, exhausted by his [illegible]d the fatigues of the day, had ret[illegible] to his chamber, demanding the attendanc[illegible] Wayland, his successful physician. Waylan[illegible]owever, was nowhere to be found; and, whi[illegible] some of the party were, with military impatience, seeking him, and cursing his absence,

the rest flocked around Raleigh, to congratulate him on his prospects of court favour.

He had the good taste and judgment to conceal the decisive circumstance of the couplet, to which Elizabeth had deigned to find a rhyme; but other circumstances had transpired which plainly intimated that he had made some progress in the queen's favour. All hastened to wish him joy on the mended appearance of his fortune: some from real regard; some, perhaps, from hopes that his preferment might hasten their own; and most from a mixture of these motives, and a sense that the countenance shown to any one of Sussex's household was in fact a triumph to the whole. Raleigh returned the kindest thanks to them all, disowning, with becoming modesty, that one day's fair reception made a favourite, any more than one swallow a summer. But he observed that Blount did not join in the general congratulation, and, somewhat hurt at his apparent unkindness, he plainly asked him the reason.

Blount replied with equal sincerity—'My good Walter, I wish thee as well as do any of these chattering gulls, who are whistling and whooping gratulations in thine ear, because it seems fair weather with thee. But I fear for thee, Walter' (and he wiped his honest eye), 'I fear for thee with all my heart. These court tricks, and gambols, and flashes of fine women's favour, are the tricks and trinkets that bring fair fortunes to farthings, and fine faces and witty coxcombs to the acquaintance of dull block and sharp axes.'

So saying, Blount arose and left the hall, while Raleigh looked after him with an expression that blanked for a moment his bold and animated countenance.

Stanley just then entered the hall, and said to Tressilian, 'My lord is calling for your fellow Wayland, and your fellow Wayland is just come hither in a sculler, and is calling for you, nor will he go to my lord till he sees you. The fellow looks as he were mazed, methinks—I would you would see him immediately.'

Tressilian instantly left the hall, and, causing Wayland Smith to be shown into a withdrawing apartment, and lights placed, he conducted the artist thither, and was surprised when he observed the emotion of his countenance.

'What is the matter with you, Smith?' said Tressilian; 'have you seen the devil?'

'Worse, sir, worse,' replied Wayland, 'I have seen a basilisk.—Thank God, I saw him first, for being so seen, and seeing not me, he will do the less harm.'

'In God's name, speak sense,' said Tressilian, 'and say what you mean!'

'I have seen my old master,' said the artist—'Last night, a friend, whom I had acquired, took me to see the palace clock, judging me to be curious in such works of art. A[illegible] the window of a turret next to the clock-h[illegible] my old master.'

'Thou must have needs been [illegible],' said Tressilian.

'I was not mistaken,' said Wayl[illegible]—'He that once hath his features by heart wo[illegible]d know him amongst a million. He was a[illegible]ticly habited; but he cannot disguise himself from me, God be praised, as I can from him. I will not, however, tempt Providence by remaining within his ken. Tarleton the player himself could not so disguise himself, but that, sooner or later, Doboobie would find him out. I must away to-morrow; for, as we stand together, it were death to me to remain within reach of him.'

'But the Earl of Sussex?' said Tressilian.

'He is in little danger from what he has hitherto taken, provided he swallow the matter of a bean's size of the orvietan every morning fasting—but let him beware of a relapse.'

'And how is that to be guarded against?' said Tressilian.

'Only by such caution as you would use against the devil,' answered Wayland. 'Let my lord's clerk of the kitchen kill his lord's meat himself, and dress it himself, using no spice but what he procures from the surest hands—Let the sewer serve it up himself, and let the master of my lord's household see that both clerk and sewer taste the dishes which the one dresses and the other serves. Let my lord use no perfumes which come not from well-accredited persons; no unguents—no pomades. Let him on no account drink with strangers, or eat fruit with them, either in the way of nooning or otherwise. Especially let him observe such caution if he goes to Kenilworth—the excuse of his illness, and his being under diet, will, and must, cover the strangeness of such practice.'

'And thou,' said Tressilian, 'what dost thou think to make of thyself?'

'France, Spain, either India, East or West, shall be my refuge,' said Wayland, 'ere I venture my life by residing within ken of Doboobie, Demetrius, or whatever else he calls himself for the time.'

'Well,' said Tressilian, 'this happens not inopportunely—I had business for you in Berkshire, but in the opposite extremity to the place where thou art known; and ere thou hadst found out this new reason for living private, I had settled to send thee thither upon a secret embassage.'

The artist expressed himself willing to receive his commands, and Tressilian, knowing he was well acquainted with the outline of his business at court, frankly explained to him the whole, mentioned the agreement which subsisted betwixt Giles Gosling and him, and told what had that day been averred in the presence-chamber by Varney, and supported by Leicester.

'Thou seest,' he added, 'that, in the circumstances in which I am placed, it behoves me to keep a narrow watch on the motions of these unprincipled men, Varney and his complices, Foster and Lambourne, as well as those of my Lord Leicester himself, who, I suspect, is partly a deceiver, and not altogether the deceived in that matter. Here is my ring, as a pledge to Giles Gosling—here is besides gold, which shall be trebled if thou serve me faithfully. Away down to Cumnor, and see what happens there.'

'I go with double good-will,' said the artist, 'first, because I serve your honour, who has been so kind to me, and then, that I may escape my old master, who, if not an absolute incarnation of the devil, has at least as much of the demon about him, in will, word, and action, as

ever polluted humanity.—And yet let him take care of me. I fly him now, as heretofore; but if, like the Scottish wild cattle,* I am vexed by frequent pursuit, I may turn on him in hate and desperation.—Will your honour command my nag to be saddled? I will but give the medicine to my lord, divided in its proper proportions, with a few instructions. His safety will then depend on the care of his friends and domestics—for the past he is guarded, but let him beware of the future.'

Wayland Smith accordingly made his farewell visit to the Earl of Sussex, dictated instructions as to his regimen, and precautions concerning his diet, and left Saye's Court without waiting for morning.

CHAPTER XVIII.

—The moment comes—
It is already come—when thou must write
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum.
The constellations stand victorious o'er thee,
The planets shoot good fortune in fair junctions,
And tell thee, 'Now's the time.'
SCHILLER'S WALLENSTEIN, BY COLERIDGE.

WHEN Leicester returned to his lodging, after a day so important and so harassing, in which, after riding out more than one gale, and touching on more than one shoal, his bark had finally gained the harbour with banner displayed, he seemed to experience as much fatigue as a mariner after a perilous storm. He spoke not a word while his chamberlain exchanged his rich court-mantle for a furred night-robe, and when this officer signified that Master Varney desired to speak with his lordship, he replied only by a sullen nod. Varney, however, entered, accepting this signal as a permission, and the chamberlain withdrew.

The earl remained silent and almost motionless in his chair, his head reclined on his hand, and his elbow resting upon the table which stood beside him, without seeming to be conscious of the entrance, or of the presence, of his confidant. Varney waited for some minutes until he should speak, desirous to know what was the finally predominant mood of a mind, through which so many powerful emotions had that day taken their course. But he waited in vain, for Leicester continued still silent, and the confidant saw himself under the necessity of being the first to speak. 'May I congratulate your lordship,' he said, 'on the deserved superiority you have this day attained over your most formidable rival?'

Leicester raised his head, and answered sadly, but without anger, 'Thou, Varney, whose ready invention has involved me in a web of most mean and perilous falsehood, knowest best what small reason there is for gratulation on the subject.'

'Do you blame me, my lord,' said Varney, 'for not betraying on the first push, the secret on which your fortunes depended, and which you have so oft and so earnestly recommended to my safe keeping? Your lordship was present in person, and might have contradicted me and ruined yourself by an avowal of the truth; but surely it was no part of a faithful servant to have done so without your commands.'

'I cannot deny it, Varney,' said the earl, rising and walking across the room; 'my own ambition has been traitor to my love.'

'Say rather, my lord, that your love has been traitor to your greatness, and barred you from such a prospect of honour and power as the world cannot offer to any other. To make my honoured lady a countess, you have missed the chance of being yourself'——

He paused, and seemed unwilling to complete the sentence.

'Of being myself *what?*' demanded Leicester; 'speak out thy meaning, Varney.'

'Of being yourself a KING, my lord,' replied Varney; 'and King of England to boot!—It is no treason to our Queen to say so. It would have chanced by her obtaining that which all true subjects wish her—a lusty, noble, and gallant husband.'

'Thou ravest, Varney,' answered Leicester. 'Besides, our times have seen enough to make men loathe the crown matrimonial which men take from their wives' lap. There was Darnley of Scotland.'

He!' said Varney; 'a gull, a fool, a thrice sodden ass, who suffered himself to be fired off into the air like a rocket on a rejoicing day. Had Mary had the hap to have wedded the noble Earl, *once* destined to share her throne, she had experienced a husband of different metal; and her husband had found in her a wife as complying and loving as the mate of the meanest squire, who follows the hounds a-horseback, and holds her husband's bridle as he mounts.'

'It might have been as thou sayest, Varney,' said Leicester, a brief smile of self-satisfaction passing over his anxious countenance. 'Henry Darnley knew little of women—with Mary, a man who knew her sex might have had some chance of holding his own. But not with Elizabeth, Varney—for I think God, when he gave her the heart of a woman, gave her the head of a man to control its follies.—No, I know her—She will accept love-tokens, ay, and requite them with the like—put sugared sonnets in her bosom,—ay, and answer them too—push gallantry to the very verge where it becomes exchange of affection—but she writes *nil ultra* to all which is to follow, and would not barter one iota of her own supreme power for all the alphabet of both Cupid and Hymen.'

'The better for you, my lord,' said Varney, 'that is, in the case supposed, if such be her disposition; since you think you cannot aspire to become her husband. Her favourite you are, and may remain, if the lady at Cumnor Place continues in her present obscurity.'

'Poo[illegible] said Leicester, with a deep sigh; she [illegible]ked [illegible] earnestly to be acknowledged in presen[illegible] God and man!'

'Ay[illegible]ut, my lord,' said Varney, 'is her desire [illegible]asonable?—that is the question.—Her religious scruples are solved—she is an honoured and beloved wife—enjoying the society of her husband at such times as his weightier duties

* A remnant of the wild cattle of Scotland are preserved at Chillingham Castle, near Wooler, in Northumberland, the seat of Lord Tankerville. They fly before strangers; but if disturbed and followed, they turn with fury on those who persist in annoying them. [See also note to Castle Dangerous—'Scottish Wild Cattle.']

permit him to afford her his company—What would she more? I am right sure that a lady so gentle and so loving would consent to live her life through in a certain obscurity—which is, after all, not dimmer than when she was at Lidcote Hall—rather than diminish the least jot of her lord's honours and greatness by a premature attempt to share them.'

'There is something in what thou sayest,' said Leicester; 'and her appearance here were fatal—yet she must be seen at Kenilworth; Elizabeth will not forget that she has so appointed.'

'Let me sleep on that point,' said Varney; 'I cannot else perfect the device I have on th stithy, which I trust will satisfy the Queen and please my honoured lady, yet leave this fatal secret where it is now buried.—Has your lordship further commands for the night?'

'I would be alone,' said Leicester. 'Leave me, and place my steel casket on the table.—Be within summons.'

Varney retired—and the earl, opening the window of his apartment, looked out long and anxiously upon the brilliant host of stars which glimmered in the splendour of a summer firmament. The words burst from him as at unawares —'I had never more need that the heavenly bodies should befriend me, for my earthly path is darkened and confused.'

It is well known that the age reposed a deep confidence in the vain predictions of judicial astrology, and Leicester, though exempt from the general control of superstition, was not in this respect superior to his time; but, on the contrary, was remarkable for the encouragement which he gave to the professors of this pretended science. Indeed, the wish to pry into futurity, so general among the human race, is peculiarly to be found amongst those who trade in state mysteries, and the dangerous intrigues and cabals of courts. With heedful precaution to see that it had not been opened, or its locks tampered with, Leicester applied a key to the steel casket, and drew from it, first, a parcel of gold pieces, which he put into a silk purse; then a parchment inscribed with planetary signs, and the lines and calculations used in framing horoscopes, on which he gazed intently for a few moments; and lastly, took forth a large key, which, lifting aside the tapestry, he applied to a little concealed door in the corner of the apartment, and, opening it, disclosed a stair constructed in the thickness of the wall.

'Alasco,' said the earl, with a voice raised, yet no higher raised than to be heard by the inhabitant of the small turret to which the stair conducted—'Alasco, I say, descend.'

'I come, my lord,' answered a voice from above. The foot of an aged man was heard slowly descending the narrow stair, and Alasco entered the earl's apartment. The astrologer was a little man, and seemed much advanced in age, for his beard was long and white, and reached over his black doublet down to his silken girdle. His hair was of the same venerable hue. But his eyebrows were as dark as the keen and piercing black eyes which they shaded, and this peculiarity gave a wild and singular cast to the physiognomy of the old man. His cheek was still fresh and ruddy, and the eyes we have mentioned resembled those of a rat in acuteness, and even fierceness of expression. His manner was not without a sort of dignity; and the interpreter of the stars, though respectful, seemed altogether at his ease, and even assumed a tone of instruction and command in conversing with the prime favourite of Elizabeth.

'Your prognostications have failed, Alasco, said the earl, when they had exchanged salutations—'He is recovering.'

'My son,' replied the astrologer, 'let me remind you, I warranted not his death—nor is there any prognostication that can be derived from the heavenly bodies, their aspects and their conjunctions, which is not liable to be controlled by the will of Heaven. *Astra regunt homines, sed regit astra Deus.*'

'Of what avail, then, is your mystery?' inquired the earl.

'Of much, my son,' replied the old man, 'since it can show the natural and probable course of events, although that course moves in subordination to a Higher Power. Thus, in reviewing the horoscope which your lordship subjected to my skill, you will observe that Saturn, being in the sixth House in opposition to Mars, retrograde in the House of Life, cannot but denote long and dangerous sickness, the issue whereof is in the will of Heaven, though death may probably be inferred—Yet, if I knew the name of the party, I would erect another scheme.'

'His name is a secret,' said the earl; 'yet I must own thy prognostication hath not been unfaithful. He has been sick, and dangerously so, not however to death. But hast thou again cast my horoscope as Varney directed thee, and art thou prepared to say what the stars tell of my present fortune?'

'My art stands at your command,' said the old man; 'and here, my son, is the map of thy fortunes, brilliant in aspect as ever beamed from those blessed signs whereby our life is influenced, yet not unchequered with fears, difficulties, and dangers.'

'My lot were more than mortal were it otherwise,' said the earl; 'proceed, father, and believe you speak with one ready to undergo his destiny in action and in passion, as may beseem a noble of England.'

'Thy courage to do and to suffer must be wound up yet a strain higher,' said the old man. 'The stars intimate yet a prouder title, yet a higher rank. It is for thee to guess their meaning, not for me to name it.'

'Name it, I conjure you—name it, I command you,' said the earl, his eyes brightening as he spoke.

'I may not, and I will not,' replied the old man. 'The ire of princes is as the wrath of the lion. But mark, and judge for thyself. Here Venus, ascendant in the House of Life, and conjoined with Sol, showers down that flood of silver light, blent with gold, which promises power, wealth, dignity—all that the proud heart of man desires, and in such abundance, that never the future Augustus of that old and mighty Rome heard from his *Haruspices* such a tale of glory as from this rich text my lore might read to my favourite son.'

'Thou dost but jest with me, father,' said the earl, astonished at the strain of enthusiasm in which the astrologer delivered his prediction.

'Is it for him to jest who hath his eye on heaven, who hath his foot in the grave?' returned the old man solemnly.

The earl made two or three strides through the apartment, with his hand outstretched, as on who follows the beckoning signal of some phantom, waving him on to deeds of high import. As he turned, however, he caught the eye of the astrologer fixed on him, while an observing glance of the most shrewd penetration shot from under the penthouse of his shaggy dark eyebrows. Leicester's haughty and suspicious soul at once caught fire; he darted towards the old man from the farther end of the lofty apartment, only standing still when his extended hand was within a foot of the astrologer's body.

'Wretch!' he said, 'if you dare to palter with me, I will have your skin stripped from your living flesh!—Confess thou hast been hired to deceive and to betray me—that thou art a cheat, and I thy silly prey and booty!'

The old man exhibited some symptoms of emotion, but not more than the furious deportment of his patron might have extorted from innocence itself.

'What means this violence, my lord?' he answered, 'or in what can I have deserved it at your hands?'

'Give me proof,' said the earl vehemently, 'that you have not tampered with mine enemies.'

'My lord,' replied the old man, with dignity, 'you can have no better proof than that which you yourself elected. In that turret I have spent the last twenty-four hours, under the key which has been in your own custody. The hours of darkness I have spent in gazing on the heavenly bodies with these dim eyes, and during those of light I have toiled this aged brain to complete the calculation arising from their combinations. Earthly food I have not tasted—earthly voice I have not heard—you are yourself aware I had no means of doing so—and yet I tell you—I who have been thus shut up in solitude and study—that within these twenty-four hours your star has become predominant in the horizon, and either the bright book of heaven speaks false, or there must have been a proportionate revolution in your fortunes upon earth. If nothing has happened within that space to secure your power, or advance your favour, then am I indeed a cheat, and the divine art, which was first devised in the plains of Chaldea, is a foul imposture.'

'It is true,' said Leicester, after a moment's reflection, 'thou wert closely immured—and it is also true that the change has taken place in my situation which thou sayest the horoscope indicates.'

'Wherefore this distrust, then, my son?' said the astrologer, assuming a tone of admonition; 'the celestial intelligences brook not diffidence, even in their favourites.'

'Peace, father,' answered Leicester; 'I have erred in doubting thee. Not to mortal man, nor to celestial intelligence—under that which is supreme—will Dudley's lips say more in condescension or apology. Speak rather to the present purpose.—Amid these bright promises, thou hast said there was a threatening aspect—Can thy skill tell whence, or by whose means, such danger seems to impend?'

'Thus far only,' answered the astrologer, 'does my art enable me to answer your query. The infortune is threatened by the malignant and adverse aspect, through means of a youth—and, as I think, a rival; but whether in love or in prince's favour, I know not; nor can I give further indication respecting him, save that he comes from the western quarter.'

'The western—ha!' replied Leicester, 'it is enough—the tempest does indeed brew in that quarter!—Cornwall and Devon—Raleigh and Tressilian—one of them is indicated—I must beware of both.—Father, if I have done thy skill injustice, I will make thee a lordly recompense.'

He took a purse of gold from the strong casket which stood before him. 'Have thou double the recompense which Varney promised.—Be faithful—be secret—obey the directions thou shalt receive from my master of the horse, and grudge not a little seclusion or restraint in my cause—it shall be richly considered.—Here, Varney—conduct this venerable man to thine own lodging—tend him heedfully in all things, but see that he holds communication with no one.'

Varney bowed, and the astrologer kissed the earl's hand in token of adieu, and followed the master of the horse to another apartment, in which were placed wine and refreshments for his use.

The astrologer sat down to his repast, while Varney shut two doors with great precaution, examined the tapestry, lest any listener lurked behind it; and then, sitting down opposite to the sage, began to question him.

'Saw you my signal from the court beneath?'

'I did,' said Alasco, for by such name he was at present called, 'and shaped the horoscope accordingly.'

'And it passed upon the patron without challenge?' continued Varney.

'Not without challenge,' replied the old man, 'but it did pass; and I added, as before agreed, danger from a discovered secret, and a western youth.'

'My lord's fear will stand sponsor to the one, and his conscience to the other, of these prognostications,' replied Varney. 'Sure never man chose to run such a race as his, yet continued to retain those silly scruples! I am fain to cheat him to his own profit. But touching your matters, sage interpreter of the stars, I can tell you more of your own fortune than plan or figure can show. You must be gone from hence forthwith.'

'I will not,' said Alasco peevishly. 'I have been too much hurried up and down of late—immured for day and night in a desolate turret-chamber—I must enjoy my liberty, and pursue my studies, which are of more import than the fate of f[illegible]men and favourites, that rise and bur[illegible] bubbles in the atmosphere of a court.'

'At y[illegible] pleasure,' said Varney, with a sneer that habit had rendered familiar to his features, and which forms the principal characteristic which painters have assigned to that of Satan

—'At your pleasure,' he said; 'you may enjoy your liberty and your studies until the daggers of Sussex's followers are clashing within your doublet and against your ribs.' The old man turned pale, and Varney proceeded. 'Wot you not he hath offered a reward for the arch-quack and poison-vender, Demetrius, who sold certain precious spices to his lordship's cook?—What! turn you pale, old friend? Does Hali already see an infortune in the House of Life?—Why, hark thee, we will have thee down to an old house of mine in the country, where thou shalt live with a hob-nailed slave, whom thy alchemy may convert into ducats, for to such conversion alone is thy art serviceable.'

'It is false, thou foul-mouthed railer,' said Alasco, shaking with impotent anger; 'it is well known that I have approached more nearly to projection than any hermetic artist who now lives. There are not six chemists in the world who possess so near an approximation to the grand arcanum'——

'Come, come,' said Varney, interrupting him, 'what means this, in the name of Heaven? Do we not know one another? I believe thee to be so perfect—so very perfect in the mystery of cheating, that, having imposed upon all mankind, thou hast at length, in some measure, imposed upon thyself; and, without ceasing to dupe others, hast become a species of dupe to thine own imagination. Blush not for it, man—thou art learned, and shalt have classical comfort:—

Ne quisquam Ajacem possit superare nisi Ajax.

No one but thyself could have gulled thee—and thou hast gulled the whole brotherhood of the Rosy Cross beside—none so deep in the mystery as thou. But hark thee in thine ear; had the seasoning which spiced Sussex's broth wrought more surely, I would have thought better of the chemical science thou dost boast so highly.'

'Thou art a hardened villain, Varney,' replied Alasco; 'many will do those things, who dare not speak of them.'

'And many speak of them who dare not do them,' answered Varney; 'but be not wroth—I will not quarrel with thee—If I did, I were fain to live on eggs for a month, that I might feed without fear. Tell me at once, how came thine art to fail thee at this great emergency?'

'The Earl of Sussex's horoscope intimates,' replied the astrologer, 'that the sign of the ascendant being in combustion'——

'Away with your gibberish,' replied Varney; 'think'st thou it is the patron thou speak'st with?'

'I crave your pardon,' replied the old man, 'and swear to you, I know but one medicine that could have saved the Earl's life; and as no man living in England knows that antidote save myself—moreover, as the ingredients, one of them in particular, are scarce possible to come by—I must needs suppose his escape [illegible]wing to such a constitution of lungs and [illegible]ts, as was never before bound up in a body o[illegible]y.'

'There was some talk of a quack who waited upon him,' said Varney, after a moment's reflection. 'Are you sure there is no one in England who has this secret of thine?'

'One man there was,' said the doctor, 'once my servant, who might have stolen this of me, with one or two other secrets of art. But content you, Master Varney, it is no part of my policy to suffer such interlopers to interfere in my trade. He pries into no mysteries more, I warrant you; for, as I well believe, he hath been wafted to heaven on the wing of a fiery dragon—Peace be with him!—But in this retreat of mine, shall I have the use of mine elaboratory?'

'Of a whole workshop, man,' said Varney: 'for a reverend father abbot, who was fain to give place to bluff King Hal, and some of his courtiers, a score of years since, had a chemist's complete apparatus, which he was obliged to leave behind him to his successors. Thou shalt there occupy, and melt, and puff, and blaze, and multiply, until the Green Dragon become a golden goose, or whatever the newer phrase of the brotherhood may testify.'

'Thou art right, Master Varney,' said the alchemist, setting his teeth close, and grinding them together—'thou art right even in thy very contempt of right and reason. For what thou sayest in mockery, may in sober verity chance to happen ere we meet again. If the most venerable sages of ancient days have spoken the truth—if the most learned of our own have rightly received it—if I have been accepted wherever I travelled in Germany, in Poland, in Italy, and in the farther Tartary, as one to whom nature has unveiled her darkest secrets—if I have acquired the most secret signs and passwords of the Jewish Cabala, so that the greyest beard in the synagogue would brush the steps to make them clean for me—if all this is so, and if there remains but one step—one little step—betwixt my long, deep, and dark, and subterranean progress, and that blaze of light which shall show Nature watching her richest and her most glorious productions in the very cradle—one step betwixt dependence and the power of sovereignty—one step betwixt poverty and such a sum of wealth as earth, without that noble secret, cannot minister from all her mines in the old or the new-found world—if this be all so, is it not reasonable that to this I dedicate my future life, secure, for a brief period of studious patience, to rise above the mean dependence upon favourites, and *their* favourites, by which I am now enthralled?'

'Now, bravo! bravo! my good father,' said Varney, with the usual sardonic expression of ridicule on his countenance; 'yet all this approximation to the philosopher's stone wringeth not one single crown out of my Lord Leicester's pouch, and far less out of Richard Varney's—*We* must have earthly and substantial services, man, and care not whom else thou canst delude with thy philosophical charlatanry.'

'My son Varney,' said the alchemist, 'the unbelief, gathered around thee like a frost-fog, hath dimmed thine acute perception to that which is a stumbling-block to the wise, and which yet, to him who seeketh knowledge with humility, extends a lesson so clear, that he who runs may read. Hath not Art, think'st thou, the means of completing Nature's imperfect concoctions in her attempts to form the precious metals, even as by art we can perfect those other operations, of incubation, distillation, ferments-

tion, and similar processes of an ordinary description, by which we extract life itself out of a senseless egg, summon purity and vitality out of muddy dregs, or call into vivacity the inert substance of a sluggish liquid?'

'I have heard all this before,' said Varney, 'and my heart is proof against such cant ever since I sent twenty good gold pieces (marry, it was in the nonage of my wit) to advance the grand magisterium, all which, God help the while, vanished *in fumo*. Since that moment, when I paid for my freedom, I defy chemistry, astrology, palmistry, and every other occult art, were it as secret as hell itself, to unloose the stricture of my purse-strings. Marry, I neither defy the manna of Saint Nicholas, nor can I dispense with it. The first task must be to prepare some when thou gett'st down to my little sequestered retreat yonder, and then make as much gold as thou wilt.'

'I will make no more of that dose,' replied the alchemist resolutely.

'Then,' said the master of the horse, 'thou shalt be hanged for what thou hast made already, and so were the great secret for ever lost to mankind.—Do not humanity this injustice, good father, but e'en bend to thy destiny, and make us an ounce or two of this same stuff, which cannot prejudice above one or two individuals, in order to gain lifetime to discover the universal medicine, which shall clear away all mortal diseases at once. But cheer up, thou grave, learned, and most melancholy jackanape! Hast thou not told me that a moderate portion of thy drug hath mild effects, no ways ultimately dangerous to the human frame, but which produces depression of spirits, nausea, headache, an unwillingness to change of place—even such a state of temper as would keep a bird from flying out of a cage, were the door left open?'

'I have said so, and it is true,' said the alchemist; 'this effect will it produce, and the bird who partakes of it in such proportion, shall sit for a season drooping on her perch, without thinking of the free blue sky, or of the fair greenwood, though the one be lighted by the rays of the rising sun, and the other ringing with the newly-awakened song of all the feathered inhabitants of the forest.'

'And this without danger to life?' said Varney, somewhat anxiously.

'Ay, so that proportion and measure be not exceeded; and so that one who knows the nature of the manna be ever near to watch the symptoms, and succour in case of need.'

'Thou shalt regulate the whole,' said Varney; 'thy reward shall be princely, if thou keep'st time and touch, and exceedest not the due proportion, to the prejudice of her health—otherwise thy punishment shall be as signal.'

'The prejudice of *her* health!' repeated Alasco; 'it is, then, a woman I am to use my skill upon?'

'No, thou fool,' replied Varney; 'said I not it was a bird—a reclaimed linnet, whose pipe might soothe a hawk when in mid stoop?—I see thine eyes sparkle, and I know thy beard is not altogether so white as art has made it—*that*, at least, thou hast been able to transmute to silver. But mark me, this is no mate for thee. This caged bird is dear to one who brooks no rivalry, and far less such rivalry as thine, and her health must over all things be cared for. But she is in the case of being commanded down to yonder Kenilworth revels; and it is most expedient—most needful—most necessary, that she fly not thither. Of these necessities and their causes, it is not needful that she should know aught, and it is to be thought that her own wish may lead her to combat all ordinary reasons which can be urged for her remaining a housekeeper.'

'That is but natural,' said the alchemist, with a strange smile, which yet bore a greater reference to the human character, than the uninterested and abstracted gaze which his physiognomy had hitherto expressed, where all seemed to refer to some world distant from that which was existing around him.

'It is so,' answered Varney; 'you understand women well, though it may have been long since you were conversant amongst them.—Well, then, she is not to be contradicted—yet she is not to be humoured. Understand me—a slight illness, sufficient to take away the desire of removing from thence, and to make such of your wise fraternity as may be called in to aid, recommend a quiet residence at home, will, in one word, be esteemed good service, and remunerated as such.'

'I am not to be asked to affect the House of Life?' said the chemist.

'On the contrary, we will have thee hanged if thou dost,' replied Varney.

'And I must,' added Alasco, 'have opportunity to do my turn, and all facilities for concealment or escape, should there be detection?'

'All, all, and everything, thou infidel in all but the impossibilities of alchemy. Why, man, for what dost thou take me?'

The old man rose, and, taking a light, walked towards the end of the apartment, where was a door that led to the small sleeping room destined for his reception during the night. At the door he turned round, and slowly repeated Varney's question ere he answered it. 'For what do I take thee, Richard Varney? Why, for a worse devil than I have been myself. But I am in your toils, and I must serve you till my term be out.'

'Well, well,' answered Varney hastily, 'be stirring with grey light. It may be we shall not need thy medicine. Do nought till I myself come down. Michael Lambourne shall guide you to the place of your destination.' *

When Varney heard the adept's door shut and carefully bolted within, he stepped towards it, and with similar precaution carefully locked it on the outside, and took the key from the lock, muttering to himself, 'Worse than *thee*, thou poisoning quacksalver and witch-monger, who, if thou art not a bounden slave to the devil, it is only because he disdains such an apprentice! I am a mortal man, and seek by mortal means the gratification of my passions and advancement of my prospects. Thou art a vassal of hell itself.—So ho, Lambourne!' he called at another door, and Michael made his appearance, with a flushed cheek and an unsteady step.

* Note G. Dr. Julio.

'Thou art drunk, thou villain!' said Varney to him.

'Doubtless, noble sir,' replied the unabashed Michael, 'we have been drinking all even to the glories of the day, and to my noble Lord of Leicester, and his valiant master of the horse. Drunk! odds blades and poniards, he that would refuse to swallow a dozen healths on such an evening, is a base besognio, and a puckfoist, and shall swallow six inches of my dagger!'

'Hark ye, scoundrel,' said Varney, 'be sober on the instant—I command thee. I know thou canst throw off thy drunken folly, like a fool's coat, at pleasure; and if not, it were the worse for thee.'

Lambourne drooped his head, left the apartment, and returned in two or three minutes, with his face composed, his hair adjusted, his dress in order, and exhibiting as great a difference from his former self as if the whole man had been changed.

'Art thou sober now, and dost thou comprehend me?' said Varney sternly.

Lambourne bowed in acquiescence.

'Thou must presently down to Cumnor Place with the reverend man of art, who sleeps yonder in the little vaulted chamber. Here is the key, that thou mayest call him by times. Take another trusty fellow with you. Use him well on the journey, but let him not escape you—pistol him if he attempt it, and I will be your warrant. I will give thee letters to Foster. The doctor is to occupy the lower apartments of the eastern quadrangle, with freedom to use the old elaboratory and its implements. He is to have no access to the lady but such as I shall point out—only she may be amused to see his philosophical jugglery. Thou wilt await at Cumnor Place my further orders: and, as thou livest, beware of the ale-bench and the aquavitæ flask. Each breath drawn in Cumnor Place must be kept severed from common air.'

'Enough, my lord—I mean my worshipful master—soon, I trust, to be my worshipful knightly master. You have given me my lesson and my licence; I will execute the one, and not abuse the other. I will be in the saddle by daybreak.'

'Do so, and deserve favour.—Stay—ere thou goest fill me a cup of wine—not out of that flask, sirrah,'—as Lambourne was pouring out from that which Alasco had left half finished, 'fetch me a fresh one.'

Lambourne obeyed, and Varney, after rinsing his mouth with the liquor, drank a full cup, and said, as he took up a lamp, to retreat to his sleeping apartment, 'It is strange—I am as little the slave of fancy as any one, yet I never speak for a few minutes with this fellow Alasco, but my mouth and lungs feel as if soiled with the fumes of calcined arsenic—pah!'

So saying, he left the apartmen[illegible] Lambourne lingered, to drink a cup of the[illegible]-opened flask. 'It is from Saint-John's-Berg[illegible]e said, as he paused in the draught to enjoy [illegible]flavour, 'and has the true relish of the viole[illegible] But I must forbear it now, that I may one day drink it at my own pleasure.' And he quaffed a goblet of water to quench the fumes of the Rhenish wine, retired slowly towards the door, made a pause, and then, finding the temptation irresistible, walked hastily back, and took another long pull at the wine flask, without the formality of a cup.

'Were it not for this accursed custom,' he said, 'I might climb as high as Varney himself. But who can climb when the room turns round with him like a parish-top? I would the distance were greater, or the road rougher, betwixt my hand and mouth! But I will drink nothing to-morrow save water—nothing save fair water.'

CHAPTER XIX.

Pistol. And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys,
And happy news of price.
Falstaff. I prithee, now, deliver them like to men of this world.
Pistol. A foutra for the world, and worldlings base!
I speak of Africa, and golden joys.
HENRY IV. *Part Second.*

THE public room of the Black Bear at Cumnor, to which the scene of our story now returns, boasted, on the evening which we treat of, no ordinary assemblage of guests. There had been a fair in the neighbourhood, and the cutting mercer of Abingdon, with some of the other personages whom the reader has already been made acquainted with, as friends and customers of Giles Gosling, had already formed their wonted circle around the evening fire, and were talking over the news of the day.

A lively, bustling, arch fellow, whose pack and oaken *ell wand*, studded duly with brass points, denoted him to be of Autolycus's profession, occupied a good deal of the attention, and furnished much of the amusement, of the evening. The pedlars of those days, it must be remembered, were men of far greater importance than the degenerate and degraded hawkers of our modern times. It was by means of these peripatetic vendors that the country trade, in the finer manufactures used in female dress particularly, was almost entirely carried on; and if a merchant of this description arrived at the dignity of travelling with a pack-horse, he was a person of no small consequence, and company for the most substantial yeoman or franklin whom he might meet in his wanderings.

The pedlar of whom we speak bore, accordingly, an active and unrebuked share in the merriment to which the rafters of the bonnie Black Bear of Cumnor resounded. He had his smile with pretty Mistress Cicely, his broad laugh with mine host, and his jest upon dashing Master Goldthred, who, though indeed without any such benevolent intention on his own part, was the general butt of the evening. The pedlar and he were closely engaged in a dispute upon the preference due to the Spanish netherstock over the black Gascoigne hose, and mine host had just winked to the guests around him, as who should say, 'You will have mirth presently, my masters,' when the trampling of horses was heard in the court yard, and the hostler was loudly summoned, with a few of the newest oaths then in vogue, to add force to the

invocation. Out tumbled Will Hostler, John Tapster, and all the militia of the inn, who had slunk from their posts in order to collect some scattered crumbs of the mirth which was flying about among the customers. Out into the yard sallied mine host himself also, to do fitting salutation to his new guests; and presently returned, ushering into the apartment his own worthy nephew, Michael Lambourne, pretty tolerably drunk, and having under his escort the astrologer. Alasco, though still a little old man, had, by altering his gown to a riding-dress, trimming his beard and eyebrows, and so forth, struck at least a score of years from his apparent age, and might now seem an active man of sixty, or little upwards. He appeared at present exceedingly anxious, and had insisted much with Lambourne that they should not enter the inn, but go straight forward to the place of their destination. But Lambourne would not be controlled. 'By Cancer and Capricorn,' he vociferated, 'and the whole heavenly host—besides all the stars that these blessed eyes of mine have seen sparkle in the southern heavens, to which these northern blinkers are but farthing candles, I will be unkindly for no one's humour. I will stay and salute my worthy uncle here. Chesu! that good blood should ever be forgotten betwixt friends! A gallon of your best, uncle, and let it go round to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester! What! shall we not collogue together, and warm the cockles of our ancient kindness? Shall we not collogue, I say?'

'With all my heart, kinsman,' said mine host, who obviously wished to be rid of him; 'but are you to stand shot to all this good liquor?'

This is a question has quelled many a jovial toper, but it moved not the purpose of Lambourne's soul. 'Question my means, nuncle!' he said, producing a handful of mixed gold and silver pieces; 'question Mexico and Peru—question the Queen's exchequer—God save her Majesty!—She is my good lord's good mistress.'

'Well, kinsman,' said mine host, 'it is my business to sell wine to those who can buy it. So, Jack Tapster, do me thine office.—But I would I knew how to come by money as lightly as thou dost, Mike.'

'Why, uncle,' said Lambourne, 'I will tell thee a secret—Dost see this little old fellow here? as old and withered a chip as ever the devil put into his porridge—and yet, uncle, between you and me—he hath Potosi in that brain of his—'Sblood! he can coin ducats faster than I can vent oaths.'

'I will have none of his coinage in my purse, though, Michael,' said mine host; 'I know what belongs to falsifying the Queen's coin.'

'Thou art an ass, uncle, for as old as thou art.—Pull me not by the skirts, doctor, thou art an ass thyself to boot—so, being both asses, I tell ye I spoke but metaphorically.'

'Are you mad?' said the old man; 'is the devil in you?—can you not let us begone without drawing all men's eyes on us?'

'Say'st thou?' said Lambourne; 'thou art deceived now—no man shall see you an I give the word.—By heavens, masters, an any one dare to look on this old gentleman, I will slash the eyes out of his head with my poniard!—So sit down, old friend, and be merry—these are mine ingles—mine ancient inmates, and will betray no man.'

'Had you not better withdraw to a private apartment, nephew?' said Giles Gosling; 'you speak strange matter,' he added, 'and there be intelligencers everywhere.'

'I care not for them,' said the magnanimous Michael—'intelligencers? pshaw!—I serve the noble Earl of Leicester.—Here comes the wine—Fill round, Master Skinker, a carouse to the health of the flower of England, the noble Earl of Leicester! I say, the noble Earl of Leicester! He that does me not reason is a swine of Sussex, and I'll make him kneel to the pledge, if I should cut his hams, and smoke them for bacon.'

None disputed a pledge given under such formidable penalties; and Michael Lambourne, whose drunken humour was not of course diminished by this new potation, went on in the same wild way, renewing his acquaintance with such of the guests as he had formerly known, and experiencing a reception in which there was now something of deference, mingled with a good deal of fear; for the least servitor of the favourite earl, especially such a man as Lambourne, was, for very sufficient reasons, an object both of the one and of the other.

In the meanwhile, the old man, seeing his guide in this uncontrollable humour, ceased to remonstrate with him, and, sitting down in the most obscure corner of the room, called for a small measure of sack, over which he seemed, as it were, to slumber, withdrawing himself as much as possible from general observation, and doing nothing which could recall his existence to the recollection of his fellow-traveller, who by this time had got into close intimacy with his ancient comrade, Goldthred of Abingdon.

'Never believe me, bully Mike,' said the mercer, 'if I am not as glad to see thee as ever I was to see a customer's money!—Why, thou canst give a friend a sly place at a mask or a revel now, Mike; ay, or I warrant thee, thou canst say in my lord's ear, when my honourable lord is down in these parts, and wants a Spanish ruff or the like—thou canst say in his ear, There is mine old friend, young Lawrence Goldthred of Abingdon, has as good wares, lawn, tiffany, cambric, and so forth—ay, and is as pretty a piece of man's flesh, too, as is in Berkshire, and will ruffle it for your lordship with any man of his inches; and thou mayest say'——

'I can say a hundred d—d lies, besides, mercer,' answered Lambourne; 'what, one must not stand upon a good word for a friend!'

'Here is to thee, Mike, with all my heart,' said the mercer; 'and thou canst tell one the reality of the new fashions too.—Here was a rogue pedlar but now, was crying up the old-fashioned Spanish nether-stock over the Gascoigne hose, although thou seest how well the French [illegible] off the leg and knee, being adorned with parti-coloured garters and garniture in conformity.'

'Excellent, excellent,' replied Lambourne; 'why, thy limber bit of a thigh, thrust through that bunch of slashed buckram and tiffany, shows like a housewife's distaff, when the flax is half spun off!'

'Said I not so?' said the mercer, whose shallow brain was now overflowed in his turn; 'where, then, where be this rascal pedlar?—there was a pedlar here but now, methinks.—Mine host, where the foul fiend is this pedlar?'

'Where wise men should be, Master Goldthred,' replied Giles Gosling; 'even shut up in his private chamber, telling over the sales of to-day, and preparing for the custom of to-morrow.'

'Hang him, a mechanical chuff!' said the mercer; 'but for shame, it were a good deed to ease him of his wares,—a set of peddling knaves, who stroll through the land, and hurt the established trader. There are good fellows in Berkshire yet, mine host—your pedlar may be met withal on Maiden Castle.'

'Ay,' replied mine host, laughing, 'and he who meets him may meet his match—the pedlar is a tall man.'

'Is he?' said Goldthred.

'Is he?' replied the host; 'ay, by cock and pie is he—the very pedlar, he who raddled Robin Hood so tightly, as the song says,—

'Now Robin Hood drew his sword so good,
The pedlar drew his brand,
And he hath raddled him Robin Hood,
Till he neither could see nor stand.'

'Hang him, foul scroyle, let him pass,' said the mercer; 'if he be such a one, there were small worship to be won upon him.—And now tell me, Mike—my honest Mike, how wears the Hollands you won of me?'

'Why, well, as you may see, Master Goldthred,' answered Mike; 'I will bestow a pot on thee for the handsel. Fill the flagon, Master Tapster.'

'Thou wilt win no more Hollands, I think, on such wager, friend Mike,' said the mercer; 'for the sulky swain, Tony Foster, rails at thee all to nought, and swears you shall ne'er darken his doors again, for that your oaths are enough to blow the roof off a Christian man's dwelling.'

'Doth he say so, the mincing, hypocritical miser?' vociferated Lambourne;—'Why, then, he shall come down and receive my commands here, this blessed night, under my uncle's roof! And I will ring him such a black sanctus, that he shall think the devil hath him by the skirts for a month to come, for barely hearing me.'

'Nay, now the pottle-pot is uppermost, with a witness!' said the mercer. 'Tony Foster obey thy whistle!—Alas! good Mike, go sleep—go sleep.'

'I tell thee what, thou thin-faced gull,' said Michael Lambourne, in high chafe, 'I will wager thee fifty angels against the first five shelves of thy shop, numbering upward from the false light, with all that is on them, that I make Tony Foster come down to this public-house before we have finished three rounds.'

'I will lay no bet to that amount,' said the mercer, something sobered by an offer which intimated rather too private a knowledge, on Lambourne's part, of the secret recesses of his shop, 'I will lay no such wager,' he said; 'but I will stake five angels against thy five, if thou wilt, that Tony Foster will not leave his own roof, or come to ale-house after prayer-time, for thee, or any man.'

'Content,' said Lambourne.—'Here, uncle, hold stakes, and let one of your young bleed-barrels here—one of your infant tapsters, trip presently up to The Place, and give this letter to Master Foster, and say that I, his ingle, Michael Lambourne, pray to speak with him at mine uncle's castle here, upon business of grave import.—Away with thee, child, for it is now sun-down, and the wretch goeth to bed with the birds to save mutton-suet—faugh!'

Shortly after this messenger was despatched—an interval which was spent in drinking and buffoonery—he returned with the answer, that Master Foster was coming presently.

'Won, won!' said Lambourne, darting on the stake.

'Not till he comes, if you please,' said the mercer, interfering.

'Why, 'sblood, he is at the threshold,' replied Michael.—'What said he, boy?'

'If it please your worship,' answered the messenger, 'he looked out of the window, with a musquetoon in his hand, and when I delivered your errand, which I did with fear and trembling, he said, with a vinegar aspect, that your worship might be gone to the infernal regions.'

'Or to hell, I suppose,' said Lambourne—'it is there he disposes of all that are not of the congregation.'

'Even so,' said the boy; 'I used the other phrase as being the more poetical.'

'An ingenious youth!' said Michael; 'shalt have a drop to whet thy poetical whistle.—And what said Foster next?'

'He called me back,' answered the boy, 'and bid me say, you might come to him, if you had aught to say to him.'

'And what next?' said Lambourne.

'He read the letter, and seemed in a fluster, and asked if your worship was in drink—and I said you were speaking a little Spanish, as one who had been in the Canaries.'

'Out, you diminutive pint-pot, whelped of an overgrown reckoning!' replied Lambourne—'out!—But what said he then?'

'Why,' said the boy, 'he muttered, that if he came not, your worship would bolt out what were better kept in; and so he took his old flat cap and threadbare blue cloak, and, as I said before, he will be here incontinent.'

'There is truth in what he said,' replied Lambourne, as if speaking to himself—'My brain has played me its old dog's trick—but couragio—let him approach!—I have not rolled about in the world for many a day, to fear Tony Foster, be I drunk or sober.—Bring me a flagon of cold water, to christen my sack withal.'

While Lambourne, whom the approach of Foster seemed to have recalled to a sense of his own condition, was busied in preparing to receive him, Giles Gosling stole up to the apartment of the pedlar, whom he found traversing the room in much agitation.

'You withdrew yourself suddenly from the company,' said the landlord to the guest.

'It was time, when the devil became one among you,' replied the pedlar.

'It is not courteous in you to term my nephew by such a name,' said Gosling, 'nor is it kindly in me to reply to it; and yet, in some sort, Mike may be considered as a limb of Satan.'

'Pooh—I talk not of the swaggering ruffian,' replied the pedlar, 'it is of the other, who, for aught I know—But when go they? or wherefore come they?'

'Marry, these are questions I cannot answer,' replied the host. 'But look you, sir, you have brought me a token from worthy Master Tressilian—a pretty stone it is.' He took out the ring, and looked at it, adding, as he put it into his purse again, that it was too rich a guerdon for anything he could do for the worthy donor He was, he said, in the public line, and it ill became him to be too inquisitive into other folk's concerns; he had already said that he could hear nothing, but that the lady lived still at Cumnor Place in the closest seclusion, and, to such as by chance had a view of her, seemed pensive and discontented with her solitude. 'But here,' he said, 'if you are desirous to gratify your master, is the rarest chance that hath occurred for this many a day. Tony Foster is coming down hither, and it is but letting Mike Lambourne smell another wine-flask, and the Queen's command would not move him from the ale-bench. So they are fast for an hour or so - Now, if you will don your pack, which will be your best excuse, you may, perchance, win the ear of the old servant, being assured of the master's absence, to let you try to get some custom of the lady, and then you may learn more of her condition than I or any other can tell you.'

'True—very true,' answered Wayland, for he it was; 'an excellent advice, but methinks something dangerous—for, say Foster should return?'

'Very possible indeed,' replied the host.

'Or say,' continued Wayland, 'the lady should render me cold thanks for my exertions?'

'As is not unlikely,' replied Giles Gosling. 'I marvel Master Tressilian will take such heed of her that cares not for him.'

'In either case I were foully sped,' said Wayland; 'and therefore I do not, on the whole, much relish your device.'

'Nay, but take me with you, good master serving-man,' replied mine host; 'this is your master's business and not mine; you best know the risk to be encountered, or how far you are willing to brave it. But that which you will not yourself hazard, you cannot expect others to risk.'

'Hold, hold,' said Wayland; 'tell me but one thing—Goes yonder old man up to Cumnor?'

'Surely, I think so,' said the landlord; 'their servant said he was to take the baggage thither, but the ale-tap has been as potent for him as the sack-spigot has been for Michael.'

'It is enough,' said Wayland, assuming an air of resolution—'I will thwart that old villain's projects—my affright at his baleful aspect begins to abate, and my hatred to arise. Help me on with my pack, good mine host.—And look to thyself, old Albumazar --there is a malignant influence in thy horoscope, and it gleams from the constellation Ursa Major.'

So saying, he assumed his burden, and, guided by the landlord through the postern gate of the Black Bear, took the most private way from thence up to Cumnor Place.

CHAPTER XX.

Clown You have of these pedlars, that have more in 'em than you'd think, sister.

WINTER'S TALE, *Act IV. Scene* 3.

In his anxiety to obey the earl's repeated charges of secrecy, as well as from his own unsocial and miserly habits, Anthony Foster was more desirous, by his mode of housekeeping, to escape observation than to resist intrusive curiosity. Thus, instead of a numerous household, to secure his charge and defend his house, he studied, as much as possible, to elude notice by diminishing his attendants; so that, unless when there were attendants of the earl or of Varney in the mansion, one old male domestic and two aged crones, who assisted in keeping the countess's apartments in order, were the only servants of the family.

It was one of these old women who opened the door when Wayland knocked, and answered his petition, to be admitted to exhibit his wares to the ladies of the family, with a volley of vituperation, couched in what is there called the *jowring* dialect. The pedlar found the means of checking this vociferation, by slipping a silver groat into her hand, and intimating the present of some stuff for a coif, if the lady would buy of his wares.

'God ield thee, for mine is aw in littocks - Slocket with thy pack into gharn, mon—Her walks in gharn.' Into the garden she ushered the pedlar accordingly, and, pointing to an old ruinous garden-house, said, 'Yonder be's her, mon yonder be's her—Zhe will buy changes an zhe loikes stuffs.'

'She has left me to come off as I may,' thought Wayland, as he heard the hag shut the garden door behind him. 'But they shall not beat me, and they dare not murder me, for so little trespass, and by this fair twilight. Hang it, I will on—a brave general never thought of his retreat till he was defeated. I see two females in the old garden-house yonder—but how to address them?—Stay—Will Shakespeare, be my friend in need. I will give them a taste of Autolycus.' He then sung, with a good voice and becoming audacity, the popular playhouse ditty—

> 'Lawn as white as driven snow,
> Cyprus black as e'er was crow,
> Gloves as sweet as damask roses,
> Masks for faces and for noses.'

'What hath fortune sent us here for an unwonted sight, Janet?' said the lady.

'One of those merchants of vanity, called pedlars,' answered Janet demurely, 'who utters his light wares in lighter measures—I marvel old Dorcas let him pass.

'It is a lucky chance, girl,' said the countess; 'we lead a heavy life here, and this may while off a weary hour.'

'Ay, my gracious lady,' said Janet; 'but my father?'

'He is not *my* father, Janet, nor, I hope, my master,' answered the lady.—'I say, call the man hither—I want some things.'

'Nay,' replied Janet, 'your ladyship has just to say so in the next packet, and if England can

furnish them they will be sent.—There will come mischief on't—Pray, dearest lady, let me bid the man begone!'

'I will have thee bid him come hither,' said the countess;—'or stay, thou terrified fool, I will bid him myself, and spare thee a chiding.'

'Ah! well-a-day, dearest lady, if that were the worst,' said Janet sadly, while the lady called to the pedlar, 'Good fellow, step forward —undo thy pack—if thou hast good wares, chance has sent thee hither for my convenience and thy profit.'

'What may your ladyship please to lack?' said Wayland, unstrapping his pack, and displaying its contents with as much dexterity as if he had been bred to the trade. Indeed, he had occasionally pursued it in the course of his roving life, and now commended his wares with all the volubility of a trader, and showed some skill in the main art of placing prices upon them.

'What do I please to lack?' said the lady; 'why, considering I have not for six long months bought one yard of lawn or cambric, or one trinket, the most inconsiderable, for my own use, and at my own choice, the better question is, what hast thou got to sell? Lay aside for me that cambric partlet and pair of sleeves—and those roundells of gold fringe, drawn out with cyprus—and that short cloak of cherry-coloured fine cloth garnished with gold buttons and loops—is it not of an absolute fancy, Janet?'

'Nay, my lady,' replied Janet, 'if you consult my poor judgment, it is, methinks, over gaudy for a graceful habit.'

'Now, out upon thy judgment, if it be no brighter, wench,' said the countess; 'thou shalt wear it thyself for penance sake; and I promise thee the gold buttons, being somewhat massive, will comfort thy father, and reconcile him to the cherry-coloured body. See that he snap them not away, Janet, and send them to bear company with the imprisoned angels which he keeps captive in his strong box.'

'May I pray your ladyship to spare my poor father?' said Janet.

'Nay, but why should any one spare him that is so sparing of his own nature?' replied the lady.—'Well, but to our gear—That head garniture for myself, and that silver bodkin mounted with pearl;—and take off two gowns of that russet cloth for Dorcas and Alison, Janet, to keep the old wretches warm against winter comes—And stay, hast thou no perfumes and sweet bags, or any handsome casting bottles, of the newest mode?'

'Were I a pedlar in earnest, I were a made merchant,' thought Wayland, as he busied himself to answer the demands which she thronged one on another, with the eagerness of a young lady who has been long secluded from such a pleasing occupation. 'But how [illegible] bring her to a moment's serious reflection?' Th[illegible] as he exhibited his choicest selection of ess[illegible]es and perfumes, he at once arrested her att[illegible]ion by observing that these articles had almo[illegible] risen to double value, since the magnificent preparations made by the Earl of Leicester to entertain the Queen and court at his princely Castle of Kenilworth.

'Ha!' said the countess hastily; 'that rumour then is true, Janet.'

'Surely, madam,' answered Wayland; 'and I marvel it hath not reached your noble ladyship's ears. The Queen of England feasts with the noble Earl for a week during the Summer's Progress; and there are many who will tell you England will have a king, and England's Elizabeth—God save her!—a husband, ere the progress be over.'

'They lie like villains!' said the countess, bursting forth impatiently.

'For God's sake, madam, consider,' said Janet, trembling with apprehension; 'who would cumber themselves about pedlar's tidings?'

'Yes, Janet!' exclaimed the countess; 'right, thou hast corrected me justly. Such reports, blighting the reputation of England's brightest and noblest peer, can only find currency amongst the mean, the abject, and the infamous!'

'May I perish, lady,' said Wayland Smith, observing that her violence directed itself towards him, 'if I have done anything to merit this strange passion!—I have said but what many men say.'

By this time the countess had recovered her composure, and endeavoured, alarmed by the anxious hints of Janet, to suppress all appearance of displeasure. 'I were loath,' she said, 'good fellow, that our Queen should change the virgin style, so dear to us her people—think not of it.' And then, as if desirous to change the subject, she added, 'And what is this paste, so carefully put up in the silver box?' as she examined the contents of a casket in which drugs and perfumes were contained in separate drawers.

'It is a remedy, madam, for a disorder of which I trust your ladyship will never have reason to complain. The amount of a small turkey-bean, swallowed daily for a week, fortifies the heart against those black vapours, which arise from solitude, melancholy, unrequited affection, disappointed hope'——

'Are you a fool, friend?' said the countess sharply; 'or do you think, because I have good-naturedly purchased your trumpery goods at your roguish prices, that you may put any gullery you will on me?—who ever heard that affections of the heart were cured by medicines given to the body?'

'Under your honourable favour,' said Wayland, 'I am an honest man, and I have sold my goods at an honest price—As to this most precious medicine, when I told its qualities, I asked you not to purchase it, so why should I lie to you? I say not it will cure a rooted affection of the mind, which only God and time can do; but I say, that this restorative relieves the black vapours which are engendered in the body of that melancholy which broodeth on the mind. I have relieved many with it, both in court and city, and of late one Master Edmund Tressilian, a worshipful gentleman in Cornwall, who, on some slight received, it was told me, where he had set his affections, was brought into that state of melancholy, which made his friends alarmed for his life.'

He paused, and the lady remained silent for some time, and then asked, with a voice which she strove in vain to render firm and indifferent,

in its tone, 'Is the gentleman you have mentioned perfectly recovered?'

'Passably, madam,' answered Wayland; 'he hath at least no bodily complaint.'

'I will take some of the medicine, Janet,' said the countess. 'I too have sometimes that dark melancholy which overclouds the brain.'

'You shall not do so, madam,' said Janet: 'who shall answer that this fellow vends what is wholesome?'

'I will myself warrant my good faith,' said Wayland; and, taking a part of the medicine, he swallowed it before them. The countess now bought what remained, a step to which Janet, by further objections, only determined her the more obstinately. She even took the first dose upon the instant, and professed to feel her heart lightened and her spirits augmented,—a consequence which, in all probability, existed only in her own imagination. The lady then piled the purchases she had made together, flung her purse to Janet, and desired her to compute the amount, and to pay the pedlar; while she herself, as if tired of the amusement she at first found in conversing with him, wished him good evening, and walked carelessly into the house, thus depriving Wayland of every opportunity to speak with her in private. He hastened, however, to attempt an explanation with Janet.

'Maiden,' he said, 'thou hast the face of one who should love her mistress. She hath much need of faithful service.'

'And well deserves it at my hands,' replied Janet; 'but what of that?'

'Maiden, I am not altogether what I seem,' said the pedlar, lowering his voice.

'The less like to be an honest man,' said Janet.

'The more so,' answered Wayland, 'since I am no pedlar.'

'Get thee gone then instantly, or I will call for assistance,' said Janet; 'my father must ere this time be returned.'

'Do not be so rash,' said Wayland; 'you will do what you may repent of. I am one of your mistress's friends; and she had need of more, not that thou shouldst ruin those she hath.'

'How shall I know that?' said Janet.

'Look me in the face,' said Wayland Smith, 'and see if thou dost not read honesty in my looks.'

And in truth, though by no means handsome, there was in his physiognomy the sharp, keen expression of inventive genius and prompt intellect, which, joined to quick and brilliant eyes, a well-formed mouth, and an intelligent smile, often gives grace and interest to features which are both homely and irregular. Janet looked at him with the sly simplicity of her sect, and replied, 'Notwithstanding thy boasted honesty, friend, and although I am not accustomed to read and pass judgment on such volumes as thou hast submitted to my perusal, I think I see in thy countenance something of the pedlar—something of the picaroon.'

'On a small scale, perhaps,' said Wayland Smith, laughing. 'But this evening, or tomorrow, will an old man come hither with thy father, who has the stealthy step of the cat, the shrewd and vindictive eye of the rat, the fawning wile of the spaniel, the determined snatch of the mastiff—of him beware, for your own sake and that of your mistress. See you, fair Janet, he brings the venom of the aspic under the assumed innocence of the dove. What precise mischief he meditates towards you I cannot guess, but death and disease have ever dogged his footsteps.—Say nought of this to thy mistress—my art suggests to me that in her state the fear of evil may be as dangerous as its operation—But see that she take my specific, for'—(he lowered his voice, and spoke low but impressively in her ear) —'it is an antidote against poison—Hark, they enter the garden!'

In effect, a sound of noisy mirth and loud talking approached the garden door, alarmed by which Wayland Smith sprung into the midst of a thicket of overgrown shrubs, while Janet withdrew to the garden-house that she might not incur observation, and that she might at the same time conceal, at least for the present, the purchases made from the supposed pedlar, which lay scattered on the floor of the summer-house.

Janet, however, had no occasion for anxiety. Her father, his old attendant, Lord Leicester's domestic, and the astrologer, entered the garden in tumult and in extreme perplexity, endeavouring to quiet Lambourne, whose brain had now become completely fired with liquor, and who was one of those unfortunate persons, who, being once stirred with the vinous stimulus, do not fall asleep like other drunkards, but remain partially influenced by it for many hours, until at length, by successive draughts, they are elevated into a state of uncontrollable frenzy. Like many men in this state, also, Lambourne neither lost the power of motion, speech, or expression; but, on the contrary, spoke with unwonted emphasis and readiness, and told all that at another time he would have been most desirous to keep secret.

'What!' ejaculated Michael, at the full extent of his voice, 'am I to have no welcome—no carouse, when I have brought fortune to your old ruinous dog-house in the shape of a devil's ally, that can change slate-shivers into Spanish dollars?—Here you, Tony Fire-the-Fagot, papist, puritan, hypocrite, miser, profligate, devil, compounded of all men's sins, bow down and reverence him who has brought into thy house the very mammon thou worshippest.'

'For God's sake,' said Foster, 'speak low—come into the house—thou shalt have wine, or whatever thou wilt.'

'No, old puckfoist, I will have it here,' thundered the inebriated ruffian—'here, *al fresco*, as the Italian hath it.—No, no, I will not drink with that poisoning devil within doors, to be choked with the fumes of arsenic and quicksilver; I learned from villain Varney to beware of that.'

'Fetch him wine, in the name of all the fiends!' said the alchemist.

'Ah! and thou wouldst spice it for me, old Truepenny, wouldst thou not? Ay, I should have copperas, and hellebore, and vitriol, and aquafortis, and twenty devilish materials, bubbling in my brainpan, like a charm to raise the devil in a witch's caldron. Hand me the flask

thyself, old Tony Fire-the-Fagot—and let it be cool—I will have no wine mulled at the pile of the old burnt bishops—Or stay, let Leicester be king if he will—good—and Varney, villain Varney, grand vizier—why, excellent!—and what shall I be, then?—why, emperor—Emperor Lambourne!—I will see this choice piece of beauty that they have walled up here for their private pleasures—I will have her this very night to serve my wine-cup, and put on my night-cap. What should a fellow do with two wives, were he twenty times an earl?—answer me that, Tony boy, you old reprobate, hypocritical dog, whom God struck out of the book of life, but tormented with the constant wish to be restored to it—You old bishop-burning, blasphemous fanatic, answer me that!'

'I will stick my knife to the haft in him,' said Foster, in a low tone, which trembled with passion.

'For the love of Heaven, no violence!' said the astrologer. 'It cannot but be looked closely into.—Here, honest Lambourne, wilt thou pledge me to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester and Master Richard Varney?'

'I will, mine old Albumazar—I will, my trusty vendor of ratsbane—I would kiss thee, mine honest infractor of the Lex Julia (as they said at Leyden), didst thou not flavour so damnably of sulphur, and such fiendish apothecary's stuff.—Here goes it, up seyes—to Varney and Leicester!—two more noble mounting spirits, and more dark-seeking, deep-diving, high-flying, malicious, ambitious miscreants—well, I say no more, but I will whet my dagger on his heart-spone, that refuses to pledge me! And so, my masters'——

Thus speaking, Lambourne exhausted the cup which the astrologer had handed to him, and which contained not wine, but distilled spirits. He swore half an oath, dropped the empty cup from his grasp, laid his hand on his sword without being able to draw it, reeled, and fell without sense or motion into the arms of the domestic, who dragged him off to his chamber and put him to bed.

In the general confusion, Janet regained her lady's chamber unobserved, trembling like an aspen leaf, but determined to keep secret from the countess the dreadful surmises which she could not help entertaining from the drunken ravings of Lambourne. Her fears, however, though they assumed no certain shape, kept pace with the advice of the pedlar; and she confirmed her mistress in her purpose of taking the medicine which he had recommended, from which it is probable she would otherwise have dissuaded her. Neither had these intimations escaped the ears of Wayland, who knew much better how to interpret them. He felt much compassion at beholding so lovely a creature as the countess, and whom he had first seen in the bosom of domestic happiness, exposed to the machinations of such a gang of villains. His indignation, too, had been highly excited, by hearing the voice of his old master, against whom he felt, in equal degree, the passions of hatred and fear. He nourished also a pride in his own art and resources; and, dangerous as the task was, he that night formed a determination to attain the bottom of the mystery, and to aid the distressed lady, if it were yet possible. From some words which Lambourne had dropped among his ravings, Wayland now, for the first time, felt inclined to doubt that Varney had acted entirely on his own account, in wooing and winning the affections of this beautiful creature. Fame asserted of this zealous retainer, that he had accommodated his lord in former love intrigues; and it occurred to Wayland Smith, that Leicester himself might be the party chiefly interested. Her marriage with the earl he could not suspect; but even the discovery of such a passing intrigue with a lady of Mistress Amy Robsart's rank, was a secret of the deepest importance to the stability of the favourite's power over Elizabeth. 'If Leicester himself should hesitate to stifle such a rumour by very strange means,' said he to himself, 'he has those about him who would do him that favour without waiting for his consent. If I would meddle in this business, it must be in such guise as my old master uses when he compounds his manna of Satan, and that is with a close mask on my face. So I will quit Giles Gosling to-morrow, and change my course and place of residence as often as a hunted fox. I should like to see this little puritan, too, once more. She looks both pretty and intelligent, to have come of such a caitiff as Anthony Fire-the-Fagot.'

Giles Gosling received the adieus of Wayland rather joyfully than otherwise. The honest publican saw so much peril in crossing the course of the Earl of Leicester's favourite, that his virtue was scarce able to support him in the task, and he was well pleased when it was likely to be removed from his shoulders; still, however, professing his goodwill, and readiness, in case of need, to do Master Tressilian or his emissary any service, in so far as consisted with his character of a publican.

CHAPTER XXI.

Vaulting ambition, that o'erleaps itself,
And falls on t'other side.

MACBETH.

THE splendour of the approaching revels at Kenilworth was now the conversation through all England; and everything was collected at home, or from abroad, which could add to the gaiety or glory of the prepared reception of Elizabeth, at the house of her most distinguished favourite. Meantime, Leicester appeared daily to advance in the queen's favour. He was perpetually by her side in council, willingly listened to in the moments of courtly recreation—favoured with approaches even to familiar intimacy—looked up to by all who had aught to hope at court—courted by foreign ministers with the most flattering testimonies of respect from their sovereigns—the *Alter Ego*, as it seemed, of the stately Elizabeth, who was now very generally supposed to be studying the time and opportunity for associating him, by marriage, into her sovereign power.

Amid such a tide of prosperity, this minion of fortune, and of the queen's favour, was probably the most unhappy man in the realm which seemed at his devotion. He had the Fairy King's superiority over his friends and dependents, and saw much which they could not. The character of his mistress was intimately known to him; it was his minute and studied acquaintance with her humours, as well as her noble faculties, which, joined to his powerful mental qualities, and his eminent external accomplishments, had raised him so high in her favour; and it was that very knowledge of her disposition which led him to apprehend at every turn some sudden and overwhelming disgrace. Leicester was like a pilot possessed of a chart, which points out to him all the peculiarities of his navigation, but which exhibits so many shoals, breakers, and reefs of rocks, that his anxious eye reaps little more from observing them, than to be convinced that his final escape can be little else than miraculous.

In fact, Queen Elizabeth had a character strangely compounded of the strongest masculine sense, with those foibles which are chiefly supposed proper to the female sex. Her subjects had the full benefit of her virtues, which far predominated over her weaknesses; but her courtiers, and those about her person, had often to sustain sudden and embarrassing turns of caprice, and the sallies of a temper which was both jealous and despotic. She was the nursing-mother of her people, but she was also the true daughter of Henry VIII.; and though early sufferings and an excellent education had repressed and modified, they had not altogether destroyed, the hereditary temper of that 'hard-ruled king.'—'Her mind,' says her witty godson, Sir John Harington, who had experienced both the smiles and the frowns which he describes, 'was ofttime like the gentle air that cometh from the western point in a summer's morn—'twas sweet and refreshing to all around her. Her speech did win all affections. And again she could put forth such alterations, when obedience was lacking, as left no doubting *whose* daughter she was. When she smiled, it was a pure sunshine, that every one did choose to bask in, if they could; but anon came a storm, from a sudden gathering of clouds, and the thunder fell, in a wondrous manner, on all alike.' *

This variability of disposition, as Leicester well knew, was chiefly formidable to those who had a share in the queen's affections, and who depended rather on her personal regard, than on the indispensable services which they could render to her councils and her crown. The favour of Burleigh, or of Walsingham, of a description far less striking than that by which he was himself upheld, was founded, as Leicester was well aware, on Elizabeth's solid judgment, not on her partiality; and was, therefore, free from all those principles of change and decay, necessarily incident to that which chiefly arose from personal accomplishments and female predilection. These great and sage statesmen were judged of by the queen, only with reference to the measures they suggested, and the reasons by which they supported their opinions in council; whereas the success of Leicester's course depended on all those light and changeable gales of caprice and humour, which thwart or favour the progress of a lover in the favour of his mistress, and she too a mistress who was ever and anon becoming fearful lest she should forget the dignity, or compromise the authority, of the queen, while she indulged the affections of the woman. Of the difficulties which surrounded his power, 'too great to keep or to resign,' Leicester was fully sensible; and as he looked anxiously round for the means of maintaining himself in his precarious situation, and sometimes contemplated those of descending from it in safety, he saw but little hope of either. At such moments, his thoughts turned to dwell upon his secret marriage and its consequences; and it was in bitterness against himself, if not against his unfortunate countess, that he ascribed to that hasty measure, adopted in the ardour of what he now called inconsiderate passion, at once the impossibility of placing his power on a solid basis, and the immediate prospect of its precipitate downfall.

'Men say,' thus ran his thoughts, in these anxious and repentant moments, 'that I might marry Elizabeth, and become King of England. All things suggest this. The match is carolled in ballads, while the rabble throw their caps up—It has been touched upon in the schools—whispered in the presence-chamber—recommended from the pulpit—prayed for in the Calvinistic churches abroad—touched on by statists in the very council at home—These bold insinuations have been rebutted by no rebuke, no resentment, no chiding, scarce even by the usual female protestation that she would live and die a virgin princess.—Her words have been more courteous than ever, though she knows such rumours are abroad—her actions more gracious—her looks more kind—nought seems wanting to make me King of England, and place me beyond the storms of court-favour, excepting the putting forth of mine own hand to take that crown imperial, which is the glory of the universe! And when I might stretch that hand out most boldly, it is fettered down by a secret and inextricable bond!—And here I have letters from Amy,' he would say, catching them up with a movement of peevishness, 'persecuting me to acknowledge her openly—to do justice to her and to myself—and I wot not what. Methinks I have done less than justice to myself already. And she speaks as if Elizabeth were to receive the knowledge of this matter with the glee of a mother hearing of the happy marriage of a hopeful son!—She, the daughter of Henry, who spared neither man in his anger, nor woman in his desire—she to find herself tricked, drawn on with toys of passion to the verge of acknowledging her love to a subject—and he discovered to be a married man!—Elizabeth to learn that she had been dallied with in such fashion, as a gay courtier might trifle with a country wench!—We should then see to our ruin *furens quid fœmina!*'

He would then pause, and call for Varney, whose advice was now more frequently resorted to than ever, because the earl remembered the

* *Nugæ Antiquæ*, vol. i. pp. 355-362.

remonstrances which he had made against his secret contract. And their consultation usually terminated in anxious deliberation, how or in what manner the countess was to be produced at Kenilworth. These communings had for some time ended always in a resolution to delay the progress from day to day. But at length a peremptory decision became necessary.

'Elizabeth will not be satisfied without her presence,' said the earl; 'whether any suspicion hath entered her mind, as my own apprehensions suggest, or whether the petition of Tressilian is kept in her memory by Sussex, or some other secret enemy, I know not; but amongst all the favourable expressions which she uses to me, she often recurs to the story of Amy Robsart. I think that Amy is the slave in the chariot, who is placed there by my evil fortune to dash and to confound my triumph, even when at the highest. Show me thy device, Varney, for solving the inextricable difficulty. I have thrown every such impediment in the way of these accursed revels as I could propound even with a shade of decency, but to-day's interview has put all to a hazard. She said to me kindly, but peremptorily, "We will give you no further time for preparations, my lord, lest you should altogether ruin yourself. On Saturday the 9th of July, we will be with you at Kenilworth.—We pray you to forget none of our appointed guests and suitors, and in especial this light-o'-love, Amy Robsart. We would wish to see the woman who could postpone yonder poetical gentleman, Master Tressilian, to your man, Richard Varney."—Now, Varney, ply thine invention, whose forge hath availed us so often; for sure as my name is Dudley, the danger menaced by my horoscope is now darkening around me.'

'Can my lady be by no means persuaded to bear for a brief space the obscure character which circumstances impose on her?' said Varney, after some hesitation.

'How, sirrah! my countess term herself *thy* wife—that may neither stand with my honour nor with hers.'

'Alas! my lord,' answered Varney, 'and yet such is the quality in which Elizabeth now holds her; and to contradict this opinion is to discover all.'

'Think of something else, Varney,' said the earl, in great agitation; 'this invention is nought—if I could give way to it, she would not; for I tell thee, Varney, if thou know'st it not, that not Elizabeth on the throne has more pride than the daughter of this obscure gentleman of Devon. She is flexible in many things, but where she holds her honour brought in question, she hath a spirit and temper as apprehensive as lightning, and as swift in execution.'

'We have experienced that, my lord, else had we not been thus circumstanced,' said Varney. 'But what else to suggest I know not—Methinks she whose good fortune in becoming your lordship's bride, and who gives rise to the danger, should do somewhat towards parrying it.'

'It is impossible,' said the earl, waving his hand; 'I know neither authority nor entreaties would make her endure thy name for an hour.'

'It is somewhat hard, though,' said Varney, in a dry tone; and without pausing on that topic, he added, 'Suppose some one were found to represent her? Such feats have been performed in the courts of as sharp-eyed monarchs as Queen Elizabeth.'

'Utter madness, Varney,' answered the earl; 'the counterfeit would be confronted with Tressilian, and discovery become inevitable.'

'Tressilian might be removed from court,' said the unhesitating Varney.

'And by what means?'

'There are many,' said Varney, 'by which a statesman in your situation, my lord, may remove from the scene one who pries into your affairs, and places himself in perilous opposition to you.'

'Speak not to me of such policy, Varney,' said the earl hastily; 'which, besides, would avail nothing in the present case. Many others there be at court, to whom Amy may be known; and besides, in the absence of Tressilian, her father or some of her friends would be instantly summoned hither. Urge thine invention once more.'

'My lord, I know not what to say,' answered Varney; 'but were I myself in such perplexity, I would ride post down to Cumnor Place, and compel my wife to give her consent to such measures as her safety and mine required.'

'Varney,' said Leicester, 'I cannot urge her to aught so repugnant to her noble nature, as a share in this stratagem—it would be a base requital to the love she bears me.'

'Well, my lord,' said Varney, 'your lordship is a wise and an honourable man, and skilled in those high points of romantic scruple, which are current in Arcadia, perhaps, as your nephew, Philip Sidney, writes. I am your humble servitor—a man of this world, and only happy that my knowledge of it, and its ways, is such as your lordship has not scorned to avail yourself of. Now I would fain know, whether the obligation lies on my lady or on you, in this fortunate union; and which has most reason to show complaisance to the other, and to consider that other's wishes, conveniences, and safety?'

'I tell thee, Varney,' said the earl, 'that all it was in my power to bestow upon her, was not merely deserved, but a thousand times overpaid, by her own virtue and beauty; for never did greatness descend upon a creature so formed by nature to grace and adorn it.'

'It is well, my lord, you are so satisfied,' answered Varney, with his usual sardonic smile, which even respect to his patron could not at all times subdue—'you will have time enough to enjoy undisturbed the society of one so gracious and beautiful—that is, so soon as such confinement in the Tower be over, as may correspond to the crime of deceiving the affections of Elizabeth Tudor—A cheaper penalty, I presume, you do not expect.'

'Malicious fiend!' answered Leicester, 'do you mock me in my misfortune?—Manage it as thou wilt.'

'If you are serious, my lord,' said Varney, 'you must set forth instantly, and post for Cumnor Place.'

'Do thou go thyself, Varney; the devil has given thee that sort of eloquence, which is most

powerful in the worst cause. I should stand self-convicted of villany were I to urge such a deceit.—Begone, I tell thee—Must I entreat thee to mine own dishonour?'

'No, my lord,' said Varney—'but if you are serious in entrusting me with the task of urging this most necessary measure, you must give me a letter to my lady, as my credentials, and trust to me for backing the advice it contains with all the force in my power. And such is my opinion of my lady's love for your lordship, and of her willingness to do that which is at once to contribute to your pleasure and your safety, that I am sure she will condescend to bear for a few brief days the name of so humble a man as myself, especially since it is not inferior in antiquity to that of her own paternal house.'

Leicester seized on writing materials, and twice or thrice commenced a letter to the countess, which he afterwards tore into fragments. At length he finished a few distracted lines, in which he conjured her, for reasons nearly concerning his life and honour, to consent to bear the name of Varney for a few days, during the revels at Kenilworth. He added, that Varney would communicate all the reasons which rendered this deception indispensable; and, having signed and sealed these credentials, he flung them over the table to Varney, with a motion that he should depart, which his adviser was not slow to comprehend and to obey.

Leicester remained like one stupefied, till he heard the trampling of the horses, as Varney, who took no time even to change his dress, threw himself into the saddle, and, followed by a single servant, set off for Berkshire. At the sound, the earl started from his seat, and ran to the window, with the momentary purpose of recalling the unworthy commission with which he had entrusted one, of whom he used to say, he knew no virtuous property save affection to his patron. But Varney was already beyond call—and the bright starry firmament, which the age considered as the Book of Fate, lying spread before Leicester when he opened the casement, diverted him from his better and more manly purpose.

'There they roll on their silent but potential course,' said the earl, looking around him, 'without a voice which speaks to our ear, but not without influences which affect, at every change, the indwellers of this vile earthly planet. This, if astrologers fable not, is the very crisis of my fate! The hour approaches of which I was taught to beware—the hour, too, which I was encouraged to hope for.—A king was the word—but how?—the crown matrimonial—all hopes of that are gone—let them go. The rich Netherlands have demanded me for their leader, and, would Elizabeth consent, would yield to me *their* crown.—And have I not such a claim, even in this kingdom? That of York, descending from George of Clarence to the House of Huntingdon, which, this lady failing, may have a fair chance—Huntingdon is of my house.—But I will plunge no deeper in these high mysteries. Let me hold my course in silence for a while, and in obscurity like a subterranean river—the time shall come, that I will burst forth in my strength, and bear all opposition before me.'

While Leicester was thus stupefying the remonstrances of his own conscience, by appealing to political necessity for his apology, or losing himself amidst the wild dreams of ambition, his agent left town and tower behind him, on his hasty journey to Berkshire. *He* also nourished high hope. He had brought Lord Leicester to the point which he had desired, of committing to him the most intimate recesses of his breast, and of using him as the channel of his most confidential intercourse with his lady. Henceforward it would, he foresaw, be difficult for his patron either to dispense with his services, or refuse his requests, however unreasonable. And if this disdainful dame, as he termed the countess, should comply with the request of her husband, Varney, her pretended husband, must needs become so situated with respect to her, that there was no knowing where his audacity might be bounded—perhaps not till circumstances enabled him to obtain a triumph, which he thought of with a mixture of fiendish feelings, in which revenge for her previous scorn was foremost and predominant. Again he contemplated the possibility of her being totally intractable, and refusing obstinately to play the part assigned to her in the drama at Kenilworth.

'Alasco must then do his part,' he said—'Sickness must serve her Majesty as an excuse for not receiving the homage of Mistress Varney—ay, and a sore and wasting sickness it may prove, should Elizabeth continue to cast so favourable an eye on my Lord of Leicester. I will not forego the chance of being favourite of a monarch for want of determined measures, should these be necessary.—Forward, good horse, forward—ambition, and haughty hope of power, pleasure, and revenge, strike their stings as deep through my bosom as I plunge the rowels in thy flanks—On, good horse, on—the devil urges us both forward.'

CHAPTER XXII.

Say that my beauty was but small,
Among court ladies all despised,
Why didst thou rend it from that hall,
Where, scornful earl, 'twas dearly prized?

No more thou comest with wonted speed,
Thy once beloved bride to see;
But be she alive, or be she dead,
I fear, stern earl, 's the same to thee.

CUMNOR HALL, BY WILLIAM JULIUS MICKLE.

THE ladies of fashion of the present, or of any other period, must have allowed that the young and lovely Countess of Leicester had, besides her youth and beauty, two qualities which entitled her to a place amongst women of rank and distinction. She displayed, as we have seen in her interview with the pedlar, a liberal promptitude to make unnecessary purchases, solely for the pleasure of acquiring useless and showy trifles which ceased to please as soon as they were possessed; and she was, besides, apt to spend a considerable space of time every day in adorning her person, although the varied splendour of her attire could only attract the half satirical praise of the precise Janet, or an approving glance from

the bright eyes which witnessed their own beams of triumph reflected from the mirror.

The Countess Amy had indeed to plead, for indulgence in those frivolous tastes, that the education of the times had done little or nothing for a mind naturally gay and averse to study. If she had not loved to collect finery and to wear it, she might have woven tapestry or sewed embroidery, till her labours spread in gay profusion all over the walls and seats at Lidcote Hall; or she might have varied Minerva's labours with the task of preparing a mighty pudding against the time that Sir Hugh Robsart returned from the greenwood. But Amy had no natural genius either for the loom, the needle, or the receipt-book. Her mother had died in infancy; her father contradicted her in nothing; and Tressilian, the only one that approached her, who was able or desirous to attend to the cultivation of her mind, had much hurt his interest with her, by assuming too eagerly the task of a preceptor; so that he was regarded by the lively, indulged, and idle girl, with some fear and much respect; but with little or nothing of that softer emotion which it had been his hope and his ambition to inspire. And thus her heart lay readily open, and her fancy became easily captivated by the noble exterior, and graceful deportment, and complacent flattery of Leicester, even before he was known to her as the dazzling minion of wealth and power.

The frequent visits of Leicester at Cumnor, during the earlier part of their union, had reconciled the countess to the solitude and privacy to which she was condemned; but when these visits become rarer and more rare, and when the void was filled up with letters of excuse, not always very warmly expressed, and generally extremely brief, discontent and suspicion began to haunt those splendid apartments which love had fitted up for beauty. Her answers to Leicester conveyed these feelings too bluntly, and pressed more naturally than prudently that she might be relieved from this obscure and secluded residence, by the Earl's acknowledgment of their marriage; and in arranging her arguments, with all the skill she was mistress of, she trusted chiefly to the warmth of the entreaties with which she urged them. Sometimes she even ventured to mingle reproaches, of which Leicester conceived he had good reason to complain.

'I have made her countess,' he said to Varney; 'surely she might wait till it consisted with my pleasure that she should put on the coronet.'

The Countess Amy viewed the subject in directly an opposite light.

'What signifies,' she said, 'that I have rank and honour in reality, if I am to live an obscure prisoner, without either society or observance, and suffering in my character, as one of dubious or disgraced reputation? I care not for all those strings of pearl, which you fret me by warping into my tresses, Janet. I tell you, that at Lidcote Hall, if I put but a fresh rosebud among my hair, my good father would call me to him, that he might see it more closely; and the kind old curate would smile, and Master Mumblazen would say something about roses gules; and now I sit here, decked out like an image with gold and gems, and no one to see my finery but you, Janet. There was the poor Tressilian, too—but it avails not speaking of him.'

'It doth not, indeed, madam,' said her prudent attendant; 'and verily you make me sometimes wish you would not speak of him so often, or so rashly.'

'It signifies nothing to warn me, Janet,' said the impatient and incorrigible countess; 'I was born free, though I am now mewed up like some fine foreign slave, rather than the wife of an English noble. I bore it all with pleasure while I was sure he loved me; but now, my tongue and heart shall be free, let them fetter these limbs as they will.—I tell thee, Janet, I love my husband—I will love him till my latest breath—I cannot cease to love him, even if I would, or if he—which, God knows, may chance—should cease to love me. But I will say, and loudly, I would have been happier than I now am, to have remained in Lidcote Hall, even although I must have married poor Tressilian, with his melancholy look, and his head full of learning, which I cared not for. He said, if I would read his favourite volumes, there would come a time that I should be glad of having done so—I think it is come now.'

'I bought you some books, madam,' said Janet, 'from a lame fellow who sold them in the market-place—and who stared something boldly at me, I promise you.'

'Let me see them, Janet,' said the countess; 'but let them not be of your own precise cast.—How is this, most righteous damsel?—*A Pair of Snuffers for the Golden Candlestick*—*A Handful of Myrrh and Hyssop to put a Sick Soul to Purgation*—*A Draught of Water from the Valley of Baca*—*Foxes and Firebrands*—What gear call you this, maiden?'

'Nay, madam,' said Janet, 'it was but fitting and seemly to put grace in your ladyship's way; but an you will none of it, there are play-books, and poet-books, I trow.'

The countess proceeded carelessly in her examination, turning over such rare volumes as would now make the fortune of twenty retail booksellers. Here was a *Boke of Cookery, Imprinted by Richard Lant*, and *Skelton's Books*—*The Passtime of the People*—*The Castle of Knowledge*, etc. But neither to this lore did the countess's heart incline, and joyfully did she start up from the listless task of turning over the leaves of the pamphlets, and hastily did she scatter them through the floor, when the hasty clatter of horses' feet, heard in the court-yard, called her to the window, exclaiming, 'It is Leicester!—it is my noble earl!—it is my Dudley!—Every stroke of his horse's hoof sounds like a note of lordly music!'

There was a brief bustle in the mansion, and Foster, with his downward look and sullen manner, entered the apartment to say, 'That Master Richard Varney was arrived from my lord, having ridden all night, and craved to speak with her ladyship instantly.'

'Varney?' said the disappointed countess; 'and to speak with me?—pshaw! But he comes with news from Leicester—so admit him instantly.'

Varney entered the dressing apartment, where

she sat arrayed in her native loveliness, adorned with all that Janet's art, and a rich and tasteful undress, could bestow. But the most beautiful part of her attire was her profuse and luxuriant light-brown locks, which floated in such rich abundance around a neck that resembled a swan's, and over a bosom heaving with anxious expectation, which communicated a hurried tinge of red to her whole countenance.

Varney entered the room in the dress in which he had waited on his master that morning to court, the splendour of which made a strange contrast with the disorder arising from hasty riding during a dark night and foul ways. His brow wore an anxious and hurried expression, as one who has that to say of which he doubts the reception, and who hath yet posted on from the necessity of communicating his tidings. The countess's anxious eye at once caught the alarm, as she exclaimed, 'You bring news from my lord, Master Varney—Gracious Heaven! is he ill?'

'No, madam, thank Heaven!' said Varney. 'Compose yourself, and permit me to take breath ere I communicate my tidings.'

'No breath, sir,' replied the lady impatiently; 'I know your theatrical arts. Since your breath hath sufficed to bring you hither, it may suffice to tell your tale, at least briefly, and in the gross.'

'Madam,' answered Varney, 'we are not alone, and my lord's message was for your ear only.'

'Leave us, Janet and Master Foster,' said the lady; 'but remain in the next apartment, and within call.'

Foster and his daughter retired, agreeably to the Lady Leicester's commands, into the next apartment, which was the withdrawing-room. The door which led from the sleeping-chamber was then carefully shut and bolted, and the father and daughter remained both in a posture of anxious attention, the first with a stern, suspicious, anxious cast of countenance, and Janet with folded hands, and looks which seemed divided betwixt her desire to know the fortunes of her mistress, and her prayers to Heaven for her safety. Anthony Foster seemed himself to have some idea of what was passing through his daughter's mind, for he crossed the apartment and took her anxiously by the hand, saying, 'That is right—pray, Janet, pray—we have all need of prayers, and some of us more than others, Pray, Janet—I would pray myself, but I must listen to what goes on within—evil has been brewing, love—evil has been brewing. God forgive our sins; but Varney's sudden and strange arrival bodes us no good.'

Janet had never before heard her father excite or even permit her attention to anything which passed in their mysterious family, and now that he did so, his voice sounded in her ear—she knew not why—like that of a screech-owl denouncing some deed of terror and of woe. She turned her eyes fearfully towards the door, almost as if she expected some sounds of horror to be heard, or some sight of fear to display itself.

All, however, was as still as death, and the voices of those who spoke in the inner chamber were, if they spoke at all, carefully subdued to a tone which could not be heard in the next. At once, however, they were heard to speak fast, thick, and hastily; and presently after the voice of the countess was heard exclaiming, at the highest pitch to which indignation could raise it, 'Undo the door, sir, I command you!—Undo the door!—I will have no other reply!' she continued, drowning with her vehement accents the low and muttered sounds which Varney was heard to utter betwixt whiles. 'What ho! without there!' she persisted, accompanying her words with shrieks. 'Janet, alarm the house!—Foster, break open the door—I am detained here by a traitor!—Use axe and lever, Master Foster—I will be your warrant!'

'It shall not need, madam,' Varney was at length distinctly heard to say. 'If you please to expose my lord's important concerns and your own to the general ear, I will not be your hindrance.'

The door was unlocked and thrown open, and Janet and her father rushed in, anxious to learn the cause of these reiterated exclamations.

When they entered the apartment, Varney stood by the door grinding his teeth, with an expression in which rage, and shame, and fear had each their share. The countess stood in the midst of her apartment like a juvenile Pythoness, under the influence of the prophetic fury. The veins in her beautiful forehead started into swollen blue lines through the hurried impulse of her articulation—her cheek and neck glowed like scarlet—her eyes were like those of an imprisoned eagle, flashing red lightning on the foes whom it cannot reach with its talons. Were it possible for one of the Graces to have been animated by a Fury, the countenance could not have united such beauty with so much hatred, scorn, defiance, and resentment. The gesture and attitude corresponded with the voice and looks, and altogether presented a spectacle which was at once beautiful and fearful; so much of the sublime had the energy of passion united with the Countess Amy's natural loveliness. Janet, as soon as the door was open, ran to her mistress; and more slowly, yet with more haste than he was wont, Anthony Foster went to Richard Varney.

'In the Truth's name, what ails your ladyship?' said the former.

'What, in the name of Satan, have you done to her?' said Foster to his friend.

'Who, I?—nothing,' answered Varney, but with sunken head and sullen voice; 'nothing but communicated to her her lord's commands, which, if the lady list not to obey, she knows better how to answer it than I may pretend to do.'

'Now, by Heaven, Janet,' said the countess, 'the false traitor lies in his throat! He must needs lie, for he speaks to the dishonour of my noble lord—he must needs lie doubly, for he speaks to gain ends of his own, equally execrable and unattainable.'

'You have misapprehended me, lady,' said Varney, with a sulky species of submission and apology; 'let this matter rest till your passion be abated, and I will explain all.'

'Thou shalt never have an opportunity to do so,' said the countess.—'Look at him, Janet. He is fairly dressed, hath the outside of a gentleman, and hither he came to persuade me it was

my lord's pleasure—nay, more, my wedded lord's commands—that I should go with him to Kenilworth, and before the Queen and nobles, and in presence of my own wedded lord, that I should acknowledge him—*him* there—that very cloak-brushing, shoe-cleaning fellow—*him* there, my lord's lackey, for my liege lord and husband; furnishing against myself, great God! whenever I was to vindicate my right and my rank, such weapons as would hew my just claim from the root, and destroy my character to be regarded as an honourable matron of the English nobility!'

'You hear her, Foster, and you, young maiden, hear this lady,' answered Varney, taking advantage of the pause which the countess had made in her charge, more for lack of breath than for lack of matter—'You hear that her heat only objects to me the course which our good lord, for the purpose to keep certain matters secret, suggests in the very letter which she holds in her hands.'

Foster here attempted to interfere with a face of authority, which he thought became the charge entrusted to him, 'Nay, lady, I must needs say you are over hasty in this—Such deceit is not utterly to be condemned when practised for a righteous end; and thus even the patriarch Abraham feigned Sarah to be his sister when they went down to Egypt.'

'Ay, sir,' answered the countess; 'but God rebuked that deceit even in the father of his chosen people, by the mouth of the heathen Pharaoh. Out upon you, that will read Scripture only to copy those things, which are held out to us as warnings, not as examples!'

'But Sarah disputed not the will of her husband, an it be your pleasure,' said Foster, in reply; 'but did as Abraham commanded, calling herself his sister, that it might be well with her husband for her sake, and that his soul might live because of her beauty.'

'Now, so Heaven pardon me my useless anger,' answered the countess, 'thou art as daring a hypocrite as yonder fellow is an impudent deceiver! Never will I believe that the noble Dudley gave countenance to so dastardly, so dishonourable a plan. Thus I tread on his infamy, if indeed it be, and thus destroy its remembrance for ever!'

So saying, she tore in pieces Leicester's letter, and stamped, in the extremity of impatience, as if she would have annihilated the minute fragments into which she had rent it.

'Bear witness,' said Varney, collecting himself, 'she hath torn my lord's letter, in order to burden me with the scheme of his devising; and although it promises nought but danger and trouble to me, she would lay it to my charge, as if I had any purpose of mine own in it.'

'Thou liest, thou treacherous slave!' said the countess, in spite of Janet's attempts to keep her silent, in the sad foresight that her vehemence might only furnish arms against herself.—'Thou liest,' she continued.—'Let me go, Janet—Were it the last word I have to speak, he lies—he had his own foul ends to seek; and broader he would have displayed them, had my passion permitted me to preserve the silence which at first encouraged him to unfold his vile projects.'

'Madam,' said Varney, overwhelmed in spite of his effrontery, 'I entreat you to believe yourself mistaken.'

'As soon will I believe light darkness,' said the enraged countess. 'Have I drunk of oblivion? Do I not remember former passages, which, known to Leicester, had given thee the preferment of a gallows, instead of the honour of his intimacy?—I would I were a man but for five minutes! It were space enough to make a craven like thee confess his villany. But go—begone. Tell thy master that, when I take the foul course to which such scandalous deceits as thou hast recommended on his behalf must necessarily lead me, I will give him a rival something worthy of the name. He shall not be supplanted by an ignominious lackey, whose best fortune is to catch a gift of his master's last suit of clothes ere it is threadbare, and who is only fit to seduce a suburb-wench by the bravery of new roses in his master's old pantoufles. Go, begone, sir—I scorn thee so much, that I am ashamed to have been angry with thee.'

Varney left the room with a mute expression of rage, and was followed by Foster, whose apprehension, naturally slow, was overpowered by the eager and abundant discharge of indignation, which, for the first time, he had heard burst from the lips of a being, who had seemed till that moment too languid and too gentle to nurse an angry thought, or utter an intemperate expression. Foster, therefore, pursued Varney from place to place, persecuting him with interrogatories, to which the other replied not, until they were in the opposite side of the quadrangle, and in the old library, with which the reader has already been made acquainted. Here he turned round on his persevering follower, and thus addressed him, in a tone tolerably equal; that brief walk having been sufficient to give one so habituated to command his temper, time to rally and recover his presence of mind.

'Tony,' he said, with his usual sneering laugh, 'it avails not to deny it. The Woman and the Devil, who, as thine oracle Holdforth will confirm to thee, cheated man at the beginning, have this day proved more powerful than my discretion. Yon termagant looked so tempting, and had the art to preserve her countenance so naturally, while I communicated my lord's message, that, by my faith, I thought I might say some little thing for myself. She thinks she hath my head under her girdle now, but she is deceived.—Where is Doctor Alasco?'

'In his laboratory,' answered Foster; 'it is the hour he is spoken not withal—we must wait till noon is past, or spoil his important—what said I, important?—I would say interrupt his divine studies.'

'Ay, he studies the devil's divinity,' said Varney,—'but when I want him, one hour must suffice as well as another. Lead the way to his pandemonium.'

So spoke Varney, and with hasty and perturbed steps followed Foster, who conducted him through private passages, many of which were well-nigh ruinous, to the opposite side of the quadrangle, where, in a subterranean apartment, now occupied by the chemist Alasco, one of the Abbots of Abingdon, who had a turn for the occult sciences,

had, much to the scandal of his convent, established a laboratory, in which, like other fools of the period, he spent much precious time, and money besides, in the pursuit of the grand arcanum.

Anthony Foster paused before the door, which was scrupulously secured within, and again showed a marked hesitation to disturb the sage in his operations. But Varney, less scrupulous, roused him, by knocking and voice, until at length, slowly and reluctantly, the inmate of the apartment undid the door. The chemist appeared, with his eyes bleared with the heat and vapours of the stove or alembic over which he brooded, and the interior of his cell displayed the confused assemblage of heterogeneous substances and extraordinary implements belonging to his profession. The old man was muttering, with spiteful impatience, 'Am I for ever to be recalled to the affairs of earth from those of heaven?'

'To the affairs of hell,' answered Varney, 'for that is thy proper element. — Foster, we need thee at our conference.'

Foster slowly entered the room. Varney, following, barred the door, and they betook themselves to secret council.

In the meanwhile, the countess traversed the apartment, with shame and anger contending on her lovely cheek.

'The villain,' she said, 'the cold-blooded, calculating slave!—But I unmasked him, Janet—I made the snake uncoil all his folds before me, and crawl abroad in his naked deformity—I suspended my resentment, at the danger of suffocating under the effort, until he had let me see the very bottom of a heart more foul than hell's darkest corner.—And thou, Leicester, is it possible thou couldst bid me for a moment deny my wedded right in thee, or thyself yield it to another?—But it is impossible—the villain has lied in all.—Janet, I will not remain here longer—I fear him—I fear thy father—I grieve to say it, Janet—but I fear thy father, and, worst of all, this odious Varney. I will escape from Cumnor.'

'Alas! madam, whither would you fly, or by what means will you escape from these walls?'

'I know not, Janet,' said the unfortunate young lady, looking upwards, and clasping her hands together, 'I know not where I shall fly, or by what means; but I am certain the God I have served will not abandon me in this dreadful crisis, for I am in the hands of wicked men.'

'Do not think so, dear lady,' said Janet; 'my father is stern and strict in his temper, and severely true to his trust—but yet'——

At this moment Anthony Foster entered the apartment, bearing in his hand a glass cup and a small flask. His manner was singular; for, while approaching the countess with the respect due to her rank, he had till this time suffered to become visible, or had been unable to suppress, the obdurate sulkiness of his natural disposition, which, as is usual with those of his unhappy temper, was chiefly exerted towards those over whom circumstances gave him control. But at present he showed nothing of that sullen consciousness of authority which he was wont to conceal under a clumsy affectation of civility and deference, as a ruffian hides his pistols and bludgeon under his ill-fashioned gaberdine. And yet it seemed as if his smile was more in fear than courtesy, and as if, while he pressed the countess to taste of the choice cordial, which should refresh her spirits after her late alarm, he was conscious of meditating some further injury. His hand trembled also, his voice faltered, and his whole outward behaviour exhibited so much that was suspicious, that his daughter Janet, after she had stood looking at him in astonishment for some seconds, seemed at once to collect herself to execute some hardy resolution, raised her head, assumed an attitude and gait of determination and authority, and, walking slowly betwixt her father and her mistress, took the salver from the hand of the former, and said in a low, but marked and decided tone, 'Father, *I* will fill for my noble mistress, when such is her pleasure.'

'Thou, my child?' said Foster, eagerly and apprehensively; 'no, my child—it is not *thou* shalt render the lady this service.'

'And why, I pray you,' said Janet, 'if it be fitting that the noble lady should partake of the cup at all?'

'Why—why?' said the seneschal, hesitating, and then bursting into passion as the readiest mode of supplying the lack of all other reason—'Why, because it is my pleasure, minion, that you should not!—Get you gone to the evening lecture.'

'Now, as I hope to hear lecture again,' replied Janet, 'I will not go thither this night, unless I am better assured of my mistress's safety. Give me that flask, father;'—and she took it from his reluctant hand, while he resigned it as if conscience-struck.—'And now,' she said, 'father, that which shall benefit my mistress cannot do *me* prejudice. Father, I drink to you.'

Foster, without speaking a word, rushed on his daughter, and wrested the flask from her hand; then, as if embarrassed by what he had done, and totally unable to resolve what he should do next, he stood with it in his hand, one foot advanced and the other drawn back, glaring on his daughter with a countenance in which rage, fear, and convicted villany formed a hideous combination.

'This is strange, my father,' said Janet, keeping her eye fixed on his, in the manner in which those who have the charge of lunatics are said to overawe their unhappy patients; 'will you neither let me serve my lady, nor drink to her myself?'

The courage of the countess sustained her through this dreadful scene, of which the import was not the less obvious that it was not even hinted at. She preserved even the rash carelessness of her temper, and though her cheek had grown pale at the first alarm, her eye was calm, and almost scornful. 'Will *you* taste this rare cordial, Master Foster? Perhaps you will not yourself refuse to pledge us, though you permit not Janet to do so—Drink, sir, I pray you.'

'I will not,' answered Foster.

'And for whom, then, is the precious beverage reserved, sir?' said the countess.

'For the devil, who brewed it!' answered Foster; and, turning on his heel, he left the chamber.

Janet looked at her mistress with a countenance expressive in the highest degree of shame, dismay, and sorrow.

'Do not weep for me, Janet,' said the countess kindly.

'No, madam,' replied her attendant, in a voice broken by sobs, 'it is not for you I weep, it is for myself—it is for that unhappy man. Those who are dishonoured before man—those who are condemned by God, have cause to mourn—not those who are innocent!—Farewell, madam!' she said, hastily assuming the mantle in which she was wont to go abroad.

'Do you leave me, Janet?' said her mistress—'desert me in such an evil strait?'

'Desert you, madam!' exclaimed Janet; and, running back to her mistress, she imprinted a thousand kisses on her hand—'desert you!—may the Hope of my trust desert me when I do so!—No, madam; well you said the God you serve will open you a path for deliverance. There is a way of escape; I have prayed night and day for light, that I might see how to act betwixt my duty to yonder unhappy man, and that which I owe to you. Sternly and fearfully that light has now dawned, and I must not shut the door which God opens.—Ask me no more. I will return in brief space.'

So speaking, she wrapped herself in her mantle, and saying to the old woman whom she passed in the outer room, that she was going to evening prayer, she left the house.

Meanwhile her father had reached once more the laboratory, where he found the accomplices of his intended guilt.

'Has the sweet bird sipped?' said Varney, with half a smile; while the astrologer put the same question with his eyes, but spoke not a word.

'She has not, nor she shall not from my hands,' replied Foster; 'would you have me do murder in my daughter's presence?'

'Wert thou not told, thou sullen and yet faint-hearted slave,' answered Varney, with bitterness, 'that no *murder*, as thou call'st it, with that staring look and stammering tone, is designed in the matter? Wert thou not told, that a brief illness, such as woman puts on in very wantonness, that she may wear her night-gear at noon, and lie on a settle when she should mind her domestic business, is all here aimed at? Here is a learned man will swear it to thee by the key of the Castle of Wisdom.'

'I swear it,' said Alasco, 'that the elixir thou hast there in the flask will not prejudice life! I swear it by that immortal and indestructible quintessence of gold, which pervades every substance in nature, though its secret existence can be traced by him only to whom Trismegistus renders the key of the Cabala.'

'An oath of force,' said Varney. 'Foster, thou wert worse than a pagan to disbelieve it. Believe me, moreover, who swear by nothing but by my own word, that if you be not conformable, there is no hope, no, not a glimpse of hope, that this thy leasehold may be transmuted into a copyhold. Thus, Alasco will leave your pewter artillery untransmigrated, and I, honest Anthony, will still have thee for my tenant.'

'I know not, gentlemen,' said Foster, 'where your designs tend to; but in one thing I am bound up,—that, fall back fall edge, I will have one in this place that may pray for me, and that one shall be my daughter. I have lived ill, and the world has been too weighty with me; but she is as innocent as ever she was when on her mother's lap, and she, at least, shall have her portion in that happy City whose walls are pure gold, and the foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones.'

'Ay, Tony,' said Varney, 'that were a paradise to thy heart's content.—Debate the matter with him, Doctor Alasco; I will be with you anon.'

So speaking, Varney arose, and, taking the flask from the table, he left the room.

'I tell thee, my son,' said Alasco to Foster, as soon as Varney had left them, 'that, whatever this bold and profligate railer may say of the mighty science, in which, by Heaven's blessing, I have advanced so far, that I would not call the wisest of living artists my better or my teacher—I say, howsoever yonder reprobate may scoff at things too holy to be apprehended by men merely of carnal and evil thoughts, yet believe that the City beheld by Saint John, in that bright vision of the Christian Apocalypse, that New Jerusalem, of which all Christian men hope to partake, sets forth typically the discovery of the GRAND SECRET, whereby the most precious and perfect of nature's works are elicited out of her basest and most crude productions; just as the light and gaudy butterfly, the most beautiful child of the summer's breeze, breaks forth from the dungeon of a sordid chrysalis.'

'Master Holdforth said nought of this exposition,' said Foster doubtfully; 'and moreover, Doctor Alasco, the Holy Writ says that the gold and precious stones of the Holy City are in no sort for those who work abomination, or who frame lies.'

'Well, my son,' said the doctor, 'and what is your inference from thence?'

'That those,' said Foster, 'who distil poisons, and administer them in secrecy, can have no portion in those unspeakable riches.'

'You are to distinguish, my son,' replied the alchemist, 'betwixt that which is necessarily evil in its progress and in its end also, and that which, being evil, is, nevertheless, capable of working forth good. If, by the death of one person, the happy period shall be brought nearer to us, in which all that is good shall be attained, by wishing its presence—all that is evil escaped, by desiring its absence—in which sickness, and pain, and sorrow, shall be the obedient servants of human wisdom,—and made to fly at the slightest signal of a sage,—in which that which is now richest and rarest shall be within the compass of every one who shall be obedient to the voice of wisdom,—when the art of healing shall be lost and absorbed in the one universal medicine,—when sages shall become monarchs of the earth, and death itself retreat before their frown,—if this blessed consummation of all things can be hastened by the slight circumstance, that a frail earthly body, which must

needs partake corruption, shall be consigned to the grave a short space earlier than in the course of nature, what is such a sacrifice to the advancement of the holy Millennium?'

'Millennium is the reign of the Saints,' said Foster, somewhat doubtfully.

'Say it is the reign of the Sages, my son,' answered Alasco; 'or rather the reign of Wisdom itself.'

'I touched on the question with Master Holdforth last exercising night,' said Foster; 'but he says your doctrine is heterodox, and a damnable and false exposition.'

'He is in the bonds of ignorance, my son,' answered Alasco, 'and, as yet, burning bricks in Egypt; or, at best, wandering in the dry desert of Sinai. Thou didst ill to speak to such a man of such matters. I will, however, give thee proof, and that shortly, which I will defy that peevish divine to confute, though he should strive with me as the magicians strove with Moses before King Pharaoh. I will do projection in thy presence, my son,—in thy very presence, and thine eyes shall witness the truth.'

'Stick to that, learned sage,' said Varney, who at this moment entered the apartment; 'if he refuse the testimony of thy tongue, yet how shall he deny that of his own eyes?'

'Varney!' said the adept—'Varney already returned! Hast thou'—— he stopped short.

'Have I done mine errand, thou wouldst say,' replied Varney—'I have!—And thou,' he added, showing more symptoms of interest than he had hitherto exhibited, 'art thou sure thou hast poured forth neither more nor less than the just measure?'

'Ay,' replied the alchemist, 'as sure as men can be in these nice proportions; for there is diversity of constitutions.'

'Nay, then,' said Varney, 'I fear nothing. I know thou wilt not go a step farther to the devil than thou art justly considered for. Thou wert paid to create illness, and wouldst esteem it thriftless prodigality to do murder at the same price. Come, let us each to our chamber—We shall see the event to-morrow.'

'What didst thou do to make her swallow it?' said Foster, shuddering.

'Nothing,' answered Varney, 'but looked on her with that aspect which governs madmen, women, and children. They told me, in Saint Luke's Hospital, that I have the right look for overpowering a refractory patient. The keepers made me their compliments on't; so I know how to win my bread, when my court favour fails me.'

'And art thou not afraid,' said Foster, 'lest the dose be disproportioned?'

'If so,' replied Varney, 'she will but sleep the sounder, and the fear of that shall not break my rest. Good-night, my masters.'

Anthony Foster groaned heavily, and lifted up his hands and eyes. The alchemist intimated his purpose to continue some experiment of high import during the greater part of the night, and the others separated to their places of repose.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Now God be good to me in this wild pilgrimage!
All hope in human aid I cast behind me.
Oh, who would be a woman?—who that fool,
A weeping, pining, faithful, loving woman?—
She hath hard measure still where she hopes kindest,
And all her bounties only make ingrates.
LOVE'S PILGRIMAGE.

THE summer evening was closed, and Janet, just when her longer stay might have occasioned suspicion and inquiry in that jealous household, returned to Cumnor Place, and hastened to the apartment in which she had left her lady. She found her with her head resting on her arms, and these crossed upon a table which stood before her. As Janet came in, she neither looked up nor stirred.

Her faithful attendant ran to her mistress with the speed of lightning, and, rousing her at the same time with her hand, conjured the countess, in the most earnest manner, to look up, and say what thus affected her. The unhappy lady raised her head accordingly, and, looking on her attendant with a ghastly eye, and cheek as pale as clay, 'Janet,' she said, 'I have drunk it.'

'God be praised!' said Janet hastily—'I mean, God be praised that it is no worse—the potion will not harm you.—Rise, shake this lethargy from your limbs, and this despair from your mind.'

'Janet,' repeated the countess again, 'disturb me not—leave me at peace—let life pass quietly,—I am poisoned.'

'You are not, my dearest lady,' answered the maiden eagerly—'What you have swallowed cannot injure you, for the antidote has been taken before it, and I hastened hither to tell you that the means of escape are open to you.'

'Escape!' exclaimed the lady, as she raised herself hastily in her chair, while light returned to her eye and life to her cheek; 'but ah! Janet, it comes too late.'

'Not so, dearest lady—Rise, take mine arm, walk through the apartment—Let not fancy do the work of poison!—So; feel you not now that you are possessed of the full use of your limbs?'

'The torpor seems to diminish,' said the countess, as, supported by Janet, she walked to and fro in the apartment; 'but is it then so, and have I not swallowed a deadly draught? Varney was here since thou wert gone, and commanded me, with eyes in which I read my fate, to swallow yon horrible drug. O, Janet! it must be fatal; never was harmless drug served by such a cup-bearer!'

'He did not deem it harmless, I fear,' replied the maiden; 'but God confounds the devices of the wicked. Believe me, as I swear by the dear Gospel in which we trust, your life is safe from his practice. Did you not debate with him?'

'The house was silent,' answered the lady—'thou gone—no other but he in the chamber—and he capable of every crime. I did but stipulate he would remove his hateful presence, and I drank whatever he offered.—But you spoke of escape, Janet; can I be so happy?'

'Are you strong enough to bear the tidings, and make the effort?' said the maiden.

'Strong!' answered the countess—'Ask the hind, when the fangs of the deer-hound are stretched to gripe her, if she is strong enough to spring over a chasm. I am equal to every effort that may relieve me from this place.'

'Hear me, then,' said Janet. 'One, whom I deem an assured friend of yours, has shown himself to me in various disguises, and sought speech of me, which—for my mind was not clear on the matter until this evening—I have ever declined. He was the pedlar who brought you goods—the itinerant hawker who sold me books—whenever I stirred abroad I was sure to see him. The event of this night determined me to speak with him. He waits even now at the postern-gate of the park with means for your flight.—But have you strength of body?—Have you courage of mind?—Can you undertake the enterprise?'

'She that flies from death,' said the lady, 'finds strength of body—she that would escape from shame, lacks no strength of mind. The thoughts of leaving behind me the villain who menaces both my life and honour, would give me strength to rise from my death-bed.'

'In God's name, then, lady,' said Janet, 'I must bid you adieu, and to God's charge I must commit you!'

'Will you not fly with me, then, Janet?' said the countess anxiously. 'Am I to lose thee? Is this thy faithful service?'

'Lady, I would fly with you as willingly as bird ever fled from cage, but my doing so would occasion instant discovery and pursuit. I must remain, and use means to disguise the truth for some time—May Heaven pardon the falsehood, because of the necessity!'

'And am I then to travel alone with this stranger?' said the lady. 'Bethink thee, Janet, may not this prove some deeper and darker scheme to separate me perhaps from you, who are my only friend?'

'No, madam, do not suppose it,' answered Janet readily; 'the youth is an honest youth in his purpose to you; and a friend to Master Tressilian, under whose direction he has come hither.'

'If he be a friend of Tressilian,' said the countess, 'I will commit myself to his charge, as to that of an angel sent from heaven; for than Tressilian, never breathed mortal man more free of whatever was base, false, or selfish. He forgot himself whenever he could be of use to others. Alas! and how was he requited!'

With eager haste they collected the few necessaries which it was thought proper the countess should take with her, and which Janet, with speed and dexterity, formed into a small bundle, not forgetting to add such ornaments of intrinsic value as came most readily in her way, and particularly a casket of jewels, which she wisely judged might prove of service in some future emergency. The Countess of Leicester next changed her dress for one which Janet usually wore upon any brief journey, for they judged it necessary to avoid every external distinction which might attract attention. Ere these preparations were fully made, the moon had arisen in the summer heaven, and all in the mansion had betaken themselves to rest, or at least to the silence and retirement of their chambers.

There was no difficulty anticipated in escaping, whether from the house or garden, provided only they could elude observation. Anthony Foster had accustomed himself to consider his daughter as a conscious sinner might regard a visible guardian angel, which, notwithstanding his guilt, continued to hover around him, and therefore his trust in her knew no bounds. Janet commanded her own motions during the day-time, and had a master-key which opened the postern-door of the park, so that she could go to the village at pleasure, either upon the household affairs, which were entirely confided to her management, or to attend her devotions at the meeting-house of her sect. It is true, the daughter of Foster was thus liberally entrusted, under the solemn condition that she should not avail herself of these privileges, to do anything inconsistent with the safe-keeping of the countess; for so her residence at Cumnor Place had been termed, since she began of late to exhibit impatience of the restrictions to which she was subjected. Nor is there reason to suppose that anything short of the dreadful suspicions which the scene of that evening had excited, could have induced Janet to violate her word, or deceive her father's confidence. But from what she had witnessed, she now conceived herself not only justified, but imperatively called upon, to make her lady's safety the principal object of her care, setting all other considerations aside.

The fugitive countess, with her guide, traversed with hasty steps the broken and interrupted path, which had once been an avenue, now totally darkened by the boughs of spreading trees which met above their head, and now receiving a doubtful and deceiving light from the beams of the moon, which penetrated where the axe had made openings in the wood. Their path was repeatedly interrupted by felled trees, or the large boughs which had been left on the ground till time served to make them into fagots and billets. The inconvenience and difficulty attending these interruptions, the breathless haste of the first part of their route, the exhausting sensations of hope and fear, so much affected the countess's strength, that Janet was forced to propose that they should pause for a few minutes to recover breath and spirits. Both therefore stood still beneath the shadow of a huge old gnarled oak-tree, and both naturally looked back to the mansion which they had left behind them, whose long dark front was seen in the gloomy distance, with its huge stacks of chimneys, turrets, and clock-house, rising above the line of the roof, and definedly visible against the pure azure blue of the summer sky. One light only twinkled from the extended and shadowy mass, and it was placed so low, that it rather seemed to glimmer from the ground in front of the mansion, than from one of the windows. The countess's terror was awakened. 'They follow us!' she said, pointing out to Janet the light which thus alarmed her.

Less agitated than her mistress, Janet perceived that the gleam was stationary, and

informed the countess, in a whisper, that the light proceeded from the solitary cell in which the alchemist pursued his occult experiments. 'He is of those,' she added, 'who sit up and watch by night that they may commit iniquity. Evil was the chance which sent hither a man whose mixed speech of earthly wealth and unearthly or superhuman knowledge, hath in it what doth so especially captivate my poor father. Well spoke the good Master Holdforth —and, methought, not without meaning, that those of our household should find therein a practical use. "There be those," he said, "and their number is legion, who will rather, like the wicked Ahab, listen to the dreams of the false prophet Zedechias, than to the words of him by whom the Lord has spoken." And he further insisted—"Ah, my brethren, there be many Zedechiases among you—men that promise you the light of their carnal knowledge, so you will surrender to them that of your heavenly understanding. What are they better than the tyrant Naas, who demanded the right eye of those who were subjected to him?" And further he insisted'——

It is uncertain how long the fair puritan's memory might have supported her in the recapitulation of Master Holdforth's discourse; but the countess now interrupted her, and assured her she was so much recovered that she could now reach the postern without the necessity of a second delay.

They set out accordingly, and performed the second part of their journey with more deliberation, and of course more easily, than the first hasty commencement. This gave them leisure for reflection; and Janet now, for the first time, ventured to ask her lady which way she proposed to direct her flight. Receiving no immediate answer—for, perhaps, in the confusion of her mind, this very obvious subject of deliberation had not occurred to the countess—Janet ventured to add, 'Probably to your father's house, where you are sure of safety and protection?'

'No, Janet,' said the lady mournfully; 'I left Lidcote Hall while my heart was light and my name was honourable, and I will not return thither till my lord's permission and public acknowledgment of our marriage restore me to my native home, with all the rank and honour which he has bestowed on me.'

'And whither will you, then, madam?' said Janet.

'To Kenilworth, girl,' said the countess, boldly and freely. 'I will see those revels — those princely revels — the preparation for which makes the land ring from side to side. Methinks, when the Queen of England feasts within my husband's halls, the Countess of Leicester should be no unbeseeming guest.'

'I pray God you may be a welcome one!' said Janet hastily.

'You abuse my situation, Janet,' said the countess angrily, 'and you forget your own.'

'I do neither, dearest madam,' said the sorrowful maiden; 'but have you forgotten that the noble Earl has given such strict charges to keep your marriage secret, that he may preserve his court favour? and can you think that your sudden appearance at his castle, at such a juncture, and in such a presence, will be acceptable to him?'

'Thou thinkest I would disgrace him,' said the countess;—'nay, let go my arm, I can walk without aid, and work without counsel.'

'Be not angry with me, lady,' said Janet meekly, 'and let me still support you; the road is rough, and you are little accustomed to walk in darkness.'

'If you deem me not so mean as may disgrace my husband,' said the countess, in the same resentful tone, 'you suppose my Lord of Leicester capable of abetting, perhaps of giving aim and authority to, the base proceedings of your father and Varney, whose errand I will do to the good Earl.'

'For God's sake, madam, spare my father in your report,' said Janet; 'let my services, however poor, be some atonement for his errors!'

'I were most unjust, dearest Janet, were it otherwise,' said the countess, resuming at once the fondness and confidence of her manner towards her faithful attendant. 'No, Janet, not a word of mine shall do your father prejudice. But thou seest, my love, I have no desire but to throw myself on my husband's protection. I have left the abode he assigned for me because of the villany of the persons by whom I was surrounded—but I will disobey his commands in no other particular. I will appeal to him alone —I will be protected by him alone—To no other, than at his pleasure, have I or will I communicate the secret union which combines our hearts and our destinies. I will see him, and receive from his own lips the directions for my future conduct. Do not argue against my resolution, Janet; you will only confirm me in it, and, to own the truth, I am resolved to know my fate at once, and from my husband's own mouth, and to seek him at Kenilworth is the surest way to attain my purpose.'

While Janet hastily revolved in her mind the difficulties and uncertainties attendant on the unfortunate lady's situation, she was inclined to alter her first opinion, and to think, upon the whole, that since the countess had withdrawn herself from the retreat in which she had been placed by her husband, it was her first duty to repair to his presence, and possess him with the reasons for such conduct. She knew what importance the earl attached to the concealment of their marriage, and could not but own that, by taking any step to make it public without his permission, the countess would incur, in a high degree, the indignation of her husband. If she retired to her father's house without an explicit avowal of her rank, her situation was likely greatly to prejudice her character; and if she made such an avowal, it might occasion an irreconcilable breach with her husband. At Kenilworth, again, she might plead her cause with her husband himself, whom Janet, though distrusting him more than the countess did, believed incapable of being accessory to the base and desperate means which his dependents, from whose power the lady was now escaping, might resort to, in order to stifle her complaints of the treatment she had received at their hands. But at the worst, and were the earl himself to deny

her justice and protection, still at Kenilworth, if she chose to make her wrongs public, the countess might have Tressilian for her advocate, and the queen for her judge; for so much Janet had learned in her short conference with Wayland. She was, therefore, on the whole, reconciled to her lady's proposal of going towards Kenilworth, and so expressed herself; recommending, however, to the countess the utmost caution in making her arrival known to her husband.

'Hast thou thyself been cautious, Janet?' said the countess; 'this guide in whom I must put my confidence, hast thou not entrusted to him the secret of my condition?'

'From me he has learned nothing,' said Janet; 'nor do I think that he knows more than what the public in general believe of your situation.'

'And what is that?' said the lady.

'That you left your father's house—but I shall offend you again if I go on,' said Janet, interrupting herself.

'Nay, go on,' said the countess; 'I must learn to endure the evil report which my folly has brought upon me. They think, I suppose, that I have left my father's house to follow lawless pleasure—It is an error which will soon be removed—indeed it shall, for I will live with spotless fame, or I shall cease to live.—I am accounted, then, the paramour of my Leicester?'

'Most men say of Varney,' said Janet; 'yet some call him only the convenient cloak of his master's pleasures; for reports of the profuse expense in garnishing yonder apartments have secretly gone abroad, and such doings far surpass the means of Varney. But this latter opinion is little prevalent; for men dare hardly even hint suspicion when so high a name is concerned, lest the Star Chamber should punish them for scandal of the nobility.'

'They do well to speak low,' said the countess, 'who would mention the illustrious Dudley as the accomplice of such a wretch as Varney.—We have reached the postern—Ah! Janet, I must bid thee farewell!—Weep not, my good girl,' said she, endeavouring to cover her own reluctance to part with her faithful attendant under an attempt at playfulness, 'and against we meet again, reform me, Janet, that precise ruff of thine for an open rabatine of lace and cut work, that will let men see thou hast a fair neck; and that kirtle of Philippine cheney, with that bugle lace which befits only a chamber-maid, into three-piled velvet and cloth of gold—thou wilt find plenty of stuffs in my chamber, and I freely bestow them on you. Thou must be brave, Janet; for though thou art now but the attendant of a distressed and errant lady, who is both nameless and fameless, yet, when we meet again, thou must be dressed as becomes the gentlewoman nearest in love and in service to the first countess in England.'

'Now, may God grant it, dear lady!' said Janet;—'not that I may go with gayer apparel, but that we may both wear our kirtles over lighter hearts.'

By this time the lock of the postern-door had, after some hard wrenching, yielded to the master-key; and the countess, not without internal shuddering, saw herself beyond the walls which her husband's strict commands had assigned to her as the boundary of her walks. Waiting with much anxiety for their appearance, Wayland Smith stood at some distance, shrouding himself behind a hedge which bordered the high road.

'Is all safe?' said Janet to him anxiously, as he approached them with caution.

'All,' he replied; 'but I have been unable to procure a horse for the lady. Giles Gosling, the cowardly hilding, refused me one on any terms whatever; lest, forsooth, he should suffer—but no matter. She must ride on my palfrey, and I must walk by her side until I come by another horse. There will be no pursuit, if you, pretty Mistress Janet, forget not thy lesson.'

'No more than the wise widow of Tekoa forgot the words which Joab put into her mouth,' answered Janet. 'To-morrow, I say that my lady is unable to rise.'

'Ay; and that she hath aching and heaviness of the head—a throbbing at the heart, and lists not to be disturbed.—Fear not; they will take the hint, and trouble thee with few questions—they understand the disease.'

'But,' said the lady, 'my absence must be soon discovered, and they will murder her in revenge—I will rather return than expose her to such danger.'

'Be at ease on my account, madam,' said Janet; 'I would you were as sure of receiving the favour you desire from those to whom you must make appeal, as I am that my father, however angry, will suffer no harm to befall me.'

The countess was now placed by Wayland upon his horse, around the saddle of which he had placed his cloak, so folded as to make her a commodious seat.

'Adieu, and may the blessing of God wend with you!' said Janet, again kissing her mistress's hand, who returned her benediction with a mute caress. They then tore themselves asunder, and Janet, addressing Wayland, exclaimed, 'May Heaven deal with you at your need, as you are true or false to this most injured and most helpless lady!'

'Amen! dearest Janet,' replied Wayland;—'and believe me, I will so acquit myself of my trust, as may tempt even your pretty eyes, saint-like as they are, to look less scornfully on me when we next meet.'

The latter part of this adieu was whispered into Janet's ear; and although she made no reply to it directly, yet her manner, influenced no doubt by her desire to leave every motive in force which could operate towards her mistress's safety, did not discourage the hope which Wayland's words expressed. She re-entered the postern-door, and locked it behind her, while Wayland, taking the horse's bridle in his hand, and walking close by its head, they began in silence their dubious and moonlight journey.

Although Wayland Smith used the utmost despatch which he could make, yet this mode of travelling was so slow, that, when morning began to dawn through the eastern mist, he found himself no farther than about ten miles distant from Cumnor. 'Now a plague upon all smooth-spoken hosts!' said Wayland, unable longer to suppress his mortification and uneasiness. 'Had

the false loon, Giles Gosling, but told me plainly two days since, that I was to reckon nought upon him, I had shifted better for myself. But your hosts have such a custom of promising whatever is called for, that it is not till the steed is to be shod you find they are out of iron. Had I but known, I could have made twenty shifts; nay, for that matter, and in so good a cause, I would have thought little to have prigged a prancer from the next common—it had but been sending back the brute to the head-borough. The farcy and the founders confound every horse in the stables of the Black Bear!'

The lady endeavoured to comfort her guide, observing that the dawn would enable him to make more speed.

'True, madam,' he replied; 'but then it will enable other folk to take note of us, and that may prove an ill beginning of our journey. I had not cared a spark from anvil about the matter, had we been farther advanced on our way. But this Berkshire has been notoriously haunted ever since I knew the country, with that sort of malicious elves, who sit up late and rise early, for no other purpose than to pry into other folk's affairs. I have been endangered by them ere now. But do not fear,' he added, 'good madam; for wit, meeting with opportunity, will not miss to find a salve for every sore.'

The alarms of her guide made more impression on the countess's mind than the comfort which he judged fit to administer along with it. She looked anxiously around her, and as the shadows withdrew from the landscape, and the heightening glow of the eastern sky promised the speedy rise of the sun, expected at every turn that the increasing light would expose them to the view of the vengeful pursuers, or present some dangerous and insurmountable obstacle to the prosecution of their journey. Wayland Smith perceived her uneasiness, and, displeased with himself for having given her cause of alarm, strode on with affected alacrity, now talking to the horse as one expert in the language of the stable, now whistling to himself low and interrupted snatches of tunes, and now assuring the lady there was no danger; while at the same time he looked sharply around to see that there was nothing in sight which might give the lie to his words while they were issuing from his mouth. Thus did they journey on, until an unexpected incident gave them the means of continuing their pilgrimage with more speed and convenience.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Richard. A horse!—a horse!—my kingdom for a horse!
Catesby. ——My lord, I'll help you to a horse.
RICHARD III.

OUR travellers were in the act of passing a small thicket of trees close by the road-side, when the first living being presented himself whom they had seen since their departure from Cumnor Place. This was a stupid lout, seemingly a farmer's boy, in a grey jerkin, with his head bare, his hose about his heels, and huge startups upon his feet. He held by the bridle what of all things they most wanted, a palfrey, namely, with a side-saddle, and all other garniture for a woman's mounting; and he hailed Wayland Smith with, 'Zur, be ye zure the party?'

'Ay, that I be, my lad,' answered Wayland, without an instant's hesitation; and it must be owned that consciences, trained in a stricter school of morality, might have given way to an occasion so tempting. While he spoke, he caught the rein out of the boy's hand, and almost at the same time helped down the countess from his own horse, and aided her to mount on that which chance had thus presented for her acceptance. Indeed, so naturally did the whole take place, that the countess, as it afterwards appeared, never suspected but that the horse had been placed there to meet them by the precaution of the guide, or some of his friends.

The lad, however, who was thus hastily dispossessed of his charge, began to stare hard, and scratch his head, as if seized with some qualms of conscience for delivering up the animal on such brief explanation.—'I be right zure thou be'st the party,' said he, muttering to himself, 'but thou shouldst ha zaid *Beans*, thou knaw'st.'

'Ay, ay,' said Wayland, speaking at a venture; 'and thou *Bacon*, thou know'st.'

'Noa, noa,' said the lad; 'bide ye—bide ye—it was *Peas* a should ha said.'

'Well, well,' answered Wayland, 'peas be it, a God's name! though bacon were the better password.'

And being by this time mounted on his own horse, he caught the rein of the palfrey from the uncertain hold of the hesitating young boor, flung him a small piece of money, and made amends for lost time by riding briskly off without further parley. The lad was still visible from the hill up which they were riding, and Wayland, as he looked back, beheld him standing with his fingers in his hair, as immoveable as a guide-post, and his head turned in the direction in which they were escaping from him. At length, just as they topped the hill, he saw the clown stoop to lift up the silver groat which his benevolence had imparted.—'Now, this is what I call a God-send,' said Wayland; 'this is a bonnie well-ridden bit of a going thing, and it will carry us so far till we get you as well mounted, and then we will send it back time enough to satisfy the Hue and Cry.'

But he was deceived in his expectations; and fate, which seemed at first to promise so fairly, soon threatened to turn the incident, which he thus gloried in, into the cause of their utter ruin.

They had not ridden a short mile from the place where they left the lad, before they heard a man's voice shouting on the wind behind them, 'Robbery! robbery!—Stop thief!' and similar exclamations, which Wayland's conscience readily assured him must arise out of the transaction to which he had been just accessory.

'I had better have gone barefoot all my life,' he said; 'it is the Hue and Cry, and I am a lost man. Ah! Wayland, Wayland, many a time thy father said horse-flesh would be the death of thee. Were I once safe among the horse-coursers

in Smithfield, or Turnball Street,* they should have leave to hang me as high as Saint Paul's, if I e'er meddled more with nobles, knights, or gentlewomen.'

Amidst these dismal reflections, he turned his head repeatedly to see by whom he was chased, and was much comforted when he could only discover a single rider, who was, however, well mounted, and came after them at a speed which left them no chance of escaping, even had the lady's strength permitted her to ride as fast as her palfrey might have been able to gallop.

'There may be fair play betwixt us, sure,' thought Wayland, 'where there is but one man on each side, and yonder fellow sits on his horse more like a monkey than a cavalier. Pshaw! if it come to the worst, it will be easy unhorsing him. Nay, 'snails! I think his horse will take the matter in his own hand, for he has the bridle betwixt his teeth. Oons, what care I for him?' said he, as the pursuer drew yet nearer; 'it is but the little animal of a mercer from Abingdon, when all is over.'

Even so it was, as the experienced eye of Wayland had descried at a distance. For the valiant mercer's horse, which was a beast of mettle, feeling himself put to his speed, and discerning a couple of horses riding fast, at some hundred yards' distance before him, betook himself to the road with such alacrity as totally deranged the seat of his rider, who not only came up with, but passed, at full gallop, those whom he had been pursuing, pulling the reins with all his might, and ejaculating 'Stop! stop!' an interjection which seemed rather to regard his own palfrey, than what seamen call 'the chase.' With the same involuntary speed, he shot ahead (to use another nautical phrase) about a furlong, ere he was able to stop and turn his horse, and then rode back towards our travellers, adjusting, as well as he could, his disordered dress, resettling himself in the saddle, and endeavouring to substitute a bold and martial frown for the confusion and dismay which sat upon his visage during his involuntary career.

Wayland had just time to caution the lady not to be alarmed, adding, 'This fellow is a gull, and I will use him as such.'

When the mercer had recovered breath and audacity enough to confront them, he ordered Wayland, in a menacing tone, to deliver up his palfrey.

'How?' said the smith, in King Cambyses' vein, 'are we commanded to stand and deliver on the king's highway? Then out, Excalibar, and tell this knight of prowess that dire blows must decide between us!'

'Haro and help, and hue and cry, every true man!' said the mercer; 'I am withstood in seeking to recover mine own!'

'Thou swearest thy gods in vain, foul paynim,' said Wayland, 'for I will through with my purpose were death at the end on't. Nevertheless, know, thou false man of frail cambric and ferrateen, that I am he, even the pedlar, whom thou didst boast to meet on Maiden Castle moor, and despoil of his pack; wherefore betake thee to thy weapons presently.'

'I spoke but in jest, man,' said Goldthred; 'I am an honest shopkeeper and citizen, who scorns to leap forth on any man from behind a hedge.'

'Then, by my faith, most puissant mercer,' answered Wayland, 'I am sorry for my vow, which was, that wherever I met thee I would despoil thee of thy palfrey, and bestow it upon my leman, unless thou couldst defend it by blows of force. But the vow is passed and registered, and all that I can do for thee, is to leave the horse at Donnington, in the nearest hostelry.'

'But I tell thee, friend,' said the mercer, 'it is the very horse on which I was this day to carry Jane Thackham, of Shottesbrok, as far as the parish church yonder, to become Dame Goldthred. She hath jumped out of the shot-window of old Gaffer Thackham's grange; and lo ye, yonder she stands at the place where she should have met the palfrey, with her camlet riding-cloak and ivory-handled whip, like a picture of Lot's wife. I pray you, in good terms, let me have back the palfrey.'

'Grieved am I,' said Wayland, 'as much for the fair damsel as for thee, most noble imp of muslin. But vows must have their course—thou wilt find the palfrey at the Angel yonder at Donnington. It is all I may do for thee with a safe conscience.'

'To the devil with thy conscience!' said the dismayed mercer—'Wouldst thou have a bride walk to church on foot?'

'Thou mayest take her on thy crupper, Sir Goldthred,' answered Wayland; 'it will take down thy steed's mettle.'

'And how if you—if you forget to leave my horse, as you propose?' said Goldthred, not without hesitation, for his soul was afraid within him.

'My pack shall be pledged for it—yonder it lies with Giles Gosling, in his chamber with the damasked leathern hangings, stuffed full with velvet, single, double, treble-piled—rash-taffeta, and parapa—shag, damask, and mocado, plush, and grogram'——

'Hold! hold!' exclaimed the mercer; 'nay, if there be, in truth and sincerity, but the half of these wares—but if ever I trust bumpkin with bonnie Bayard again!'

'As you list for that, good Master Goldthred—and so good-morrow to you—and well parted,' he added, riding on cheerfully with the lady, while the discountenanced mercer rode back much slower than he came, pondering what excuse he should make to the disappointed bride, who stood waiting for her gallant groom in the midst of the king's highway.

'Methought,' said the lady, as they rode on, 'yonder fool stared at me as if he had some remembrance of me; yet I kept my muffler as high as I might.'

'If I thought so,' said Wayland, 'I would ride back, and cut him over the pate—there would be no fear of harming his brains, for he never had so much as would make pap to a sucking gosling. We must now push on, however, and at Donnington we will leave the oaf's

* [Turnbull Street, London (now and originally Turnmill Street), near Clerkenwell, was the resort of bullies and other dissolute persons.]

horse, that he may have no further temptation to pursue us, and endeavour to assume such a change of shape as may baffle his pursuit, if he should persevere in it.'

The travellers reached Donnington without further alarm, where it became matter of necessity that the countess should enjoy two or three hours' repose, during which Wayland disposed himself, with equal address and alacrity, to carry through those measures on which the safety of their future journey seemed to depend.

Exchanging his pedlar's gaberdine for a smock-frock, he carried the palfrey of Goldthred to the Angel Inn, which was at the other end of the village from that where our travellers had taken up their quarters. In the progress of the morning, as he travelled about his other business, he saw the steed brought forth and delivered to the cutting mercer himself, who, at the head of a valorous posse of the Hue and Cry, came to rescue, by force of arms, what was delivered to him without any other ransom than the price of a huge quantity of ale, drunk out by his assistants, thirsty, it would seem, with their walk, and concerning the price of which Master Goldthred had a fierce dispute with the head-borough, whom he had summoned to aid him in raising the country.

Having made this act of prudent, as well as just restitution, Wayland procured such change of apparel for the lady, as well as himself, as gave them both the appearance of country people of the better class; it being further resolved that, in order to attract the less observation, she should pass upon the road for the sister of her guide. A good, but not a gay horse, fit to keep pace with his own, and gentle enough for a lady's use, completed the preparations for the journey; for making which, and for other expenses, he had been furnished with sufficient funds by Tressilian. And thus, about noon, after the countess had been refreshed by the sound repose of several hours, they resumed their journey, with the purpose of making the best of their way to Kenilworth, by Coventry and Warwick. They were not, however, destined to travel far, without meeting some cause of apprehension.

It is necessary to premise, that the landlord of the inn had informed them that a jovial party, intended, as he understood, to present some of the masques or mummeries, which made a part of the entertainment with which the queen was usually welcomed on the royal progresses, had left the village of Donnington an hour or two before them, in order to proceed to Kenilworth. Now it had occurred to Wayland, that, by attaching themselves in some sort to this group, as soon as they should overtake them on the road, they would be less likely to attract notice, than if they continued to travel entirely by themselves. He communicated his idea to the countess, who, only anxious to arrive at Kenilworth without interruption, left him free to choose the manner in which this was to be accomplished. They pressed forward their horses, therefore, with the purpose of overtaking the party of intended revellers, and making the journey in their company; and had just seen the little party, consisting partly of riders, partly of people on foot, crossing the summit of a gentle hill, at about half-a-mile's distance, and disappearing on the other side, when Wayland, who maintained the most circumspect observation of all that met his eye in every direction, was aware that a rider was coming up behind them on a horse of uncommon action, accompanied by a serving-man, whose utmost efforts were unable to keep up with his master's trotting hackney, and who, therefore, was fain to follow him at a hand-gallop. Wayland looked anxiously back at these horsemen, became considerably disturbed in his manner, looked back again, and became pale, as he said to the lady—'That is Richard Varney's trotting gelding—I would know him among a thousand nags—this is a worse business than meeting the mercer.'

'Draw your sword,' answered the lady, 'and pierce my bosom with it, rather than I should fall into his hands!'

'I would rather by a thousand times,' answered Wayland, 'pass it through his body, or even mine own. But, to say truth, fighting is not my best point, though I can look on cold iron, like another, when needs must be. And indeed, as for my sword—(put on, I pray you), it is a poor provant rapier, and I warrant you he has a special Toledo. He has a serving-man, too, and I think it is the drunken ruffian Lambourne, upon the horse on which men say—(I pray you heartily to put on)—he did the great robbery of the west country grazier. It is not that I fear either Varney or Lambourne in a good cause—(your palfrey will go yet faster if you urge him)—But yet—(nay, I pray you let him not break off into the gallop, lest they should see we fear them, and give chase—keep him only at the full trot)—But yet, though I fear them not, I would we were well rid of them, and that rather by policy than by violence. Could we once reach the party before us, we may herd among them, and pass unobserved, unless Varney be really come in express pursuit of us, and then, happy man be his dole!'

While he thus spoke, he alternately urged and restrained his horse, desirous to maintain the fleetest pace that was consistent with the idea of an ordinary journey on the road, but to avoid such rapidity of movement as might give rise to suspicion that they were flying.

At such a pace they ascended the gentle hill we have mentioned, and, looking from the top, had the pleasure to see that the party which had left Donnington before them, were in the little valley or bottom on the other side, where the road was traversed by a rivulet, beside which was a cottage or two. In this place they seemed to have made a pause, which gave Wayland the hope of joining them, and becoming a part of their company, ere Varney should overtake them. He was the more anxious, as his companion, though she made no complaints, and expressed no fear, began to look so deadly pale, that he was afraid she might drop from her horse. Notwithstanding this symptom of decaying strength, she pushed on her palfrey so briskly, that they joined the party in the bottom of the valley, ere Varney appeared on the top of the gentle eminence which they descended.

They found the company to which they meant

to associate themselves in great disorder. The women, with dishevelled locks, and looks of great importance, ran in and out of one of the cottages, and the men stood around holding the horses, and looking silly enough, as is usual in cases where their assistance is not wanted.

Wayland and his charge paused, as if out of curiosity, and then gradually, without making any inquiries, or being asked any questions, they mingled with the group, as if they had always made part of it.

They had not stood there above five minutes, anxiously keeping as much to the side of the road as possible, so as to place the other travellers betwixt them and Varney, when Lord Leicester's master of the horse, followed by Lambourne, came riding fiercely down the hill, their horses' flanks and the rowels of their spurs showing bloody tokens of the rate at which they travelled. The appearance of the stationary group around the cottages, wearing their buckram suits in order to protect their masquing dresses, having their light cart for transporting their scenery, and carrying various fantastic properties in their hands for the more easy conveyance, let the riders at once into the character and purpose of the company.

'You are revellers,' said Varney, 'designing for Kenilworth?'

'*Recte quidem, Domine spectatissime*,' answered one of the party.

'And why the devil stand you here,' said Varney, 'when your utmost despatch will but bring you to Kenilworth in time? The Queen dines at Warwick to-morrow, and you loiter here, ye knaves!'

'In very truth, sir,' said a little diminutive urchin, wearing a vizard with a couple of sprouting horns of an elegant scarlet hue, having moreover a black serge jerkin drawn close to his body by lacing, garnished with red stockings, and shoes so shaped as to resemble cloven feet,—'in very truth, sir, and you are in the right on't. —It is my father the Devil, who, being taken in labour, has delayed our present purpose, by increasing our company with an imp too many.'

'The devil he has!' answered Varney, whose laugh, however, never exceeded a sarcastic smile.

'It is even as the juvenal hath said,' added the masquer who spoke first; 'our major devil, for this is but our minor one, is even now at *Lucina fer opem*, within that very *tugurium*.'

'By Saint George, or rather by the Dragon, who may be a kinsman of the fiend in the straw, a most comical chance!' said Varney. 'How sayest thou, Lambourne, wilt thou stand godfather for the nonce?—if the devil were to choose a gossip, I know no one more fit for the office.'

'Saving always when my betters are in presence,' said Lambourne, with the civil impudence of a servant who knows his services to be so indispensable, that his jest will be permitted to pass muster.

'And what is the name of this devil or devil's dam, who has timed her turns so strangely?' said Varney. 'We can ill afford to spare any of our actors.'

'*Gaudet nomine Sibyllæ*,' said the first speaker, 'she is called Sibyl Laneham, wife of Master Robert Laneham'——

'Clerk to the council chamber door,' said Varney; 'why, she is inexcusable, having had experience how to have ordered her matters better. But who were those, a man and a woman, I think, who rode so hastily up the hill before me even now?—do they belong to your company?'

Wayland was about to hazard a reply to this alarming inquiry, when the little *diablotin* again thrust in his oar.

'So please you,' he said, coming close up to Varney, and speaking so as not to be overheard by his companions, 'the man was our devil major, who has tricks enough to supply the lack of a hundred such as Dame Laneham; and the woman—if you please, is the sage person whose assistance is most particularly necessary to our distressed comrade.'

'O, what, you have got the wise woman, then?' said Varney. 'Why, truly, she rode like one bound to a place where she was needed—And you have a spare limb of Satan, besides, to supply the place of Mistress Laneham?'

'Ay, sir,' said the boy, 'they are not so scarce in this world as your honour's virtuous eminence would suppose—This master-fiend shall spit a few flashes of fire, and eruct a volume or two of smoke on the spot, if it will do you pleasure—you would think he had Ætna in his abdomen.'

'I lack time just now, most hopeful imp of darkness, to witness his performance,' said Varney; 'but here is something for you all to drink the lucky hour—and so, as the play says, "God be with your labour!"'

Thus speaking, he struck his horse with the spurs, and rode on his way.

Lambourne tarried a moment or two behind his master, and rummaged his pouch for a piece of silver, which he bestowed on the communicative imp, as he said, for his encouragement on his path to the infernal regions, some sparks of whose fire, he said, he could discover flashing from him already. Then, having received the boy's thanks for his generosity, he also spurred his horse, and rode after his master as fast as the fire flashes from flint.

'And now,' said the wily imp, sideling close up to Wayland's horse, and cutting a gambol in the air, which seemed to vindicate his title to relationship with the prince of that element, '*I* have told them who *you* are, do you in return tell me who *I* am?'

'Either Flibbertigibbet,' answered Wayland Smith, 'or else an imp of the devil in good earnest.'

'Thou hast hit it,' answered Dickie Sludge; 'I am thine own Flibbertigibbet, man; and I have broken forth of bounds, along with my learned preceptor, as I told thee I would do, whether he would or not.—But what lady hast thou got with thee? I saw thou wert at fault, the first question was asked, and so I drew up for thy assistance. But I must know all who she is, dear Wayland.'

'Thou shalt know fifty finer things, my dear ingle,' said Wayland; 'but a truce to thine inquiries just now; and since you are bound for Kenilworth, thither will I too, even for the love of thy sweet face and waggish company.'

'Thou shouldst have said my waggish face and

sweet company,' said Dickie; 'but how wilt thou travel with us—I mean in what character?'

'E'en in that thou hast assigned me, to be sure—as a juggler; thou know'st I am used to the craft,' answered Wayland.

'Ay, but the lady?' answered Flibbertigibbet; 'credit me, I think she *is* one, and thou art in a sea of troubles about her at this moment, as I can perceive by thy fidgeting.'

'O, she, man?—she is a poor sister of mine,' said Wayland—'she can sing and play o' the lute, would win the fish out o' the stream.'

'Let me hear her instantly,' said the boy; 'I love the lute rarely; I love it of all things, though I never heard it.'

'Then how canst thou love it, Flibbertigibbet?' said Wayland.

'As knights love ladies in old tales,' answered Dickie—'on hearsay.'

'Then love it on hearsay a little longer, till my sister is recovered from the fatigue of her journey,' said Wayland;—muttering afterwards betwixt his teeth, 'The devil take the imp's curiosity! I must keep fair weather with him, or we shall fare the worse.'

He then proceeded to state to Master Holiday his own talents as a juggler, with those of his sister as a musician. Some proof of his dexterity was demanded, which he gave in such a style of excellence, that, delighted at obtaining such an accession to their party, they readily acquiesced in the apology which he offered, when a display of his sister's talents was required. The new-comers were invited to partake of the refreshments with which the party were provided; and it was with some difficulty that Wayland Smith obtained an opportunity of being apart with his supposed sister during the meal, of which interval he availed himself to entreat her to forget for the present both her rank and her sorrows, and condescend, as the most probable chance of remaining concealed, to mix in the society of those with whom she was to travel.

The countess allowed the necessity of the case, and when they resumed their journey, endeavoured to comply with her guide's advice, by addressing herself to a female near her, and expressing her concern for the woman whom they were thus obliged to leave behind them.

'O, she is well attended, madam,' replied the dame whom she addressed, who, from her jolly and laughter-loving demeanour, might have been the very emblem of the Wife of Bath; 'and my gossip Laneham thinks as little of these matters as any one. By the ninth day, an the revels last so long, we shall have her with us at Kenilworth, even if she should travel with her bantling on her back.'

There was something in this speech which took away all desire on the Countess of Leicester's part to continue the conversation; but, having broken the charm by speaking to her fellow-traveller first, the good dame, who was to play Rare Gillian of Croydon, in one of the interludes, took care that silence did not again settle on the journey, but entertained her mute companion with a thousand anecdotes of revels, from the days of King Harry downwards, with the reception given them by the great folk, and all the names of those who played the principal characters; but ever concluding with, 'they would be nothing to the princely pleasures of Kenilworth.'

'And when shall we reach Kenilworth?' said the countess, with an agitation which she in vain attempted to conceal.

'We that have horses may, with late riding, get to Warwick to-night, and Kenilworth may be distant some four or five miles,—but then we must wait till the foot-people come up; although it is like my good Lord of Leicester will have horses or light carriages to meet them, and bring them up without being travel-toiled, which last is no good preparation, as you may suppose, for dancing before your betters—And yet, Lord help me, I have seen the day I would have tramped five leagues of lea-land, and turned on my toe the whole evening after, as a juggler spins a pewter platter on the point of a needle. But age has clawed me somewhat in his clutch, as the song says; though, if I like the tune and like my partner, I'll dance the heys yet with any merry lass in Warwickshire, that writes that unhappy figure four with a round O after it.'

If the countess was overwhelmed with the garrulity of this good dame, Wayland Smith, on his part, had enough to do to sustain and parry the constant attacks made upon him by the indefatigable curiosity of his old acquaintance, Richard Sludge. Nature had given that arch youngster a prying cast of disposition, which matched admirably with his sharp wit; the former inducing him to plant himself as a spy on other people's affairs, and the latter quality leading him perpetually to interfere, after he had made himself master of that which concerned him not. He spent the livelong day in attempting to peer under the countess's muffler, and apparently what he could there discern greatly sharpened his curiosity.

'That sister of thine, Wayland,' he said, 'has a fair neck to have been born in a smithy, and a pretty taper hand to have been used for twirling a spindle—faith, I'll believe in your relationship when the crow's egg is hatched into a cygnet.'

'Go to,' said Wayland, 'thou art a prating boy, and should be breeched for thine assurance.'

'Well,' said the imp, drawing off, 'all I say is, —remember you have kept a secret from me, and if I give thee not a Roland for thine Oliver, my name is not Dickon Sludge!'

This threat, and the distance at which Hobgoblin kept from him for the rest of the way, alarmed Wayland very much, and he suggested to his pretended sister, that, on pretext of weariness, she should express a desire to stop two or three miles short of the fair town of Warwick, promising to rejoin the troop in the morning. A small village inn afforded them a resting-place; and it was with secret pleasure that Wayland saw the whole party, including Dickon, pass on, after a courteous farewell, and leave them behind.

'To-morrow, madam,' he said to his charge, 'we will, with your leave, again start early, and reach Kenilworth before the rout which are to assemble there.'

The countess gave assent to the proposal of her faithful guide; but, somewhat to his surprise, said nothing further on the subject, which left Wayland under the disagreeable uncertainty

whether or no she had formed any plan for her own future proceedings, as he knew her situation demanded circumspection, although he was but imperfectly acquainted with all its peculiarities. Concluding, however, that she must have friends within the castle, whose advice and assistance she could safely trust, he supposed his task would be best accomplished by conducting her thither in safety, agreeably to her repeated commands.

CHAPTER XXV.

Hark, the bells summon, and the bugle calls,
But she the fairest answers not—the tide
Of nobles and of ladies throngs the halls,
But she the loveliest must in secret hide.
What eyes were thine, proud Prince, which in the gleam
Of yon gay meteors lost that better sense,
That o'er the glow-worm doth the star esteem,
And merit's modest blush o'er courtly insolence?

THE GLASS SLIPPER.

THE unfortunate Countess of Leicester had, from her infancy upwards, been treated by those around her with indulgence as unbounded as injudicious. The natural sweetness of her disposition had saved her from becoming insolent and ill-humoured; but the caprice which preferred the handsome and insinuating Leicester before Tressilian, of whose high honour and unalterable affection she herself entertained so firm an opinion—that fatal error, which ruined the happiness of her life, had its origin in the mistaken kindness that had spared her childhood the painful but necessary lesson of submission and self-command. From the same indulgence, it followed that she had only been accustomed to form and to express her wishes, leaving to others the task of fulfilling them; and thus, at the most momentous period of her life, she was alike destitute of presence of mind and of ability to form for herself any reasonable or prudent plan of conduct.

These difficulties pressed on the unfortunate lady with overwhelming force on the morning which seemed to be the crisis of her fate. Overlooking every intermediate consideration, she had only desired to be at Kenilworth, and to approach her husband's presence; and now, when she was in the vicinity of both, a thousand considerations arose at once upon her mind, startling her with accumulated doubts and dangers, some real, some imaginary, and all exalted and exaggerated by a situation alike helpless and destitute of aid and counsel.

A sleepless night rendered her so weak in the morning, that she was altogether unable to attend Wayland's early summons. The trusty guide became extremely distressed on the lady's account, and somewhat alarmed on his own, and was on the point of going alone to Kenilworth, in the hope of discovering Tressilian, and intimating to him the lady's approach, when about nine in the morning he was summoned to attend her. He found her dressed, and ready for resuming her journey, but with a paleness of countenance which alarmed him for her health. She intimated her desire that the horses might be got instantly ready, and resisted with impatience her guide's request, that she would take some refreshment before setting forward. 'I have had,' she said, 'a cup of water—the wretch who is dragged to execution needs no stronger cordial, and that may serve me which suffices for him—do as I command you.' Wayland Smith still hesitated. 'What would you have?' said she—'have I not spoken plainly?'

'Yes, madam,' answered Wayland; 'but may I ask what is your further purpose?—I only wish to know, that I may guide myself by your wishes. The whole country is afloat, and streaming towards the Castle of Kenilworth. It will be difficult travelling thither even if we had the necessary passports for safe-conduct and free admittance—Unknown and unfriended, we may come by mishap.—Your ladyship will forgive my speaking my poor mind—Were we not better try to find out the masquers, and again join ourselves with them?'—The countess shook her head, and her guide proceeded, 'Then I see but one other remedy.'

'Speak out, then,' said the lady, not displeased, perhaps, that he should thus offer the advice which she was ashamed to ask; 'I believe thee faithful—what wouldst thou counsel?'

'That I should warn Master Tressilian,' said Wayland, 'that you are in this place. I am right certain he would get a horse with a few of Lord Sussex's followers, and insure your personal safety.'

'And is it to *me* you advise,' said the countess, 'to put myself under the protection of Sussex, the unworthy rival of the noble Leicester?' Then, seeing the surprise with which Wayland stared upon her, and afraid of having too strongly intimated her interest in Leicester, she added, 'And for Tressilian, it must not be—mention not to him, I charge you, my unhappy name; it would but double *my* misfortunes, and involve *him* in dangers beyond the power of rescue.' She paused; but when she observed that Wayland continued to look on her with that anxious and uncertain gaze, which indicated a doubt whether her brain was settled, she assumed an air of composure, and added, 'Do thou but guide me to Kenilworth Castle, good fellow, and thy task is ended, since I will then judge what further is to be done. Thou hast yet been true to me—here is something that will make thee rich amends.'

She offered the artist a ring, containing a valuable stone. Wayland looked at it, hesitated a moment, and then returned it. 'Not,' he said, 'that I am above your kindness, madam, being but a poor fellow, who have been forced, God help me! to live by worse shifts than the bounty of such a person as you. But, as my old master the farrier used to say to his customers, 'No cure, no pay.' We are not yet in Kenilworth Castle, and it is time enough to discharge your guide, as they say, when you take your boots off. I trust in God your ladyship is as well assured of fitting reception when you arrive, as you may hold yourself certain of my best endeavours to conduct you thither safely. I go to get the horses; meantime, let me pray you once more, as your poor physician as well as guide, to take some sustenance.'

[illegible]

audacity,' said she, when he left the room; 'even

this poor groom sees through my affectation of courage, and fathoms the very ground of my fears.'

She then attempted to follow her guide's advice by taking some food, but was compelled to desist, as the effort to swallow even a single morsel gave her so much uneasiness as amounted well-nigh to suffocation. A moment afterwards, the horses appeared at the latticed window — the lady mounted, and found that relief from the free air and change of place which is frequently experienced in similar circumstances.

It chanced well for the countess's purpose, that Wayland Smith, whose previous wandering and unsettled life had made him acquainted with almost all England, was intimate with all the by-roads, as well as direct communications, through the beautiful county of Warwick. For such and so great was the throng which flocked in all directions towards Kenilworth, to see the entry of Elizabeth into that splendid mansion of her prime favourite, that the principal roads were actually blocked up and interrupted, and it was only by circuitous by-paths that the travellers could proceed on their journey.

The queen's purveyors had been abroad, sweeping the farms and villages of those articles usually exacted during a royal progress, and for which the owners were afterwards to obtain a tardy payment from the Board of Green Cloth. The Earl of Leicester's household officers had been scouring the country for the same purpose; and many of his friends and allies, both near and remote, took this opportunity of ingratiating themselves, by sending large quantities of provisions and delicacies of all kinds, with game in huge numbers, and whole tuns of the best liquors, foreign and domestic. Thus the high roads were filled with droves of bullocks, sheep, calves, and hogs, and choked with loaded wains, whose axle-trees cracked under their burdens of wine-casks and hogsheads of ale, and huge hampers of grocery goods, and slaughtered game, and salted provisions, and sacks of flour. Perpetual stoppages took place as these wains became entangled; and their rude drivers, swearing and brawling till their wild passions were fully raised, began to debate precedence with their waggon-whips and quarter-staves, which occasional riots were usually quieted by a purveyor, deputy-marshal's man, or some other person in authority, breaking the heads of both parties.

Here were, besides, players and mummers, jugglers and showmen, of every description, traversing in joyous bands the paths which led to the Palace of Princely Pleasure; for so the travelling minstrels had termed Kenilworth in the songs which already had come forth in anticipation of the revels which were there expected. In the midst of this motley show, mendicants were exhibiting their real or pretended miseries, forming a strange, though common, contrast betwixt the vanities and the sorrows of human existence. All these floated along with the immense tide of population, whom mere curiosity had drawn together; and where the mechanic, in his leather apron, elbowed the dink and dainty dame, his city mistress; where clowns, with hobnailed shoes, were treading on the kibes of substantial burghers and gentlemen of worship; and where Joan of the dairy, with robust pace, and red, sturdy arms, rowed her way onward, amongst those prim and pretty moppets, whose sires were knights and squires.

The throng and confusion was, however, of a gay and cheerful character. All came forth to see and to enjoy, and all laughed at the trifling inconveniences which at another time might have chafed their temper. Excepting the occasional brawls which we have mentioned among that irritable race the carmen, the mingled sounds which arose from the multitude were those of light-hearted mirth, and tiptoe jollity. The musicians preluded on their instruments—the minstrels hummed their songs—the licensed jester whooped betwixt mirth and madness, as he brandished his bauble—the morrice-dancers jangled their bells—the rustics halloo'd and whistled—men laughed loud, and maidens giggled shrill; while many a broad jest flew like a shuttlecock from one party, to be caught in the air and returned from the opposite side of the road by another, at which it was aimed.*

No infliction can be so distressing to a mind absorbed in melancholy, as being plunged into a scene of mirth and revelry, forming an accompaniment so dissonant from its own feelings. Yet, in the case of the Countess of Leicester, the noise and tumult of this giddy scene distracted her thoughts, and rendered her this sad service, that it became impossible for her to brood on her own misery, or to form terrible anticipations of her approaching fate. She travelled on, like one in a dream, following implicitly the guidance of Wayland, who, with great address, now threaded his way through the general throng of passengers, now stood still until a favourable opportunity occurred of again moving forward, and frequently turning altogether out of the direct road, followed some circuitous by-path, which brought them into the highway again, after having given them the opportunity of traversing a considerable way with greater ease and rapidity.

It was thus he avoided Warwick, within whose castle (that fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendour which yet remains uninjured by time) Elizabeth had passed the previous night, and where she was to tarry until past noon, at that time the general hour of dinner throughout England, after which repast she was to proceed to Kenilworth. In the meanwhile, each passing group had something to say in the sovereign's praise, though not absolutely without the usual mixture of satire which qualifies more or less our estimate of our neighbours, especially if they chance to be also our betters.

'Heard you,' said one, 'how graciously she spoke to Master Bailiff and the Recorder, and to good Master Griffin the preacher, as they kneeled down at her coach-window?'

'Ay, and how she said to little Aglionby, "Master Recorder, men would have persuaded me that you were afraid of me, but truly I think, so well did you reckon up to me the

*[Dr. Beattie, in his *Castles of England*, says, 'It is probable the romance of "Kenilworth" has brought within the last forty years more pilgrims to this town and neighbourhood than ever resorted to its ancient shrine of the Virgin, more knights and dames than ever figured in its tilts and tournaments.']

virtues of a sovereign, that I have more reason to be afraid of you."—And then with what grace she took the fair-wrought purse with the twenty gold sovereigns, seeming as though she would not willingly handle it, and yet taking it withal.'

'Ay, ay,' said another, 'her fingers closed on it pretty willingly, methought, when all was done; and methought, too, she weighed them for a second in her hand, as she would say, I hope they be avoirdupois.'

'She needed not, neighbour,' said a third; 'it is only when the corporation pay the accounts of a poor handicraft like me, that they put him off with clipt coin.—Well, there is a God above all—Little Master Recorder, since that is the word, will be greater now than ever.'

'Come, good neighbour,' said the first speaker, 'be not envious—She is a good Queen, and a generous—She gave the purse to the Earl of Leicester.'

'I envious?—beshrew thy heart for the word!' replied the handicraft—'But she will give all to the Earl of Leicester anon, methinks.'

'You are turning ill, lady,' said Wayland Smith to the Countess of Leicester, and proposed that she should draw off from the road, and halt till she recovered. But, subduing her feelings at this, and different speeches to the same purpose which caught her ear as they passed on, she insisted that her guide should proceed to Kenilworth with all the haste which the numerous impediments of their journey permitted. Meanwhile, Wayland's anxiety at her repeated fits of indisposition, and her obvious distraction of mind, was hourly increasing, and he became extremely desirous that, according to her reiterated requests, she should be safely introduced into the castle, where, he doubted not, she was secure of a kind reception, though she seemed unwilling to reveal on whom she reposed her hopes.

'An I were once rid of this peril,' thought he, 'and if any man shall find me playing squire of the body to a damosel-errant, he shall have leave to beat my brains out with my own sledge-hammer!'

At length the princely castle appeared, upon improving which, and the domains around, the Earl of Leicester had, it is said, expended sixty thousand pounds sterling, a sum equal to half a million of our present money.

The outer wall of this splendid and gigantic structure enclosed seven acres, a part of which was occupied by extensive stables, and by a pleasure-garden, with its trim arbours and parterres, and the rest formed the large base-court, or outer yard, of the noble castle. The lordly structure itself, which rose near the centre of this spacious enclosure, was composed of a huge pile of magnificent castellated buildings, apparently of different ages, surrounding an inner court, and bearing in the names attached to each portion of the magnificent mass, and in the armorial bearings which were there blazoned, the emblems of mighty chiefs who had long passed away, and whose history, could Ambition have lent ear to it, might have read a lesson to the haughty favourite, who had now acquired and was augmenting the fair domain. A large and massive keep, which formed the citadel of the castle, was of uncertain though great antiquity. It bore the name of Cæsar, perhaps from its resemblance to that in the Tower of London so called. Some antiquaries ascribe its foundation to the time of Kenelph, from whom the castle had its name, a Saxon King of Mercia, and others to an early era after the Norman Conquest. On the exterior walls frowned the scutcheon of the Clintons, by whom they were founded in the reign of Henry I., and of the yet more redoubted Simon de Montfort, by whom, during the Barons' wars, Kenilworth was long held out against Henry III. Here Mortimer, Earl of March, famous alike for his rise and his fall, had once gaily revelled in Kenilworth, while his dethroned sovereign, Edward II., languished in its dungeons. Old John of Gaunt, 'time-honoured Lancaster,' had widely extended the castle, erecting that noble and massive pile which yet bears the name of Lancaster's Buildings; and Leicester himself had outdone the former possessors, princely and powerful as they were, by erecting another immense structure, which now lies crushed under its own ruins, the monument of its owner's ambition. The external wall of this royal castle was, on the south and west sides, adorned and defended by a lake, partly artificial, across which Leicester had constructed a stately bridge, that Elizabeth might enter the castle by a path hitherto untrodden, instead of the usual entrance to the northward, over which he had erected a gate-house, or barbican, which still exists, and is equal in extent, and superior in architecture, to the baronial castle of many a northern chief.

Beyond the lake lay an extensive chase, full of red-deer, fallow-deer, roes, and every species of game, and abounding with lofty trees, from amongst which the extended front and massive towers of the castle were seen to rise in majesty and beauty. We cannot but add, that of this lordly palace, where princes feasted and heroes fought, now in the bloody earnest of storm and siege, and now in the games of chivalry, where beauty dealt the prize which valour won, all is now desolate. The bed of the lake is but a rushy swamp; and the massive ruins of the castle only serve to show what their splendour once was, and to impress on the musing visitor the transitory value of human possessions, and the happiness of those who enjoy a humble lot in virtuous contentment.

It was with far different feelings that the unfortunate Countess of Leicester viewed those grey and massive towers, when she first beheld them rise above the embowering and richly-shaded woods, over which they seemed to preside. She, the undoubted wife of the great earl, of Elizabeth's minion, and England's mighty favourite, was approaching the presence of her husband, and that husband's sovereign, under the protection, rather than the guidance, of a poor juggler; and though unquestioned mistress of that proud castle, whose lightest word ought to have had force sufficient to make its gates leap from their massive hinges to receive her, yet she could not conceal from herself the difficulty and peril which she must experience in gaining admission into her own halls.

The risk and difficulty, indeed, seemed to in-

crease every moment, and at length threatened altogether to put a stop to her further progress, at the great gate leading to a broad and fair road, which, traversing the breadth of the chase for the space of two miles, and commanding several most beautiful views of the castle and lake, terminated at the newly-constructed bridge, to which it was an appendage, and which was destined to form the queen's approach to the castle on that memorable occasion.

Here the countess and Wayland found the gate at the end of this avenue, which opened on the Warwick road, guarded by a body of the queen's mounted Yeomen of the Guard, armed in corselets richly carved and gilded, and wearing morions instead of bonnets, having their carabines resting with the butt-end on their thighs. These guards, distinguished for strength and stature, who did duty wherever the queen went in person, were here stationed under the direction of a pursuivant, graced with the Bear and Ragged Staff on his arm, as belonging to the Earl of Leicester, and peremptorily refused all admittance, excepting to such as were guests invited to the festival, or persons who were to perform some part in the mirthful exhibitions which were proposed.

The press was of consequence great around the entrance, and persons of all kinds presented every sort of plea for admittance; to which the guards turned an inexorable ear, pleading, in return to fair words, and even to fair offers, the strictness of their orders, founded on the queen's well-known dislike to the rude pressing of a multitude. With those whom such reasons did not serve, they dealt more rudely, repelling them without ceremony by the pressure of their powerful barbed horses, and good round blows from the stock of their carabines. These last manœuvres produced undulations amongst the crowd, which rendered Wayland much afraid that he might perforce be separated from his charge in the throng. Neither did he know what excuse to make in order to obtain admittance, and he was debating the matter in his head with great uncertainty, when the earl's pursuivant having cast an eye upon him, exclaimed, to his no small surprise, 'Yeomen, make room for the fellow in the orange-tawny cloak—Come forward, Sir Coxcomb, and make haste. What, in the fiend's name, has kept you waiting? Come forward with your bale of woman's gear.'

While the pursuivant gave Wayland this pressing yet uncourteous invitation, which for a minute or two he could not imagine was applied to him, the yeomen speedily made a free passage for him, while, only cautioning his companion to keep the muffler close around her face, he entered the gate, leading her palfrey, but with such a drooping crest, and such a look of conscious fear and anxiety, that the crowd, not greatly pleased at any rate with the preference bestowed upon them, accompanied their admission with hooting, and a loud laugh of derision.

Admitted thus within the chase, though with no very flattering notice or distinction, Wayland and his charge rode forward, musing what difficulties it would be next their lot to encounter, through the broad avenue, which was sentinelled on either side by a long line of retainers, armed with swords and partisans, richly dressed in the Earl of Leicester's liveries, and bearing his cognisance of the Bear and Ragged Staff, each placed within three paces of each other, so as to line the whole road from the entrance into the park to the bridge. And indeed, when the lady obtained the first commanding view of the castle, with its stately towers rising from within a long sweeping line of outward walls, ornamented with battlements, and turrets, and platforms, at every point of defence, with many a banner streaming from its walls, and such a bustle of gay crests and waving plumes disposed on the terraces and battlements, and all the gay and gorgeous scene, her heart, unaccustomed to such splendour, sank as if it died within her, and for a moment she asked herself what she had offered up to Leicester to deserve to become the partner of this princely splendour. But her pride and generous spirit resisted the whisper which bade her despair.

'I have given him,' she said, 'all that woman has to give. Name and fame, heart and hand, have I given the lord of all this magnificence, at the altar, and England's Queen could give him no more. He is my husband—I am his wife—Whom God hath joined, man cannot sunder. I will be bold in claiming my right; even the bolder, that I come thus unexpected, and thus forlorn. I know my noble Dudley well! He will be something impatient at my disobeying him, but Amy will weep, and Dudley will forgive her.'

These meditations were interrupted by a cry of surprise from her guide Wayland, who suddenly felt himself grasped firmly round the body by a pair of long thin black arms, belonging to some one who had dropped himself out of an oak-tree upon the croupe of his horse, amidst the shouts of laughter which burst from the sentinels.

'This must be the devil, or Flibbertigibbet again!' said Wayland, after a vain struggle to disengage himself, and unhorse the urchin who clung to him. 'Do Kenilworth oaks bear such acorns?'

'In sooth do they, Master Wayland,' said his unexpected adjunct, 'and many others, too hard for you to crack, for as old as you are, without my teaching you. How would you have passed the pursuivant at the upper gate yonder, had not I warned him our principal juggler was to follow us? and here have I waited for you, having clambered up into the tree from the top of the wain, and I suppose they are all mad for want of me by this time.'

'Nay, then, thou art a limb of the devil in good earnest,' said Wayland. 'I give thee way, good imp, and will walk by thy counsel; only, as thou art powerful, be merciful.'

As he spoke, they approached a strong tower, at the south extremity of the long bridge we have mentioned, which served to protect the outer gateway of the Castle of Kenilworth.

Under such disastrous circumstances, and in such singular company, did the unfortunate Countess of Leicester approach, for the first time, the magnificent abode of her almost princely husband.*

* Note H. Amy Robsart at Kenilworth.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quince. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

WHEN the Countess of Leicester arrived at the outer gate of the Castle of Kenilworth, she found the tower, beneath which its ample portal arch opened, guarded in a singular manner. Upon the battlements were placed gigantic warders, with clubs, battle-axes, and other implements of ancient warfare, designed to represent the soldiers of King Arthur; those primitive Britons, by whom, according to romantic tradition, the castle had been first tenanted, though history carried back its antiquity only to the times of the Heptarchy. Some of these tremendous figures were real men, dressed up with vizards and buskins; others were mere pageants composed of pasteboard and buckram, which, viewed from beneath, and mingled with those that were real, formed a sufficiently striking representation of what was intended. But the gigantic porter who waited at the gate beneath, and actually discharged the duties of warder, owed none of his terrors to fictitious means. He was a man whose huge stature, thewes, sinews, and bulk in proportion, would have enabled him to enact Colbrand, Ascapart, or any other giant of romance, without raising himself nearer to heaven even by the altitude of a chopin.* The legs and knees of this son of Anak were bare, as were his arms from a span below the shoulder; but his feet were defended with sandals, fastened with cross straps of scarlet leather, studded with brazen knobs. A close jerkin of scarlet velvet, looped with gold, with short breeches of the same, covered his body and part of his limbs; and he wore on his shoulders, instead of a cloak, the skin of a black bear. The head of this formidable person was uncovered, except by his shaggy black hair, which descended on either side around features of that huge, lumpish, and heavy cast, which are often annexed to men of very uncommon size, and which, notwithstanding some distinguished exceptions, have created a general prejudice against giants, as being a dull and sullen kind of persons. This tremendous warder was appropriately armed with a heavy club spiked with steel. In fine, he represented excellently one of those giants of popular romance, who figure in every fairy tale, or legend of knight-errantry.

The demeanour of this modern Titan, when Wayland Smith bent his attention to him, had in it something arguing much mental embarrassment and vexation; for sometimes he sat down for an instant on a massive stone bench, which seemed placed for his accommodation beside the gateway, and then ever and anon he started up, scratching his huge head, and striding to and fro on his post, like one under a fit of impatience and anxiety. It was while the porter was pacing before the gate in this agitated manner, that Wayland, modestly, yet as a manner of course (not, however, without some mental misgiving), was about to pass him, and enter the portal arch. The porter, however, stopped his progress, bidding him, in a thundering voice, 'Stand back!' and enforcing his injunction by heaving up his steel-shod mace, and dashing it on the ground before Wayland's horse's nose with such vehemence, that the pavement flashed fire, and the archway rang to the clamour. Wayland, availing himself of Dickie's hints, began to state that he belonged to a band of performers to which his presence was indispensable,—that he had been accidentally detained behind,—and much to the same purpose. But the warden was inexorable, and kept muttering and murmuring something betwixt his teeth, which Wayland could make little of; and addressing betwixt whiles a refusal of admittance, couched in language which was but too intelligible. A specimen of his speech might run thus:—'What, how now, my masters?' (To himself)—'Here's a stir- -here's a coil.'—(Then to Wayland)—'You are a loitering knave, and shall have no entrance'—(Again to himself)—'Here's a throng—here's a thrusting—I shall never get through with it—Here's a—humph—ha.'—(To Wayland)—'Back from the gate, or I'll break the pate of thee'—(Once more to himself)—'Here's a—ne—I shall never get through it.'

'Stand still,' whispered Flibbertigibbet into Wayland's ear, 'I know where the shoe pinches, and will tame him in an instant.'

He dropped down from the horse, and, skipping up to the porter, plucked him by the tail of the bear-skin, so as to induce him to decline his huge head, and whispered something in his ear. Not at the command of the lord of some Eastern talisman did ever Afrite change his horrid frown into a look of smooth submission, more suddenly than the gigantic porter of Kenilworth relaxed the terrors of his looks, at the instant Flibbertigibbet's whisper reached his ears. He flung his club upon the ground, and caught up Dickie Sludge, raising him to such a distance from the earth, as might have proved perilous had he chanced to let him slip.

'It is even so,' he said, with a thundering sound of exultation—'it is even so, my little dandieprat—But who the devil could teach it thee?'

'Do not thou care about that,' said Flibbertigibbet; 'but'——he looked at Wayland and the lady, and then sunk what he had to say in a whisper, which needed not be a loud one, as the giant held him for his convenience close to his ear. The porter then gave Dickie a warm caress, and set him on the ground with the same care which a careful housewife uses in replacing a cracked china cup upon her mantelpiece, calling out at the same time to Wayland and the lady, 'In with you—in with you—and take heed how you come too late another day when I chance to be porter.'

* [The old traveller Coryat, in his amusing work called *Crudities*, 1611, says the chopin 'is a thing so common in Venice, that no woman whatsoever goeth without it, either in her house or abroad; a thing made of wood, and covered with leather of sundry colors, some with white, some redde, some yellow. It is called a Chapiney, which they weare under their shoes. There are many of these Chapineys of a great height, even half a yard high, which maketh many of their women that are very short seeme much taller than the tallest women we have in England.']

'Ay, ay, in with you,' added Flibbertigibbet; 'I must stay a short space with my honest Philistine, my Goliath of Gath here; but I will be with you anon, and at the bottom of all your secrets, were they as deep and dark as the castle dungeon.'

'I do believe thou wouldst,' said Wayland; 'but I trust the secret will be soon out of my keeping, and then I shall care the less whether thou or any one knows it.'

They now crossed the entrance tower, which obtained the name of the Gallery Tower from the following circumstance:—The whole bridge, extending from the entrance to another tower on the opposite side of the lake, called Mortimer's Tower, was so disposed as to make a spacious tilt-yard about one hundred and thirty yards in length, and ten in breadth, strewed with the finest sand, and defended on either side by strong and high palisades. The broad and fair gallery, destined for the ladies who were to witness the feats of chivalry presented on this area, was erected on the northern side of the outer tower, to which it gave name. Our travellers passed slowly along the bridge or tilt-yard, and arrived at Mortimer's Tower, at its farthest extremity, through which the approach led into the outer, or base-court of the castle. Mortimer's Tower bore on its front the scutcheon of the Earl of March, whose daring ambition overthrew the throne of Edward II., and aspired to share his power with the 'She-wolf of France,' to whom the unhappy monarch was wedded. The gate, which opened under this ominous memorial, was guarded by many warders in rich liveries; but they offered no opposition to the entrance of the countess and her guide, who, having passed by licence of the principal porter at the Gallery Tower, were not, it may be supposed, liable to interruption from his deputies. They entered accordingly, in silence, the great outward court of the castle, having then full before them that vast and lordly pile, with all its stately towers, each gate open, as if in sign of unlimited hospitality, and the apartments filled with noble guests of every degree, besides dependents, retainers, domestics of every description, and all the appendages and promoters of mirth and revelry.

Amid this stately and busy scene, Wayland halted his horse, and looked upon the lady, as if waiting her commands what was next to be done, since they had safely reached the place of destination. As she remained silent, Wayland, after waiting a minute or two, ventured to ask her, in direct terms, what were her next commands. She raised her hand to her forehead, as if in the act of collecting her thoughts and resolutions, while she answered him in a low and suppressed voice, like the murmurs of one who speaks in a dream—'Commands? I may indeed claim right to command, but who is there will obey me?'

Then suddenly raising her head, like one who had formed a decisive resolution, she addressed a gaily-dressed domestic, who was crossing the court with importance and bustle in his countenance.—'Stop, sir,' she said, 'I desire to speak with the Earl of Leicester.'

'With whom, an it please you?' said the man, surprised at the demand; and then, looking upon the mean equipage of her who used towards him such a tone of authority, he added, with insolence, 'Why, what Bess of Bedlam is this, would ask to see my lord on such a day as the present?'

'Friend,' said the countess, 'be not insolent—my business with the Earl is most urgent.'

'You must get some one else to do it, were it thrice as urgent,' said the fellow,—'I should summon my lord from the Queen's royal presence to do *your* business, should I?—I were like to be thanked with a horse-whip. I marvel our old porter took not measure of such ware with his club, instead of giving them passage; but his brain is addled with getting his speech by heart.'

Two or three persons stopped, attracted by the fleering way in which the serving-man expressed himself; and Wayland, alarmed both for himself and the lady, hastily addressed himself to one who appeared the most civil, and, thrusting a piece of money into his hand, held a moment's counsel with him, on the subject of finding a place of temporary retreat for the lady. The person to whom he spoke, being one in some authority, rebuked the others for their incivility, and, commanding one fellow to take care of the strangers' horses, he desired them to follow him. The countess retained presence of mind sufficient to see that it was absolutely necessary she should comply with his request; and, leaving the rude lackeys and grooms to crack their brutal jests about light heads, light heels, and so forth, Wayland and she followed in silence the deputy-usher, who undertook to be their conductor.

They entered the inner court of the castle by the great gateway, which extended betwixt the principal keep, or donjon, called Cæsar's Tower, and a stately building which passed by the name of King Henry's Lodging, and were thus placed in the centre of the noble pile, which presented on its different fronts magnificent specimens of every species of castellated architecture, from the Conquest to the reign of Elizabeth, with the appropriate style and ornaments of each.

Across this inner court also they were conducted by their guide to a small but strong tower occupying the north-east angle of the building, adjacent to the great hall, and filling up a space betwixt the immense range of kitchens and the end of the great hall itself. The lower part of this tower was occupied by some of the household officers of Leicester, owing to its convenient vicinity to the places where their duty lay; but in the upper storey, which was reached by a narrow winding stair, was a small octangular chamber, which, in the great demand for lodgings, had been on the present occasion fitted up for the reception of guests, though generally said to have been used as a place of confinement for some unhappy person who had been there murdered. Tradition called this prisoner Mervyn, and transferred his name to the tower. That it had been used as a prison was not improbable; for the floor of each storey was arched, the walls of tremendous thickness, while the space of the chamber did not exceed fifteen feet in diameter. The window, however, was pleasant, though narrow, and commanded a delightful view of what was called the *Pleasance;* a space

of ground enclosed and decorated with arches, trophies, statues, fountains, and other architectural monuments, which formed one access from the castle itself into the garden. There was a bed in the apartment, and other preparations for the reception of a guest, to which the countess paid but slight attention, her notice being instantly arrested by the sight of writing materials placed on the table (not very commonly to be found in the bedrooms of those days), which instantly suggested the idea of writing to Leicester, and remaining private until she had received his answer.

The deputy-usher having introduced them into this commodious apartment, courteously asked Wayland, whose generosity he had experienced, whether he could do anything further for his service. Upon receiving a gentle hint that some refreshment would not be unacceptable, he presently conveyed the smith to the buttery-hatch, where dressed provisions of all sorts were distributed, with hospitable profusion, to all who asked for them. Wayland was readily supplied with some light provisions, such as he thought would best suit the faded appetite of the lady, and did not omit the opportunity of himself making a hasty but hearty meal on more substantial fare. He then returned to the apartment in the turret, where he found the countess, who had finished her letter to Leicester; and, in lieu of a seal and silken thread, had secured it with a braid of her own beautiful tresses, fastened by what is called a true-love knot.

'Good friend,' said she to Wayland, 'whom God hath sent to aid me at my utmost need, I do beseech thee, as the last trouble you shall take for an unfortunate lady, to deliver this letter to the noble Earl of Leicester. Be it received as it may,' she said, with features agitated betwixt hope and fear, 'thou, good fellow, shalt have no more cumber with me. But I hope the best; and if ever lady made a poor man rich, thou hast surely deserved it at my hand, should my happy days ever come round again. Give it, I pray you, into Lord Leicester's own hand, and mark how he looks on receiving it.'

Wayland, on his part, readily undertook the commission, but anxiously prayed the lady, in his turn, to partake of some refreshment; in which he at length prevailed, more through importunity, and her desire to see him begone on his errand, than from any inclination the countess felt to comply with his request. He then left her, advising her to lock her door on the inside, and not to stir from her little apartment—and went to seek an opportunity of discharging her errand, as well as of carrying into effect a purpose of his own, which circumstances had induced him to form.

In fact, from the conduct of the lady during the journey—her long fits of profound silence—the irresolution and uncertainty which seemed to pervade all her movements, and the obvious incapacity of thinking and acting for herself, under which she seemed to labour, Wayland had formed the not improbable opinion, that the difficulties of her situation had in some degree affected her understanding.

When she had escaped from the seclusion of Cumnor Place, and the dangers to which she was there exposed, it would have seemed her most rational course to retire to her father's, or elsewhere, at a distance from the power of those by whom these dangers had been created. When, instead of doing so, she demanded to be conveyed to Kenilworth, Wayland had been only able to account for her conduct, by supposing that she meant to put herself under the tutelage of Tressilian, and to appeal to the protection of the queen. But now, instead of following this natural course, she entrusted him with a letter to Leicester, the patron of Varney, and within whose jurisdiction at least, if not under his express authority, all the evils she had already suffered were inflicted upon her. This seemed an unsafe and even a desperate measure, and Wayland felt anxiety for his own safety, as well as that of the lady, should he execute her commission before he had secured the advice and countenance of a protector. He therefore resolved, before delivering the letter to Leicester, that he would seek out Tressilian, and communicate to him the arrival of the lady at Kenilworth, and thus at once rid himself of all further responsibility, and devolve the task of guiding and protecting this unfortunate lady upon the patron who had at first employed him in her service.

'He will be a better judge than I am,' said Wayland, 'whether she is to be gratified in this humour of appeal to my Lord of Leicester, which seems like an act of insanity; and, therefore, I will turn the matter over on his hands, deliver him the letter, receive what they list to give me by way of guerdon, and then show the Castle of Kenilworth a pair of light heels; for, after the work I have been engaged in, it will be, I fear, neither a safe nor wholesome place of residence; and I would rather shoe colts on the coldest common in England than share in their gayest revels.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

In my time I have seen a boy do wonders.
Robin, the red tinker, had a boy,
Would ha' run through a cat-hole.
THE COXCOMB.

AMID the universal bustle which filled the castle and its environs, it was no easy matter to find out any individual; and Wayland was still less likely to light upon Tressilian, whom he sought so anxiously, because, sensible of the danger of attracting attention, in the circumstances in which he was placed, he dared not make general inquiries among the retainers or domestics of Leicester. He learned, however, by indirect questions, that, in all probability, Tressilian must have been one of a large party of gentlemen in attendance on the Earl of Sussex, who had accompanied their patron that morning to Kenilworth, when Leicester had received them with marks of the most formal respect and distinction. He further learned, that both earls, with their followers, and many other nobles, knights, and gentlemen, had taken horse, and gone towards Warwick several hours since, for the purpose of escorting the queen to Kenilworth.

Her Majesty's arrival, like other great events, was delayed from hour to hour; and it was now announced, by a breathless post, that, her Majesty being detained by her gracious desire to receive the homage of her lieges who had thronged to wait upon her at Warwick, it would be the hour of twilight ere she entered the castle. The intelligence released for a time those who were upon duty, in the immediate expectation of the queen's appearance, and ready to play their part in the solemnities with which it was to be accompanied; and Wayland, seeing several horsemen enter the castle, was not without hopes that Tressilian might be of the number. That he might not lose an opportunity of meeting his patron, in the event of this being the case, Wayland placed himself in the base-court of the castle, near Mortimer's Tower, and watched every one who went or came by the bridge, the extremity of which was protected by that building. Thus stationed, nobody could enter or leave the castle without his observation, and most anxiously did he study the garb and countenance of every horseman, as, passing from under the opposite Gallery Tower, they paced slowly, or curveted, along the tilt-yard, and approached the entrance of the base-court.

But while Wayland gazed thus eagerly to discover him whom he saw not, he was pulled by the sleeve by one by whom he himself would not willingly have been seen.

This was Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, who, like the imp whose name he bore, and whom he had been accoutred in order to resemble, seemed to be ever at the ear of those who thought least of him. Whatever were Wayland's internal feelings, he judged it necessary to express pleasure at their unexpected meeting.

'Ha! is it thou, my minikin—my miller's thumb—my prince of cacodemons—my little mouse?'

'Ay,' said Dickie, 'the mouse which gnawed asunder the toils, just when the lion who was caught in them began to look wonderfully like an ass.'

'Why, thou little hop-the-gutter, thou art as sharp as vinegar this afternoon! But tell me, how didst thou come off with yonder jolter-headed giant, whom I had left thee with?—I was afraid he would have stripped thy clothes, and so swallowed thee, as men peel and eat a roasted chestnut.'

'Had he done so,' replied the boy, 'he would have had more brains in his guts than ever he had in his noddle. But the giant is a courteous monster, and more grateful than many other folk whom I have helped at a pinch, Master Wayland Smith.'

'Beshrew me, Flibbertigibbet,' replied Wayland, 'but thou art sharper than a Sheffield whittle! I would I knew by what charm you muzzled yonder old bear.'

'Ay, that is in your own manner,' answered Dickie; 'you think fine speeches will pass muster instead of good-will. However, as to this honest porter, you must know, that when we presented ourselves at the gate yonder, his brain was overburdened with a speech that had been penned for him, and which proved rather an overmatch for his gigantic faculties. Now this same pithy oration had been indited, like sundry others, by my learned magister, Erasmus Holiday, so I had heard it often enough to remember every line. As soon as I heard him blundering and floundering like a fish upon dry land through the first verse, and perceived him at a stand, I knew where the shoe pinched, and helped him to the next word, when he caught me up in an ecstasy, even as you saw but now. I promised, as the price of your admission, to hide me under his bearish gaberdine, and prompt him in the hour of need. I have just now been getting some food in the castle, and am about to return to him.'

'That's right—that's right, my dear Dickie,' replied Wayland; 'haste thee, for Heaven's sake! else the poor giant will be utterly disconsolate for want of his dwarfish auxiliary—Away with thee, Dickie!'

'Ay, ay!' answered the boy—'Away with Dickie, when we have got what good of him we can.—You will not let me know the story of this lady, then, who is as much sister of thine as I am?'

'Why, what good would it do thee, thou silly elf?' said Wayland.

'O, stand ye on these terms?' said the boy; 'well, I care not greatly about the matter,—only, I never smell out a secret, but I try to be either at the right or the wrong end of it, and so good evening to ye.'

'Nay, but, Dickie,' said Wayland, who knew the boy's restless and intriguing disposition too well not to fear his enmity—'stay, my dear Dickie—part not with old friends so shortly!—thou shalt know all I know of the lady one day.'

'Ay!' said Dickie; 'and that day may prove a nigh one. Fare thee well, Wayland—I will to my large-limbed friend, who, if he have not so sharp a wit as some folk, is at least more grateful for the service which other folk render him. And so again, good evening to ye.'

So saying, he cast a somersault through the gateway, and, lighting on the bridge, ran with the extraordinary agility, which was one of his distinguishing attributes, towards the Gallery Tower, and was out of sight in an instant.

'I would to God I were safe out of this castle again!' prayed Wayland internally; 'for now that this mischievous imp has put his finger in the pie, it cannot but prove a mess fit for the devil's eating. I would to Heaven Master Tressilian would appear!'

Tressilian, whom he was thus anxiously expecting in one direction, had returned to Kenilworth by another access. It was indeed true, as Wayland had conjectured, that, in the earlier part of the day, he had accompanied the earls on their cavalcade towards Warwick, not without hope that he might in that town hear some tidings of his emissary. Being disappointed in this expectation, and observing Varney amongst Leicester's attendants, seeming as if he had some purpose of advancing to and addressing him, he conceived, in the present circumstances, it was wisest to avoid the interview. He therefore left the presence-chamber when the high-sheriff of the county was in the very midst of his dutiful address to her Majesty; and, mounting his horse, rode back to Kenilworth, by a remote and

circuitous road, and entered the castle by a small sally-port in the western wall, at which he was readily admitted, as one of the followers of the Earl of Sussex, towards whom Leicester had commanded the utmost courtesy to be exercised. It was thus that he met not Wayland, who was impatiently watching his arrival, and whom he himself would have been, at least, equally desirous to see.

Having delivered his horse to the charge of his attendant, he walked for a space in the Pleasance and in the garden, rather to indulge in comparative solitude his own reflections, than to admire those singular beauties of nature and art which the magnificence of Leicester had there assembled. The greater part of the persons of condition had left the castle for the present, to form part of the earl's cavalcade; others, who remained behind, were on the battlements, outer walls, and towers, eager to view the splendid spectacle of the royal entry. The garden, therefore, while every other part of the castle resounded with the human voice, was silent, but for the whispering of the leaves, the emulous warbling of the tenants of a large aviary, with their happier companions who remained denizens of the free air, and the plashing of the fountains, which, forced into the air from sculptures of fantastic and grotesque forms, fell down with ceaseless sound into the great basins of Italian marble.

The melancholy thoughts of Tressilian cast a gloomy shade on all the objects with which he was surrounded. He compared the magnificent scenes which he here traversed, with the deep woodland and wild moorland which surrounded Lidcote Hall, and the image of Amy Robsart glided like a phantom through every landscape which his imagination summoned up. Nothing is perhaps more dangerous to the future happiness of men of deep thought and retired habits, than the entertaining an early, long, and unfortunate attachment. It frequently sinks so deep into the mind, that it becomes their dream by night and their vision by day—mixes itself with every source of interest and enjoyment; and when blighted and withered by final disappointment, it seems as if the springs of the heart were dried up along with it. This aching of the heart, this languishing after a shadow which has lost all the gaiety of its colouring, this dwelling on the remembrance of a dream from which we have been long roughly awakened, is the weakness of a gentle and generous heart, and it was that of Tressilian.

He himself at length became sensible of the necessity of forcing other objects upon his mind; and for this purpose he left the Pleasance, in order to mingle with the noisy crowd upon the walls, and view the preparation for the pageants. But as he left the garden, and heard the busy hum mixed with music and laughter, which floated around him, he felt an uncontrollable reluctance to mix with society, whose feelings were in a tone so different from his own, and resolved, instead of doing so, to retire to the chamber assigned him, and employ himself in study until the tolling of the great castle bell should announce the arrival of Elizabeth.

Tressilian crossed accordingly by the passage betwixt the immense range of kitchens and the great hall, and ascended to the third storey of Mervyn's Tower, and, applying himself to the door of the small apartment which had been allotted to him, was surprised to find it was locked. He then recollected that the deputy-chamberlain had given him a master-key, advising him, in the present confused state of the castle, to keep his door as much shut as possible. He applied this key to the lock, the bolt revolved, he entered, and in the same instant saw a female form seated in the apartment, and recognised that form to be Amy Robsart. His first idea was, that a heated imagination had raised the image on which it doted into visible existence; his second, that he beheld an apparition; the third and abiding conviction, that it was Amy herself, paler, indeed, and thinner than in the days of heedless happiness, when she possessed the form and hue of a wood-nymph, with the beauty of a sylph; but still Amy, unequalled in loveliness by aught which had ever visited his eyes.

The astonishment of the countess was scarce less than that of Tressilian, although it was of shorter duration, because she had heard from Wayland that he was in the castle. She had started up on his first entrance, and now stood facing him, the paleness of her cheeks having given way to a deep blush.

'Tressilian,' she said at length, 'why come you here?'

'Nay, why come *you* here, Amy,' returned Tressilian, 'unless it be at length to claim that aid, which, as far as one man's heart and arm can extend, shall instantly be rendered to you?'

She was silent a moment, and then answered in a sorrowful rather than an angry tone,—'I require no aid, Tressilian, and would rather be injured than benefited by any which your kindness can offer me. Believe me, I am near one whom law and love oblige to protect me.'

'The villain, then, hath done you the poor justice which remained in his power,' said Tressilian; 'and I behold before me the wife of Varney?'

'The wife of Varney!' she replied, with all the emphasis of scorn; 'with what base name, sir, does your boldness stigmatize the—the—the'—She hesitated, dropped her tone of scorn, looked down, and was confused and silent, for she recollected what fatal consequences might attend her completing the sentence with 'the Countess of Leicester,' which were the words that had naturally suggested themselves. It would have been a betrayal of the secret, on which her husband had assured her that his fortunes depended, to Tressilian, to Sussex, to the queen, and to the whole assembled court. 'Never,' she thought, 'will I break my promised silence. I will submit to every suspicion rather than that.'

The tears rose to her eyes, as she stood silent before Tressilian; while, looking on her with mingled grief and pity, he said, 'Alas! Amy, your eyes contradict your tongue. That speaks of a protector, willing and able to watch over you; but these tell me you are ruined, and deserted by the wretch to whom you have attached yourself.'

She looked on him with eyes in which anger sparkled through her tears, but only repeated the word 'wretch!' with a scornful emphasis.

'Yes, *wretch!*' said Tressilian; 'for were he aught better, why are you here, and alone in my apartment? why was not fitting provision made for your honourable reception?'

'In your apartment?' repeated Amy; 'in *your* apartment? It shall instantly be relieved of my presence.' She hastened towards the door; but the sad recollection of her deserted state at once pressed on her mind, and, pausing on the threshold, she added, in a tone unutterably pathetic, 'Alas! I had forgot—I know not where to go'——

'I see—I see it all,' said Tressilian, springing to her side, and leading her back to the seat, on which she sunk down—'You *do* need aid—you *do* need protection, though you will not own it; and you shall not need it long. Leaning on my arm, as the representative of your excellent and broken-hearted father, on the very threshold of the castle-gate, you shall meet Elizabeth; and the first deed she shall do in the halls of Kenilworth shall be an act of justice to her sex and her subjects. Strong in my good cause, and in the Queen's justice, the power of her minion shall not shake my resolution. I will instantly seek Sussex.'

'Not for all that is under heaven!' said the countess, much alarmed, and feeling the absolute necessity of obtaining time, at least, for consideration. 'Tressilian, you were wont to be generous—Grant me one request, and believe, if it be your wish to save me from misery and from madness, you will do more by making me the promise I ask of you, than Elizabeth can do for me with all her power.'

'Ask me anything for which you can allege reason,' said Tressilian; 'but demand not of me'——

'O, limit not your boon, dear Edmund!' exclaimed the countess—'you once loved that I should call you so—Limit not your boon to reason! for my case is all madness, and frenzy must guide the counsels which alone can aid me.'

'If you speak thus wildly,' said Tressilian, astonishment again overpowering both his grief and his resolution, 'I must believe you indeed incapable of thinking or acting for yourself.'

'O no!' she exclaimed, sinking on one knee before him, 'I am not mad—I am but a creature unutterably miserable, and, from circumstances the most singular, dragged on to a precipice by the arm of him who thinks he is keeping me from it—even by yours, Tressilian—by yours, whom I have honoured, respected—all but loved—and yet loved, too—loved, too, Tressilian—though not as you wished to be.'

There was an energy—a self-possession—an abandonment in her voice and manner—a total resignation of herself to his generosity, which, together with the kindness of her expressions to himself, moved him deeply. He raised her, and in broken accents entreated her to be comforted.

'I cannot,' she said, 'I will not be comforted, till you grant me my request! I will speak as plainly as I dare—I am now awaiting the commands of one who has a right to issue them—The interference of a third person—of you in especial, Tressilian, will be ruin—utter ruin to me. Wait but four-and-twenty hours, and it may be that the poor Amy may have the means to show that she values, and can reward, your disinterested friendship—that she is happy herself, and has the means to make you so—It is surely worth your patience, for so short a space?'

Tressilian paused, and, weighing in his mind the various probabilities which might render a violent interference on his part more prejudicial than advantageous, both to the happiness and reputation of Amy, considering also that she was within the walls of Kenilworth, and could suffer no injury in a castle honoured with the queen's residence, and filled with her guards and attendants,—he conceived, upon the whole, that he might render her more evil than good service, by intruding upon her his appeal to Elizabeth in her behalf. He expressed his resolution cautiously, however, doubting naturally whether Amy's hopes of extricating herself from her difficulties rested on something stronger than a blinded attachment to Varney, whom he supposed to be her seducer.

'Amy,' he said, while he fixed his sad and expressive eyes on hers, which, in her ecstasy of doubt, terror, and perplexity, she cast up towards him, 'I have ever remarked, that when others called thee girlish and wilful, there lay under that external semblance of youthful and self-willed folly, deep feeling and strong sense. In this I will confide, trusting your own fate in your own hands for the space of twenty-four hours, without my interference by word or act.'

'Do you promise me this, Tressilian?' said the countess. 'Is it possible you can yet repose so much confidence in me? Do you promise, as you are a gentleman and a man of honour, to intrude in my matters, neither by speech nor action, whatever you may see or hear that seems to you to demand your interference?—Will you so far trust me?'

'I will, upon my honour,' said Tressilian; 'but when that space is expired'——

'When that space is expired,' she said, interrupting him, 'you are free to act as your judgment shall determine.'

'Is there nought besides which I can do for you, Amy?' said Tressilian.

'Nothing,' said she, 'save to leave me,—that is, if—I blush to acknowledge my helplessness by asking it—if you can spare me the use of this apartment for the next twenty-four hours.'

'This is most wonderful!' said Tressilian; 'what hope or interest can you have in a castle, where you cannot command even an apartment?'

'Argue not, but leave me,' she said; and added, as he slowly and unwillingly retired, 'Generous Edmund! the time may come, when Amy may show she deserved thy noble attachment.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

What, man, ne'er lack a draught, when the full can
Stands at thine elbow, and craves emptying!—
Nay, fear not me, for I have no delight
To watch men's vices, since I have myself
Of virtue nought to boast of.—I'm a striker,
Would have the world strike with me, pell-mell, all.
PANDÆMONIUM.

TRESSILIAN, in strange agitation of mind, had hardly stepped down the first two or three steps of the winding staircase, when, greatly to his surprise and displeasure, he met Michael Lambourne, wearing an impudent familiarity of visage, for which Tressilian felt much disposed to throw him down-stairs; until he remembered the prejudice which Amy, the only object of his solicitude, was likely to receive from his engaging in any act of violence at that time, and in that place.

He therefore contented himself with looking sternly upon Lambourne, as upon one whom he deemed unworthy of notice, and attempted to pass him in his way down-stairs, without any symptom of recognition. But Lambourne, who, amidst the profusion of that day's hospitality, had not failed to take a deep, though not an overpowering cup of sack, was not in the humour of humbling himself before any man's looks. He stopped Tressilian upon the staircase without the least bashfulness or embarrassment, and addressed him as if he had been on kind and intimate terms:—'What, no grudge between us, I hope, upon old scores, Master Tressilian?—nay, I am one who remembers former kindness rather than latter feud—I'll convince you that I meant honestly and kindly, ay, and comfortably by you.'

'I desire none of your intimacy,' said Tressilian—'keep company with your mates.'

'Now, see how hasty he is!' said Lambourne; 'and how these gentles, that are made questionless out of the porcelain clay of the earth, look down upon poor Michael Lambourne! You would take Master Tressilian now for the most maid-like, modest, simpering squire of dames, that ever made love when candles were long i' the stuff—snuff, call you it?—Why, you would play the saint on us, Master Tressilian, and forget that even now thou hast commodity in thy very bedchamber, to the shame of my lord's castle, ha! ha! ha! Have I touched you, Master Tressilian?'

'I know not what you mean,' said Tressilian, inferring, however, too surely, that this licentious ruffian must have been sensible of Amy's presence in his apartment; 'but if,' he continued, 'thou art varlet of the chambers, and lackest a fee, there is one to leave mine unmolested.'

Lambourne looked at the piece of gold, and put it in his pocket, saying—'Now, I know not but you might have done more with me by a kind word, than by this chiming rogue. But after all he pays well that pays with gold—and Mike Lambourne was never a make-bate, or a spoil-sport, or the like. E'en live and let others live, that is my motto—only, I would not let some folks cock their beaver at me neither, as if they were made of silver ore, and I of Dutch pewter. So if I keep your secret, Master Tressilian, you may look sweet on me at least; and were I to want a little backing or countenance, being caught, as you see the best of us may be, in a sort of peccadillo—why, you owe it me—and so e'en make your chamber serve you and that same bird in bower beside—it's all one to Mike Lambourne.'

'Make way, sir,' said Tressilian, unable to bridle his indignation, 'you have had your fee.'

'Um!' said Lambourne, giving place, however, while he sulkily muttered between his teeth, repeating Tressilian's words—'Make way—and you have had your fee—but it matters not, I will spoil no sport, as I said before; I am no dog in the manger—mind that.'

He spoke louder and louder, as Tressilian, by whom he felt himself overawed, got farther and farther out of hearing.

'I am no dog in the manger—but I will not carry coals neither—mind that, my Master Tressilian; and I will have a peep at this wench, whom you have quartered so commodiously in your old haunted room—afraid of ghosts, belike, and not too willing to sleep alone. If *I* had done this now in a strange lord's castle, the word had been,—The porter's lodge for the knave! and—Have him flogged—trundle him down-stairs like a turnip!—Ay, but your virtuous gentlemen take strange privileges over us, who are downright servants of our senses. Well—I have my Master Tressilian's head under my belt by this lucky discovery, that is one thing certain; and I will try to get a sight of this Lindabrides of his, that is another.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

Now fare thee well, my master—if true service
Be guerdon'd with hard looks, e'en cut the tow-line,
And let our barks across the pathless flood
Hold different courses——
SHIPWRECK.

TRESSILIAN walked into the outer yard of the castle, scarce knowing what to think of his late strange and most unexpected interview with Amy Robsart, and dubious if he had done well, being entrusted with the delegated authority of her father, to pass his word so solemnly to leave her to her own guidance for so many hours. Yet how could he have denied her request,—dependent as she had too probably rendered herself upon Varney? Such was his natural reasoning. The happiness of her future life might depend upon his not driving her to extremities, and since no authority of Tressilian's could extricate her from the power of Varney, supposing he was to acknowledge Amy to be his wife, what title had he to destroy the hope of domestic peace, which might yet remain to her, by setting enmity betwixt them? Tressilian resolved, therefore, scrupulously to observe his word pledged to Amy, both because it had been given, and because, as he still thought, while he considered and reconsidered that extraordinary interview, it could not with justice or propriety have been refused.

In one respect, he had gained much towards

securing effectual protection for this unhappy and still beloved object of his early affection. Amy was no longer mewed up in a distant and solitary retreat, under the charge of persons of doubtful reputation. She was in the Castle of Kenilworth, within the verge of the royal court for the time, free from all risk of violence, and liable to be produced before Elizabeth on the first summons. These were circumstances which could not but assist greatly the efforts which he might have occasion to use in her behalf.

While he was thus balancing the advantages and perils which attended her unexpected presence in Kenilworth, Tressilian was hastily and anxiously accosted by Wayland, who, after ejaculating, 'Thank God, your worship is found at last!' proceeded, with breathless caution, to pour into his ear the intelligence that the lady had escaped from Cumnor Place.

'And is at present in this castle,' said Tressilian; 'I know it, and I have seen her.—Was it by her own choice she found refuge in my apartment?'

'No,' answered Wayland; 'but I could think of no other way of safely bestowing her, and was but too happy to find a deputy-usher who knew where you were quartered;—in jolly society truly, the hall on the one hand and the kitchen on the other!'

'Peace, this is no time for jesting,' answered Tressilian sternly.

'I wot that but too well,' said the artist, 'for I have felt these three days as if I had a halter round my neck. This lady knows not her own mind—she will have none of your aid—commands you not to be named to her—and is about to put herself into the hands of my Lord Leicester. I had never got her safe into your chamber, had she known the owner of it.'

'Is it possible?' said Tressilian. 'But she may have hopes the Earl will exert his influence in her favour over his villanous dependent.'

'I know nothing of that,' said Wayland—'but I believe, if she is to reconcile herself with either Leicester or Varney, the side of the Castle of Kenilworth which will be safest for us will be the outside, from which we can fastest fly away. It is not my purpose to abide an instant after delivery of the letter to Leicester, which waits but your commands to find its way to him. See, here it is—but no—a plague on it—I must have left it in my dog-hole, in the hay-loft yonder, where I am to sleep.'

'Death and fury!' said Tressilian, transported beyond his usual patience; 'thou hast not lost that on which may depend a stake more important than a thousand such lives as thine?'

'Lost it!' answered Wayland readily; 'that were a jest indeed! No, sir, I have it carefully put up with my night-sack, and some matters I have occasion to use—I will fetch it in an instant.'

'Do so,' said Tressilian; 'be faithful, and thou shalt be well rewarded. But if I have reason to suspect thee, a dead dog were in better case than thou!'

Wayland bowed, and took his leave with seeming confidence and alacrity; but, in fact, filled with the utmost dread and confusion. The letter was lost, that was certain, notwithstanding the apology which he had made to appease the impatient displeasure of Tressilian. It was lost—it might fall into wrong hands—it would then, certainly, occasion a discovery of the whole intrigue in which he had been engaged; nor, indeed, did Wayland see much prospect of its remaining concealed, in any event. He felt much hurt, besides, at Tressilian's burst of impatience.

'Nay, if I am to be paid in this coin for services where my neck is concerned, it is time I should look to myself. Here have I offended, for aught I knew, to the death, the lord of this stately castle, whose word were as powerful to take away my life, as the breath which speaks it to blow out a farthing candle. And all this for a mad lady, and a melancholy gallant; who, on the loss of a four-nooked bit of paper, has his hand on his poignado, and swears death and fury!—Then there is the doctor and Varney—I will save myself from the whole mess of them—Life is dearer than gold—I will fly this instant, though I leave my reward behind me.'

These reflections naturally enough occurred to a mind like Wayland's, who found himself engaged far deeper than he had expected in a train of mysterious and unintelligible intrigues, in which the actors seemed hardly to know their own course. And yet, to do him justice, his personal fears were, in some degree, counterbalanced by his compassion for the deserted state of the lady.

'I care not a groat for Master Tressilian,' he said; 'I have done more than bargain by him, and I have brought his errant-damozel within his reach, so that he may look after her himself; but I fear the poor thing is in much danger amongst these stormy spirits. I will to her chamber, and tell her the fate which has befallen her letter, that she may write another if she list. She cannot lack a messenger, I trow, where there are so many lackeys that can carry a letter to their lord. And I will tell her also that I leave the castle, trusting her to God, her own guidance, and Master Tressilian's care and looking after.—Perhaps she may remember the ring she offered me—it was well earned, I trow; but she is a lovely creature, and—marry hang the ring! I will not bear a base spirit for the matter. If I fare ill in this world for my good nature, I shall have better chance in the next.—So now for the lady, and then for the road.'

With the stealthy step and jealous eye of the cat that steals on her prey, Wayland resumed the way to the countess's chamber, sliding along by the side of the courts and passages, alike observant of all around him, and studious himself to escape observation. In this manner he crossed the outward and inward castle-yard, and the great arched passage, which, running betwixt the range of kitchen offices and the hall, led to the bottom of the little winding stair that gave access to the chambers of Mervyn's Tower.

The artist congratulated himself on having escaped the various perils of his journey, and was in the act of ascending by two steps at once, when he observed that the shadow of a man, thrown from a door which stood ajar, darkened the opposite wall of the staircase. Wayland drew back cautiously, went down to the inner court-yard, spent about a quarter of an hour,

which seemed at least quadruple its usual duration, in walking from place to place, and then returned to the tower in hopes to find that the lurker had disappeared. He ascended as high as the suspicious spot—there was no shadow on the wall—he ascended a few yards farther—the door was still ajar, and he was doubtful whether to advance or retreat, when it was suddenly thrown wide open, and Michael Lambourne bolted out upon the astonished Wayland. 'Who the devil art thou? and what seek'st thou in this part of the castle? March into that chamber, and be hanged to thee!'

'I am no dog to go at every man's whistle,' said the artist, affecting a confidence which was belied by a timid shake in his voice.

'Say'st thou me so?—Come hither, Lawrence Staples.'

A huge ill-made and ill-looked fellow, upwards of six feet high, appeared at the door, and Lambourne proceeded: 'If thou be'st so fond of this tower, my friend, thou shalt see its foundations, good twelve feet below the bed of the lake, and tenanted by certain jolly toads, snakes, and so forth, which thou wilt find mighty good company. Therefore once more I ask you, in fair play, who thou art, and what thou seek'st here?'

'If the dungeon-grate once clashes behind me,' thought Wayland, 'I am a gone man.' He therefore answered submissively, 'He was the poor juggler whom his honour had met yesterday in Weatherly Bottom.'

'And what juggling trick art thou playing in this tower? Thy gang,' said Lambourne, 'lie over against Clinton's buildings.'

'I came here to see my sister,' said the juggler, 'who is in Master Tressilian's chamber, just above.'

'Aha!' said Lambourne, smiling, 'here be truths! Upon my honour, for a stranger, this same Master Tressilian makes himself at home among us, and furnishes out his cell handsomely, with all sort of commodities. This will be a precious tale of the sainted Master Tressilian, and will be welcome to some folks, as a purse of broad pieces to me.—Hark ye, fellow,' he continued, addressing Wayland, 'thou shalt not give puss a hint to steal away—we must catch her in her form. So, back with that pitiful sheep-biting visage of thine, or I will fling thee from the window of the tower, and try if your juggling skill can save thy bones.'

'Your worship will not be so hard-hearted, I trust,' said Wayland; 'poor folk must live. I trust your honour will allow me to speak with my sister?'

'Sister on Adam's side, I warrant,' said Lambourne; 'or, if otherwise, the more knave thou. But, sister or no sister, thou diest on point of fox, if thou comest a-prying to this tower once more. And now I think of it—uds daggers and death!—I will see thee out of the castle, for this is a more main concern than thy jugglery.'

'But, please your worship,' said Wayland, 'I am to enact Arion in the pageant upon the lake this very evening.'

'I will act it myself, by Saint Christopher!' said Lambourne—'Orion, call'st thou him?—I will act Orion, his belt, and his seven stars to boot. Come along, for a rascal knave as thou art—follow me!—Or stay—Lawrence, do thou bring him along.'

Lawrence seized by the collar of the cloak the unresisting juggler, while Lambourne, with hasty steps, led the way to that same sallyport, or secret postern, by which Tressilian had returned to the castle, and which opened in the western wall, at no great distance from Mervyn's Tower.

While traversing with a rapid foot the space betwixt the tower and the sallyport, Wayland in vain racked his brain for some device which might avail the poor lady, for whom, notwithstanding his own imminent danger, he felt deep interest. But when he was thrust out of the castle, and informed by Lambourne, with a tremendous oath, that instant death would be the consequence of his again approaching it, he cast up his hands and eyes to heaven, as if to call God to witness he had stood to the uttermost in defence of the oppressed; then turned his back on the proud towers of Kenilworth, and went his way to seek a humbler and safer place of refuge.

Lawrence and Lambourne gazed a little while after Wayland, and then turned to go back to their tower, when the former thus addressed his companion: 'Never credit me, Master Lambourne, if I can guess why thou hast driven this poor caitiff from the castle, just when he was to bear a part in the show that was beginning, and all this about a wench.'

'Ah, Lawrence,' replied Lambourne, 'thou art thinking of Black Joan Jugges of Slingdon, and hast sympathy with human frailty. But couragio, most noble Duke of the Dungeon and Lord of Limbo, for thou art as dark in this matter as thine own dominions of Little-ease. My most reverend Signior of the Low Countries of Kenilworth, know that our most notable master, Richard Varney, would give as much to have a hole in this same Tressilian's coat, as would make us some fifty midnight carousals, with the full leave of bidding the steward go snick up, if he came to startle us too soon from our goblets.'

'Nay, an that be the case, thou hast right,' said Lawrence Staples, the upper warder, or, in common phrase, the first jailor, of Kenilworth Castle, and of the liberty and honour belonging thereto; 'but how will you manage when you are absent at the Queen's entrance, Master Lambourne; for methinks thou must attend thy master there?'

'Why, thou, mine honest prince of prisons, must keep ward in my absence—Let Tressilian enter if he will, but see thou let no one come out. If the damsel herself would make a break, as 'tis not unlike she may, scare her back with rough words—she is but a paltry player's wench after all.'

'Nay, for that matter,' said Lawrence, 'I might shut the iron wicket upon her, that stands without the double door, and so force per force she will be bound to her answer without more trouble.'

'Then Tressilian will not get access to her,' said Lambourne, reflecting a moment. 'But 'tis no matter—she will be detected in his chamber, and that is all one.—But confess, thou old bat's-eyed dungeon-keeper, that you fear to keep awake by yourself in that Mervyn's Tower of thine.'

'Why, as to fear, Master Lambourne,' said the

fellow, 'I mind it not the turning of a key; but strange things have been heard and seen in that tower.—You must have heard, for as short a time as you have been in Kenilworth, that it is haunted by the spirit of Arthur ap Mervyn, a wild chief taken by fierce Lord Mortimer, when he was one of the Lords Marchers of Wales, and murdered, as they say, in that same tower which bears his name?'

'O, I have heard the tale five hundred times,' said Lambourne, 'and how the ghost is always most vociferous when they boil leeks and stir-about, or fry toasted cheese, in the culinary regions. Santo Diavolo, man, hold thy tongue, I know all about it!'

'Ay, but thou dost not, though,' said the turnkey, 'for as wise as thou wouldst make thyself. Ah, it is an awful thing to murder a prisoner in his ward!—You, that may have given a man a stab in a dark street, know nothing of it. To give a mutinous fellow a knock on the head with the keys, and bid him be quiet, that's what I call keeping order in the ward; but to draw weapon and slay him, as was done to this Welsh lord, *that* raises you a ghost that will render your prison-house untenantable by any decent captive for some hundred years. And I have that regard for my prisoners, poor things, that I have put good squires and men of worship, that have taken a ride on the highway, or slandered my Lord of Leicester, or the like, fifty feet under ground, rather than I would put them into that upper chamber yonder that they call Mervyn's Bower. Indeed, by good Saint Peter of the Fetters, I marvel my noble lord, or Master Varney, could think of lodging guests there; and if this Master Tressilian could get any one to keep him company, and in especial a pretty wench, why, truly, I think he was in the right on't.'

'I tell thee,' said Lambourne, leading the way into the turnkey's apartment, 'thou art an ass—Go bolt the wicket on the stair, and trouble not thy noddle about ghosts—Give me the wine-stoup, man; I am somewhat heated with chafing with yonder rascal.'

While Lambourne drew a long draught from a pitcher of claret, which he made use of without any cup, the warder went on vindicating his own belief in the supernatural.

'Thou hast been few hours in this castle, and hast been for the whole space so drunk, Lambourne, that thou art deaf, dumb, and blind. But we should hear less of your bragging, were you to pass a night with us at full moon, for then the ghost is busiest; and more especially when a rattling wind sets in from the north-west, with some sprinkling of rain, and now and then a growl of thunder. Body o' me, what crackings and clashings, what groanings and what howlings, will there be at such times in Mervyn's Bower, right as it were over our heads, till the matter of two quarts of distilled waters has not been enough to keep my lads and me in some heart!'

'Pshaw, man!' replied Lambourne, on whom his last draught, joined to repeated visitations of the pitcher upon former occasions, began to make some innovation, 'thou speak'st thou know'st not what about spirits. No one knows justly what to say about them; and, in short, least said may in that matter be soonest mended. Some men believe in one thing, some in another—it is all matter of fancy. I have known them of all sorts, my dear Lawrence Lock-the-door, and sensible men too. There's a great lord—we'll pass his name, Lawrence—he believes in the stars and the moon, the planets and their courses, and so forth, and that they twinkle exclusively for his benefit; when in sober, or rather in drunken truth, Lawrence, they are only shining to keep honest fellows like me out of the kennel. Well, sir, let his humour pass, he is great enough to indulge it. Then look ye, there is another—a very learned man, I promise you, and can vent Greek and Hebrew as fast as I can thieves'-Latin—he has a humour of sympathies and antipathies—of changing lead into gold, and the like—why, via, let that pass too, and let him pay those in transmigrated coin, who are fools enough to let it be current with them.—Then here comest thou thyself, another great man, though neither learned nor noble, yet full six feet high, and thou, like a purblind mole, must needs believe in ghosts and goblins, and such like.—Now, there is, besides, a great man—that is, a great little man, or a little great man, my dear Lawrence—and his name begins with V, and what believes he? Why, nothing, honest Lawrence—nothing in earth, heaven, or hell; and for my part, if I believe there is a devil, it is only because I think there must be some one to catch our aforesaid friend by the back "when soul and body sever," as the ballad says—for your antecedent will have a consequent—*raro antecedentem*, as Dr. Bircham was wont to say—But this is Greek to you now, honest Lawrence, and in sooth learning is dry work—Hand me the pitcher once more.'

'In faith, if you drink more, Michael,' said the warder, 'you will be in sorry case either to play Arion or to wait on your master on such a solemn night; and I expect each moment to hear the great bell toll for the muster at Mortimer's Tower to receive the Queen.'

While Staples remonstrated, Lambourne drank; and then, setting down the pitcher, which was nearly emptied, with a deep sigh, he said, in an under-tone, which soon rose to a high one as his speech proceeded, 'Never mind, Lawrence—if I be drunk, I know that shall make Varney uphold me sober! But, as I said, never mind, I can carry my drink discreetly. Moreover, I am to go on the water as Orion, and shall take cold unless I take something comfortable beforehand. Not play Orion! Let us see the best roarer that ever strained his lungs for twelve-pence out-mouth me! What if they see me a little disguised?—Wherefore should any man be sober to-night? answer me that—It is matter of loyalty to be merry—and I tell thee, there are those in the castle, who, if they are not merry when drunk, have little chance to be merry when sober—I name no names, Lawrence. But your pottle of sack is a fine shoeing-horn to pull on a loyal humour, and a merry one. Huzza for Queen Elizabeth!—for the noble Leicester!—for the worshipful Master Varney!—and for Michael Lambourne, that can turn them all round his finger!'

So saying, he walked down-stairs, and across the inner court.

The warder looked after him, shook his head, and, while he drew close and locked a wicket, which, crossing the staircase, rendered it impossible for any one to ascend higher than the storey immediately beneath Mervyn's Bower, as Tressilian's chamber was named, he thus soliloquised with himself—'It's a good thing to be a favourite—I well-nigh lost mine office, because one frosty morning Master Varney thought I smelled of aquavitæ; and this fellow can appear before him drunk as a wineskin, and yet meet no rebuke. But then he is a pestilent clever fellow withal, and no one can understand above one-half of what he says.'

CHAPTER XXX.

Now bid the steeple rock—she comes, she comes!—
Speak for us, bells—speak for us, shrill-tongued tuckets.
Stand to thy linstock, gunner; let thy cannon
Play such a peal, as if a paynim foe
Came stretch'd in turban'd ranks to storm the ramparts.
We will have pageants too—but that craves wit,
And I'm a rough-hewn soldier.
THE VIRGIN QUEEN—A TRAGI-COMEDY.

TRESSILIAN, when Wayland had left him, as mentioned in the last chapter, remained uncertain what he ought next to do, when Raleigh and Blount came up to him arm in arm, yet, according to their wont, very eagerly disputing together. Tressilian had no great desire for their society in the present state of his feelings, but there was no possibility of avoiding them; and indeed he felt that, bound by his promise not to approach Amy, or take any step in her behalf, it would be his best course at once to mix with general society, and to exhibit on his brow as little as he could of the anguish and uncertainty which sat heavy at his heart. He therefore made a virtue of necessity, and hailed his comrades with, 'All mirth to you, gentlemen. Whence come ye?'

'From Warwick, to be sure,' said Blount; 'we must needs home to change our habits, like poor players, who are fain to multiply their persons to outward appearance by change of suits; and you had better do the like, Tressilian.'

'Blount is right,' said Raleigh; 'the Queen loves such marks of deference, and notices, as wanting in respect, those who, not arriving in her immediate attendance, may appear in their soiled and ruffled riding-dress. But look at Blount himself, Tressilian, for the love of laughter, and see how his villanous tailor hath apparelled him—in blue, green, and crimson, with carnation ribbons, and yellow roses in his shoes!'

'Why, what wouldst thou have?' said Blount. 'I told the cross-legged thief to do his best, and spare no cost; and methinks these things are gay enough—gayer than thine own—I'll be judged by Tressilian.'

'I agree—I agree,' said Walter Raleigh. 'Judge betwixt us, Tressilian, for the love of Heaven!'

Tressilian, thus appealed to, looked at them both, and was immediately sensible, at a single glance, that honest Blount had taken upon the tailor's warrant the pied garments which he had chosen to make, and was as much embarrassed by the quantity of points and ribbons which garnished his dress, as a clown is in his holiday clothes; while the dress of Raleigh was a well-fancied and rich suit, which the wearer bore as a garb too well adapted to his elegant person to attract particular attention. Tressilian said, therefore, 'That Blount's dress was finest, but Raleigh's the best fancied.'

Blount was satisfied with his decision. 'I knew mine was finest,' he said; 'if that knave Double-stitch had brought me home such a simple doublet as that of Raleigh's, I would have beat his brains out with his own pressing-iron. Nay, if we must be fools, ever let us be fools of the first head, say I.'

'But why gettest thou not on thy braveries, Tressilian?' said Raleigh.

'I am excluded from my apartment by a silly mistake,' said Tressilian, 'and separated for the time from my baggage. I was about to seek thee, to beseech a share of thy lodging.'

'And welcome,' said Raleigh; 'it is a noble one. My Lord of Leicester has done us that kindness, and lodged us in princely fashion. If his courtesy be extorted reluctantly, it is at least extended far. I would advise you to tell your strait to the Earl's chamberlain—you will have instant redress.'

'Nay, it is not worth while, since you can spare me room,' replied Tressilian—'I would not be troublesome.—Has any one come hither with you?'

'O, ay,' said Blount; 'Varney and a whole tribe of Leicesterians, besides about a score of us honest Sussex folk. We are all, it seems, to receive the Queen at what they call the Gallery Tower, and witness some fooleries there; and then we're to remain in attendance upon the Queen in the Great Hall—God bless the mark—while those who are now waiting upon her Grace get rid of their slough, and doff their riding-suits. Heaven help me, if her Grace should speak to me, I shall never know what to answer!'

'And what has detained them so long at Warwick?' said Tressilian, unwilling that their conversation should return to his own affairs.

'Such a succession of fooleries,' said Blount, 'as were never seen at Bartholomew fair. We have had speeches and players, and dogs and bears, and men making monkeys, and women moppets, of themselves—I marvel the Queen could endure it. But ever and anon came in something of "the lovely light of her gracious countenance," or some such trash. Ah! vanity makes a fool of the wisest. But come, let us on to this same Gallery Tower—though I see not what thou, Tressilian, canst do with thy riding-dress and boots.'

'I will take my station behind thee, Blount,' said Tressilian, who saw that his friend's unusual finery had taken a strong hold of his imagination; 'thy goodly size and gay dress will cover my defects.'

'And so thou shalt, Edmund,' said Blount. 'In faith, I am glad thou think'st my garb well-fancied, for all Mr. Wittypate here; for, when one does a foolish thing, it is right to do it handsomely.'

So saying, Blount cocked his beaver, threw

out his leg, and marched manfully forward, as if at the head of his brigade of pikemen, ever and anon looking with complaisance on his crimson stockings, and the huge yellow roses which blossomed on his shoes. Tressilian followed, wrapt in his own sad thoughts, and scarce minding Raleigh, whose quick fancy, amused by the awkward vanity of his respectable friend, vented itself in jests, which he whispered into Tressilian's ear.

In this manner they crossed the long bridge or tilt-yard, and took their station, with other gentlemen of quality, before the outer gate of the Gallery or Entrance Tower. The whole amounted to about forty persons, all selected as of the first rank under that of knighthood, and were disposed in double rows on either side of the gate, like a guard of honour, within the close hedge of pikes and partisans which was formed by Leicester's retainers, wearing his liveries. The gentlemen carried no arms save their swords and daggers. These gallants were as gaily dressed as imagination could devise; and as the garb of the time permitted a great display of expensive magnificence, nought was to be seen but velvet and cloth of gold and silver, ribbons, feathers, gems, and golden chains. In spite of his more serious subjects of distress, Tressilian could not help feeling that he, with his riding-suit, however handsome it might be, made rather an unworthy figure among these 'fierce vanities,' and the rather because he saw that his dishabille was the subject of wonder among his own friends, and of scorn among the partisans of Leicester.

We could not suppress this fact, though it may seem something at variance with the gravity of Tressilian's character; but the truth is, that a regard for personal appearance is a species of self-love from which the wisest are not exempt, and to which the mind clings so instinctively, that not only the soldier advancing to almost inevitable death, but even the doomed criminal who goes to certain execution, shows an anxiety to array his person to the best advantage. But this is a digression.

It was the twilight of a summer night (9th July 1575), the sun having for some time set, and all were in anxious expectation of the queen's immediate approach. The multitude had remained assembled for many hours, and their numbers were still rather on the increase. A profuse distribution of refreshments, together with roasted oxen, and barrels of ale set abroach in different places of the road, had kept the populace in perfect love and loyalty towards the queen and her favourite, which might have somewhat abated had fasting been added to watching. They passed away the time, therefore, with the usual popular amusements of whooping, hallooing, shrieking, and playing rude tricks upon each other, forming the chorus of discordant sounds usual on such occasions. These prevailed all through the crowded roads and fields, and especially beyond the gate of the chase, where the greater number of the common sort were stationed; when, all of a sudden, a single rocket was seen to shoot into the atmosphere, and at the instant, far heard over flood and field, the great bell of the castle tolled.

Immediately there was a pause of dead silence, succeeded by a deep hum of expectation, the united voice of many thousands, none of whom spoke above their breath; or, to use a singular expression, the whisper of an immense multitude.

'They come now for certain,' said Raleigh. 'Tressilian, that sound is grand. We hear it from this distance as mariners, after a long voyage, hear, upon their night watch, the tide rush upon some distant and unknown shore.'

'Mass!' answered Blount, 'I hear it rather as I used to hear mine own kine lowing from the close of Wittens Westlowe.'

'He will assuredly graze presently,' said Raleigh to Tressilian; 'his thought is all of fat oxen and fertile meadows—he grows little better than one of his own beeves, and only becomes grand when he is provoked to pushing and goring.'

'We shall have him at that presently,' said Tressilian, 'if you spare not your wit.'

'Tush, I care not,' answered Raleigh; 'but thou too, Tressilian, hast turned a kind of owl, that flies only by night; hast exchanged thy songs for screechings, and good company for an ivy-tod.'

'But what manner of animal art thou thyself, Raleigh,' said Tressilian, 'that thou holdest us all so lightly?'

'Who, I?' replied Raleigh. 'An eagle am I, that never will think of dull earth while there is a heaven to soar in, and a sun to gaze upon.'

'Well bragged, by Saint Barnaby!' said Blount; 'but, good Master Eagle, beware the cage, and beware the fowler. Many birds have flown as high, that I have seen stuffed with straw, and hung up to scare kites. But hark, what a dead silence hath fallen on them at once!'

'The procession pauses,' said Raleigh, 'at the gate of the chase, where a sibyl, one of the *fatidicæ*, meets the Queen to tell her fortune. I saw the verses; there is little savour in them, and her Grace has been already crammed full with such poetical compliments. She whispered to me during the Recorder's speech yonder, at Ford Mill, as she entered the liberties of Warwick, how she was "*pertæsa barbaræ loquelæ.*"'

'The Queen whispered to *him!*' said Blount, in a kind of soliloquy; 'Good God, to what will this world come!'

His further meditations were interrupted by a shout of applause from the multitude, so tremendously vociferous, that the country echoed for miles round. The guards, thickly stationed upon the road by which the queen was to advance, caught up the acclamation, which ran like wildfire to the castle, and announced to all within that Queen Elizabeth had entered the Royal Chase of Kenilworth. The whole music of the castle sounded at once, and a round of artillery, with a salvo of small arms, was discharged from the battlements; but the noise of drums and trumpets, and even of the cannon themselves, was but faintly heard amidst the roaring and reiterated welcomes of the multitude.

As the noise began to abate, a broad glare of light was seen to appear from the gate of the park, and, broadening and brightening as it

came nearer, advanced along the open and fair avenue that led towards the Gallery Tower; and which, as we have already noticed, was lined on either hand by the retainers of the Earl of Leicester. The word was passed along the line, 'The Queen! The Queen! Silence, and stand fast!' Onward came the cavalcade, illuminated by two hundred thick waxen torches, in the hands of as many horsemen, which cast a light like that of broad day all around the procession, but especially on the principal group, of which the queen herself, arrayed in the most splendid manner, and blazing with jewels, formed the central figure. She was mounted on a milk-white horse, which she reined with peculiar grace and dignity; and in the whole of her stately and noble carriage you saw the daughter of an hundred kings.

The ladies of the court who rode beside her Majesty had taken especial care that their own external appearance should not be more glorious than their rank and the occasion altogether demanded, so that no inferior luminary might appear to approach the orbit of royalty. But their personal charms, and the magnificence by which, under every prudential restraint, they were necessarily distinguished, exhibited them as the very flower of a realm so far famed for splendour and beauty. The magnificence of the courtiers, free from such restraints as prudence imposed on the ladies, was yet more unbounded.

Leicester, who glittered like a golden image with jewels and cloth of gold, rode on her Majesty's right hand, as well in quality of her host as of her master of the horse. The black steed which he mounted had not a single white hair on his body, and was one of the most renowned chargers in Europe, having been purchased by the earl at large expense for this royal occasion. As the noble animal chafed at the slow pace of the procession, and, arching his stately neck, champed on the silver bits which restrained him, the foam flew from his mouth, and speckled his well-formed limbs as if with spots of snow. The rider well became the high place which he held, and the proud steed which he bestrode; for no man in England, or perhaps in Europe, was more perfect than Dudley in horsemanship, and all other exercises belonging to his quality. He was bare-headed, as were all the courtiers in the train; and the red torchlight shone upon his long curled tresses of dark hair, and on his noble features, to the beauty of which even the severest criticism could only object the lordly fault, as it may be termed, of a forehead somewhat too high. On that proud evening, those features wore all the grateful solicitude of a subject, to show himself sensible of the high honour which the queen was conferring on him, and all the pride and satisfaction which became so glorious a moment. Yet, though neither eye nor feature betrayed aught but feelings which suited the occasion, some of the earl's personal attendants remarked that he was unusually pale, and they expressed to each other their fear that he was taking more fatigue than consisted with his health.

Varney followed close behind his master, as the principal esquire in waiting, and had charge of his lordship's black velvet bonnet, garnished with a clasp of diamonds, and surmounted by a white plume. He kept his eye constantly on his master; and, for reasons with which the reader is not unacquainted, was, among Leicester's numerous dependents, the one who was most anxious that his lord's strength and resolution should carry him successfully through a day so agitating. For although Varney was one of the few—the very few moral monsters, who contrive to lull to sleep the remorse of their own bosoms, and are drugged into moral insensibility by atheism, as men in extreme agony are lulled by opium, yet he knew that in the breast of his patron there was already awakened the fire that is never quenched, and that his lord felt, amid all the pomp and magnificence we have described, the gnawing of the worm that dieth not. Still, however, assured as Lord Leicester stood, by Varney's own intelligence, that his countess laboured under an indisposition which formed an unanswerable apology to the queen for her not appearing at Kenilworth, there was little danger, his wily retainer thought, that a man so ambitious would betray himself by giving way to any external weakness.

The train, male and female, who attended immediately upon the queen's person, were of course of the bravest and the fairest—the highest born nobles, and the wisest counsellors, of that distinguished reign, to repeat whose names were but to weary the reader. Behind came a long crowd of knights and gentlemen, whose rank and birth, however distinguished, were thrown into shade, as their persons into the rear of a procession, whose front was of such august majesty.

Thus marshalled, the cavalcade approached the Gallery Tower, which formed, as we have often observed, the extreme barrier of the castle.

It was now the part of the huge porter to step forward; but the lubbard was so overwhelmed with confusion of spirit,—the contents of one immense black jack of double ale which he had just drunk to quicken his memory, having treacherously confused the brain it was intended to clear,—that he only groaned piteously, and remained sitting on his stone seat; and the queen would have passed on without greeting, had not the gigantic warder's secret ally, Flibbertigibbet, who lay perdue behind him, thrust a pin into the rear of the short femoral garment which we elsewhere described.

The porter uttered a sort of yell, which came not amiss into his part, started up with his club, and dealt a sound douse or two on each side of him; and then, like a coach-horse pricked by the spur, started off at once into the full career of his address, and by dint of active prompting on the part of Dickie Sludge, delivered, in sounds of gigantic intonation, a speech which may be thus abridged;—the reader being to suppose that the first lines were addressed to the throng who approached the gateway; the conclusion, at the approach of the queen, upon sight of whom, as struck by some heavenly vision, the gigantic warder dropped his club, resigned his keys, and gave open way to the goddess of the night, and all her magnificent train.

What stir, what turmoil, have we for the nones?
Stand back, my masters, or beware your bones!
Sirs, I'm a warder, and no man of straw,
My voice keeps order, and my club gives law.
Yet soft—nay stay—what vision have we here?
What dainty darling's this?—what peerless peer?
What loveliest face, that loving ranks enfold,
Like brightest diamond chased in purest gold?
Dazzled and blind, mine office I forsake,
My club, my key, my knee, my homage take.
Bright paragon; pass on in joy and bliss;—
Beshrew the gate that opes not wide at such a
sight as this! *

Elizabeth received most graciously the homage of the herculean porter, and, bending her head to him in requital, passed through his guarded tower, from the top of which was poured a clamorous blast of warlike music, which was replied to by other bands of minstrelsy placed at different points on the castle walls, and by others again stationed in the chase; while the tones of the one, as they yet vibrated on the echoes, were caught up and answered by new harmony from different quarters.

Amidst these bursts of music, which, as if the work of enchantment, seemed now close at hand, now softened by distant space, now wailing so low and sweet as if that distance were gradually prolonged until only the last lingering strains could reach the ear, Queen Elizabeth crossed the Gallery Tower, and came upon the long bridge, which extended from thence to Mortimer's Tower, and which was already as light as day, so many torches had been fastened to the palisades on either side. Most of the nobles here alighted, and sent their horses to the neighbouring village of Kenilworth, following the queen on foot, as did the gentlemen who had stood in array to receive her at the Gallery Tower.

On this occasion, as at different times during the evening, Raleigh addressed himself to Tressilian, and was not a little surprised at his vague and unsatisfactory answers; which, joined to his leaving his apartment without any assigned reason, appearing in an undress when it was likely to be offensive to the queen, and some other symptoms of irregularity which he thought he discovered, led him to doubt whether his friend did not labour under some temporary derangement.

Meanwhile, the queen had no sooner stepped on the bridge than a new spectacle was provided; for as soon as the music gave signal that she was so far advanced, a raft, so disposed as to resemble a small floating island, illuminated by a great variety of torches, and surrounded by floating pageants formed to represent sea-horses, on which sat Tritons, Nereids, and other fabulous deities of the seas and rivers, made its appearance upon the lake, and, issuing from behind a small heronry where it had been concealed, floated gently towards the farther end of the bridge.

On the islet appeared a beautiful woman, clad in a watchet-coloured silken mantle, bound with a broad girdle, inscribed with characters like the phylacteries of the Hebrews. Her feet and arms were bare, but her wrists and ankles were adorned with gold bracelets of uncommon size. Amidst her long silky black hair she wore a crown or chaplet of artificial mistletoe, and bore in her hand a rod of ebony tipped with silver. Two nymphs attended on her, dressed in the same antique and mystical guise.

The pageant was so well managed, that this Lady of the Floating Island, having performed her voyage with much picturesque effect, landed at Mortimer's Tower with her two attendants, just as Elizabeth presented herself before that outwork. The stranger then, in a well-penned speech, announced herself as that famous Lady of the Lake, renowned in the stories of King Arthur, who had nursed the youth of the redoubted Sir Lancelot, and whose beauty had proved too powerful both for the wisdom and the spells of the mighty Merlin. Since that early period she had remained possessed of her crystal dominions, she said, despite the various men of fame and might by whom Kenilworth had been successively tenanted. The Saxons, the Danes, the Normans, the Saintlowes, the Clintons, the Mountforts, the Mortimers, the Plantagenets, great though they were in arms and magnificence, had never, she said, caused her to raise her head from the waters which hid her crystal palace. But a greater than all these great names had now appeared, and she came in homage and duty to welcome the peerless Elizabeth to all sport, which the castle and its environs, which lake or land, could afford.

The queen received this address also with great courtesy, and made answer in raillery, 'We thought this lake had belonged to our own dominions, fair dame; but since so famed a lady claims it for hers, we will be glad at some other time to have further communing with you touching our joint interests.'

With this gracious answer the Lady of the Lake vanished, and Arion, who was amongst the maritime deities, appeared upon his dolphin. But Lambourne, who had taken upon him the part in the absence of Wayland, being chilled with remaining immersed in an element to which he was not friendly, having never got his speech by heart, and not having, like the porter, the advantage of a prompter, paid it off with impudence, tearing off his vizard, and swearing, 'Cogs bones! he was none of Arion or Orion either, but honest Mike Lambourne, that had been drinking her Majesty's health from morning till midnight, and was come to bid her heartily welcome to Kenilworth Castle.'

This unpremeditated buffoonery answered the purpose probably better than the set speech would have done. The queen laughed heartily, and swore (in her turn) that he had made the best speech she had heard that day. Lambourne, who instantly saw his jest had saved his bones, jumped on shore, gave his dolphin a kick, and declared he would never meddle with fish again, except at dinner.

At the same time that the queen was about to enter the castle, that memorable discharge of fireworks, by water and land, took place, which Master Laneham, formerly introduced to the reader, has strained all his eloquence to describe,

* This is an imitation of Gascoigne's verses spoken by the herculean porter, as mentioned in the text. The original may be found in the republication of the Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth, by the same author, in the History of Kenilworth. Chiswick, 1821.

'Such,' says the clerk of the council chamber door, 'was the blaze of burning darts, the gleams of stars coruscant, the streams and hail of fiery sparks, lightnings of wildfire, and flight-shot of thunder-bolts, with continuance, terror, and vehemency, that the heavens thundered, the waters surged, and the earth shook; and, for my part, hardy as I am, it made me very vengeably afraid.*

CHAPTER XXXI.

Nay, this is matter for the month of March,
When hares are maddest. Either speak in reason,
Giving cold argument the wall of passion,
Or I break up the court.
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

It is by no means our purpose to detail minutely all the princely festivities of Kenilworth, after the fashion of Master Robert Laneham, whom we quoted in the conclusion of the last chapter. It is sufficient to say that, under discharge of the splendid fireworks, which we have borrowed Laneham's eloquence to describe, the queen entered the base-court of Kenilworth through Mortimer's Tower, and, moving on through pageants of heathen gods and heroes of antiquity, who offered gifts and compliments on the bended knee, at length found her way to the Great Hall of the castle, gorgeously hung for her reception with the richest silken tapestry, misty with perfumes, and sounding to strains of soft and delicious music. From the highly-carved oaken roof hung a superb chandelier of gilt bronze, formed like a spread eagle, whose outstretched wings supported three male and three female figures, grasping a pair of branches in each hand. The hall was thus illuminated by twenty-four torches of wax. At the upper end of the splendid apartment was a state canopy, overshadowing a royal throne, and beside was a door, which opened to a long suite of apartments, decorated with the utmost magnificence for the queen and her ladies, whenever it should be her pleasure to be private.

The Earl of Leicester, having handed the queen up to her throne, and seated her there, knelt down before her, and, kissing the hand which she held out, with an air in which romantic and respectful gallantry was happily mingled with the air of loyal devotion, he thanked her, in terms of the deepest gratitude, for the highest honour which a sovereign could render to a subject. So handsome did he look when kneeling before her, that Elizabeth was tempted to prolong the scene a little longer than there was, strictly speaking, necessity for; and, ere she raised him, she passed her hand over his head, so near as almost to touch his long curled and perfumed hair, and with a movement of fondness that seemed to intimate she would, if she dared, have made the motion a slight caress.†

She at length raised him, and, standing beside the throne, he explained to her the various preparations which had been made for her amusement and accommodation, all of which received her prompt and gracious approbation. The earl then prayed her Majesty for permission, that he himself, and the nobles who had been in attendance upon her during the journey, might retire for a few minutes, and put themselves into a guise more fitting for dutiful attendance, during which space, those gentlemen of worship (pointing to Varney, Blount, Tressilian, and others), who had already put themselves into fresh attire, would have the honour of keeping her presence-chamber.

'Be it so, my lord,' answered the queen; 'you could manage a theatre well, who can thus command a double set of actors. For ourselves, we will receive your courtesies this evening but clownishly, since it is not our purpose to change our riding attire, being in effect something fatigued with a journey which the concourse of our good people hath rendered slow, though the love they have shown our person hath, at the same time, made it delightful.'

Leicester, having received this permission, retired accordingly, and was followed by those nobles who had attended the queen to Kenilworth in person. The gentlemen who had preceded them, and were of course dressed for the solemnity, remained in attendance. But being most of them of rather inferior rank, they remained at an awful distance from the throne which Elizabeth occupied. The queen's sharp eye soon distinguished Raleigh amongst them, with one or two others who were personally known to her, and she instantly made them a sign to approach, and accosted them very graciously. Raleigh in particular, the adventure of whose cloak, as well as the incident of the verses, remained on her mind, was very graciously received; and to him she most frequently applied for information concerning the names and rank of those who were in presence. These he communicated concisely, and not without some traits of humorous satire, by which Elizabeth seemed much amused. 'And who is yonder clownish fellow?' she said, looking at Tressilian, whose soiled dress on this occasion greatly obscured his good mien.

'A poet, if it please your Grace,' replied Raleigh.

'I might have guessed that from his careless garb,' said Elizabeth. 'I have known some poets so thoughtless as to throw their cloaks into gutters.'

'It must have been when the sun dazzled both their eyes and their judgment,' answered Raleigh.

Elizabeth smiled and proceeded, 'I asked that slovenly fellow's name, and you only told me his profession.'

'Tressilian is his name,' said Raleigh, with internal reluctance, for he saw nothing favourable

* Note I. Entertainments at Kenilworth.

† To justify what may be considered as a high-coloured picture, the Author quotes the original of the courtly and shrewd Sir James Melville, being then Queen Mary's envoy at the court of London.

'I was required,' says Sir James, 'to stay till I had seen him made Earl of Leicester, and Baron of Denbigh, with great solemnity at Westminster; herself (Elizabeth) helping to put on his ceremonial, he sitting on his knees before her, keeping a great gravity and a discreet behaviour; but she could not refrain from putting her hand to his neck to kittle (*i.e.* tickle) him, smilingly, the French Ambassador and I standing beside her.'—MELVILLE'S *Memoirs, Bannatyne Edition*, p. 119.

to his friend from the manner in which she took notice of him.

'Tressilian!' answered Elizabeth. 'O, the Menelaus of our romance! Why, he has dressed himself in a guise that will go far to exculpate his fair and false Helen. And where is Farnham, or whatever his name is—my Lord of Leicester's man, I mean—the Paris of this Devonshire tale?'

With still greater reluctance Raleigh named and pointed out to her Varney, for whom the tailor had done all that art could perform in making his exterior agreeable; and who, if he had not grace, had a sort of tact and habitual knowledge of breeding, which came in place of it.

The queen turned her eyes from the one to the other—'I doubt,' she said, 'this same poetical Master Tressilian, who is too learned, I warrant me, to remember whose presence he was to appear in, may be one of those of whom Geoffrey Chaucer says wittily, the wisest clerks are not the wisest men. I remember that Varney is a smooth-tongued varlet. I doubt this fair runaway hath had reasons for breaking her faith.'

To this Raleigh durst make no answer, aware how little he should benefit Tressilian by contradicting the queen's sentiments, and not at all certain, on the whole, whether the best thing that could befall him would not be that she should put an end at once by her authority to this affair, upon which it seemed to him Tressilian's thoughts were fixed with unavailing and distressing pertinacity. As these reflections passed through his active brain, the lower door of the hall opened, and Leicester, accompanied by several of his kinsmen, and of the nobles who had embraced his faction, re-entered the castle hall.

The favourite earl was now apparelled all in white, his shoes being of white velvet; his under-stocks (or stockings) of knit silk; his upper stocks of white velvet, lined with cloth of silver, which was shown at the slashed part of the middle thigh; his doublet of cloth of silver, the close jerkin of white velvet, embroidered with silver and seed-pearl, his girdle and the scabbard of his sword of white velvet with golden buckles; his poniard and sword hilted and mounted with gold; and over all a rich loose robe of white satin, with a border of golden embroidery a foot in breadth. The collar of the Garter, and the azure Garter itself around his knee, completed the appointments of the Earl of Leicester; which were so well matched by his fair stature, graceful gesture, fine proportion of body, and handsome countenance, that at that moment he was admitted by all who saw him, as the goodliest person whom they had ever looked upon. Sussex and the other nobles were also richly attired, but in point of splendour and gracefulness of mien, Leicester far exceeded them all.

Elizabeth received him with great complacency. 'We have one piece of royal justice,' she said, 'to attend to. It is a piece of justice, too, which interests us as a woman, as well in the character of mother and guardian of the English people.'

An involuntary shudder came over Leicester, as he bowed low, expressive of his readiness to receive her royal commands; and a similar cold fit came over Varney, whose eyes (seldom during that evening removed from his patron) instantly perceived, from the change in his looks, slight as that was, of what the queen was speaking. But Leicester had wrought his resolution up to the point which, in his crooked policy, he judged necessary; and when Elizabeth added—'It is of the matter of Varney and Tressilian we speak—is the lady here, my lord?' his answer was ready; —'Gracious madam, she is not.'

Elizabeth bent her brows and compressed her lips. 'Our orders were strict and positive, my lord,' was her answer.

'And should have been obeyed, good my liege,' replied Leicester, 'had they been expressed in the form of the lightest wish. But—Varney, step forward—this gentleman will inform your Grace of the cause why the lady' (he could not force his rebellious tongue to utter the words—*his wife*) 'cannot attend on your royal presence.'

Varney advanced, and pleaded with readiness, what indeed he firmly believed, the absolute incapacity of the party (for neither did he dare, in Leicester's presence, term her his wife) to wait on her Grace.

'Here,' said he, 'are attestations from a most learned physician, whose skill and honour are well known to my good Lord of Leicester; and from an honest and devout Protestant, a man of credit and substance, one Anthony Foster, the gentleman in whose house she is at present bestowed, that she now labours under an illness which altogether unfits her for such a journey as betwixt this castle and the neighbourhood of Oxford.'

'This alters the matter,' said the queen, taking the certificates in her hand, and glancing at their contents—'Let Tressilian come forward.—Master Tressilian, we have much sympathy for your situation, the rather that you seem to have set your heart deeply on this Amy Robsart, or Varney. Our power, thanks to God, and the willing obedience of a loving people, is worth much, but there are some things which it cannot compass. We cannot, for example, command the affections of a giddy young girl, or make her love sense and learning better than a courtier's fine doublet; and we cannot control sickness, with which it seems this lady is afflicted, who may not, by reason of such infirmity, attend our court here, as we had required her to do. Here are the testimonials of the physician who hath her under his charge, and the gentleman in whose house she resides, so setting forth.'

'Under your Majesty's favour,' said Tressilian hastily, and, in his alarm for the consequence of the imposition practised on the queen, forgetting, in part at least, his own promise to Amy, 'these certificates speak not the truth.'

'How, sir!' said the queen—'Impeach my Lord of Leicester's veracity! But you shall have a fair hearing. In our presence the meanest of our subjects shall be heard against the proudest, and the least known against the most favoured; therefore you shall be heard fairly, but beware you speak not without a warrant! Take these certificates in your own hand; look at them carefully, and say manfully, if you impugn the truth of them, and upon what evidence.'

As the queen spoke, his promise and all its consequences rushed on the mind of the unfortunate Tressilian, and while it controlled his natural inclination to pronounce that a falsehood

which he knew from the evidence of his senses to be untrue, gave an indecision and irresolution to his appearance and utterance, which made strongly against him in the mind of Elizabeth, as well as of all who beheld him. He turned the papers over and over, as if he had been an idiot, incapable of comprehending their contents. The queen's impatience began to become visible.—'You are a scholar, sir,' she said, 'and of some note, as I have heard; yet you seem wondrous slow in reading text hand. How say you, are these certificates true or no?'

'Madam,' said Tressilian, with obvious embarrassment and hesitation, anxious to avoid admitting evidence which he might afterwards have reason to confute, yet equally desirous to keep his word to Amy, and to give her, as he had promised, space to plead her own cause in her own way—'Madam—Madam, your Grace calls on me to admit evidence which ought to be proved valid by those who found their defence upon them.'

'Why, Tressilian, thou art critical as well as poetical,' said the queen, bending on him a brow of displeasure; 'methinks these writings, being produced in the presence of the noble earl to whom this castle pertains, and his honour being appealed to as the guarantee of their authenticity, might be evidence enough for thee. But since thou lists to be so formal—Varney, or rather my Lord of Leicester, for the affair becomes yours' (these words, though spoken at random, thrilled through the earl's marrow and bones), 'what evidence have you as touching these certificates?'

Varney hastened to reply, preventing Leicester, —'So please your Majesty, my young Lord of Oxford, who is here in presence, knows Master Anthony Foster's hand and his character.'

The Earl of Oxford, a young unthrift, whom Foster had more than once accommodated with loans on usurious interest, acknowledged, on this appeal, that he knew him as a wealthy and independent franklin, supposed to be worth much money, and verified the certificate produced to be his handwriting.

'And who speaks to the doctor's certificate?' said the Queen. 'Alasco, methinks, is his name.'

Masters, her Majesty's physician (not the less willingly that he remembered his repulse from Saye's Court, and thought that his present testimony might gratify Leicester, and mortify the Earl of Sussex and his faction), acknowledged he had more than once consulted with Doctor Alasco, and spoke of him as a man of extraordinary learning and hidden acquirements, though not altogether in the regular course of practice. The Earl of Huntingdon, Lord Leicester's brother-in-law, and the old Countess of Rutland, next sang his praises, and both remembered the thin, beautiful Italian hand in which he was wont to write his recipes, and which corresponded to the certificate produced as his.

'And now, I trust, Master Tressilian, this matter is ended,' said the queen. 'We will do something ere the night is older to reconcile old Sir Hugh Robsart to the match. You have done your duty something more than boldly; but we were no woman had we not compassion for the wounds which true love deals; so we forgive your audacity, and your uncleansed boots withal, which have well-nigh overpowered my Lord of Leicester's perfumes.'

So spoke Elizabeth, whose nicety of scent was one of the characteristics of her organization, as appeared long afterwards, when she expelled Essex from her presence, on a charge against his boots similar to that which she now expressed against those of Tressilian.

But Tressilian had by this time collected himself, astonished as he had at first been by the audacity of the falsehood so feasibly supported, and placed in array against the evidence of his own eyes. He rushed forward, kneeled down, and caught the queen by the skirt of the robe. 'As you are Christian woman,' he said, 'madam, as you are crowned queen, to do equal justice among your subjects—as you hope yourself to have fair hearing (which God grant you) at that last bar at which we must all plead, grant me one small request! Decide not this matter so hastily. Give me but twenty-four hours' interval, and I will, at the end of that brief space, produce evidence which will show to demonstration that these certificates, which state this unhappy lady to be now ill at ease in Oxfordshire, are false as hell!'

'Let go my train, sir!' said Elizabeth, who was startled at his vehemence, though she had too much of the lion in her to fear; 'the fellow must be distraught—that witty knave, my godson Harrington, must have him into his rhymes of Orlando Furioso!—And yet, by this light, there is something strange in the vehemence of his demand.—Speak, Tressilian; what wilt thou do if, at the end of these four-and-twenty hours, thou canst not confute a fact so solemnly proved as this lady's illness?'

'I will lay down my head on the block,' answered Tressilian.

'Pshaw!' replied the queen. 'God's light! thou speak'st like a fool. What head falls in England but by just sentence of English law?—I ask thee, man—if thou hast sense to understand me—wilt thou, if thou shalt fail in this improbable attempt of thine, render me a good and sufficient reason why thou dost undertake it?'

Tressilian paused, and again hesitated; because he felt convinced that if, within the interval demanded, Amy should become reconciled to her husband, he would in that case do her the worst offices by again ripping up the whole circumstances before Elizabeth, and showing how that wise and jealous princess had been imposed upon by false testimonials. The consciousness of this dilemma renewed his extreme embarrassment of look, voice, and manner; he hesitated, looked down, and on the queen repeating her question with a stern voice and flashing eye, he admitted with faltering words, 'That it might be—he could not positively—that is, in certain events—explain the reasons and grounds on which he acted.'

'Now, by the soul of King Henry,' said the queen, 'this is either moonstruck madness, or very knavery!—Seest thou, Raleigh, thy friend is far too Pindaric for this presence. Have him away, and make us quit of him, or it shall be the worse for him; for his flights are too unbridled for any place but Parnassus, or Saint

Luke's Hospital. But come back instantly thyself, when he is placed under fitting restraint.—We wish we had seen the beauty which could make such havoc in a wise man's brain.'

Tressilian was again endeavouring to address the queen, when Raleigh, in obedience to the orders he had received, interfered, and, with Blount's assistance, half led, half forced him out of the presence-chamber, where he himself indeed began to think his appearance did his cause more harm than good.

When they had attained the antechamber, Raleigh entreated Blount to see Tressilian safely conducted into the apartments allotted to the Earl of Sussex's followers, and, if necessary, recommended that a guard should be mounted on him.

'This extravagant passion,' he said, 'and, as it would seem, the news of the lady's illness, has utterly wrecked his excellent judgment. But it will pass away if he be kept quiet. Only let him break forth again at no rate; for he is already fal in her Highness's displeasure, and should she be again provoked, she will find for him a worse place of confinement, and sterner keepers.'

'I judged as much as that he was mad,' said Nicholas Blount, looking down upon his own crimson stockings and yellow roses, 'whenever I saw him wearing yonder damned boots, which stunk so in her nostrils.—I will but see him stowed, and be back with you presently.—But, Walter, did the Queen ask who I was?—methought she glanced an eye at me.'

'Twenty—twenty eye-glances she sent, and I told her all how thou wert a brave soldier, and a ——But for God's sake get off Tressilian!'

'I will—I will,' said Blount; 'but methinks this court-haunting is no such bad pastime, after all. We shall rise by it, Walter, my brave lad. Thou saidst I was a good soldier, and a—What besides, dearest Walter?'

'An all unutterable—codshead.—For God's sake, begone!'

Tressilian, without further resistance or expostulation, followed, or rather suffered himself to be conducted by Blount to Raleigh's lodging, where he was formally installed into a small truckle-bed, placed in a wardrobe, and designed for a domestic. He saw but too plainly that no remonstrances would avail to procure the help or sympathy of his friends, until the lapse of the time for which he had pledged himself to remain inactive should enable him either to explain the whole circumstances to them, or remove from him every pretext or desire of further interference with the fortunes of Amy, by her having found means to place herself in a state of reconciliation with her husband.

With great difficulty, and only by the most patient and mild remonstrances with Blount, he escaped the disgrace and mortification of having two of Sussex's stoutest yeomen quartered in his apartment. At last, however, when Nicholas had seen him fairly deposited in his truckle-bed, and had bestowed one or two hearty kicks, and as hearty curses, on the boots, which, in his lately acquired spirit of foppery, he considered as a strong symptom, if not the cause, of his friend's malady, he contented himself with the modified measure of locking the door on the unfortunate Tressilian; whose gallant and disinterested efforts to save a female who had treated him with ingratitude, thus terminated for the present, in the displeasure of his sovereign, and the conviction of his friends that he was little better than a madman.

CHAPTER XXXII.

> The wisest sovereigns err like private men,
> And royal hand has sometimes laid the sword
> Of chivalry upon a worthless shoulder,
> Which better had been branded by the hangman.
> What then?—Kings do their best—and they and we
> Must answer for the intent, and not the event.
>
> OLD PLAY.

'It is a melancholy matter,' said the queen, when Tressilian was withdrawn, 'to see a wise and learned man's wit thus pitifully unsettled. Yet this public display of his imperfection of brain plainly shows us that his supposed injury and accusation were fruitless; and therefore, my Lord of Leicester, we remember your suit formerly made to us in behalf of your faithful servant Varney, whose good gifts and fidelity, as they are useful to you, ought to have due reward from us, knowing well that your lordship, and all you have, are so earnestly devoted to our service. And we render Varney the honour more especially that we are a guest, and we fear a chargeable and troublesome one, under your lordship's roof; and also for the satisfaction of the good old knight of Devon, Sir Hugh Robsart, whose daughter he hath married; and we trust the especial mark of grace which we are about to confer may reconcile him to his son-in-law.—Your sword, my Lord of Leicester.'

The earl unbuckled his sword, and, taking it by the point, presented on bended knee the hilt to Elizabeth.

She took it slowly, drew it from the scabbard, and, while the ladies who stood around turned away their eyes with real or affected shuddering, she noted with a curious eye the high polish and rich damasked ornaments upon the glittering blade.

'Had I been a man,' she said, 'methinks none of my ancestors would have loved a good sword better. As it is with me, I like to look on one, and could, like the fairy of whom I have read in some Italian rhymes—were my godson Harrington here he could tell me the passage *—even trim my hair and arrange my head-gear in such a steel mirror as this is.—Richard Varney, come forth, and kneel down. In the name of God and Saint George, we dub thee knight! Be Faithful, Brave, and Fortunate.—Arise, Sir Richard Varney.'

Varney arose and retired, making a deep obeisance to the sovereign who had done him so much honour.

'The buckling of the spur, and what other rites remain,' said the queen, 'may be finished to-morrow in the chapel; for we intend Sir Richard Varney a companion in his honours.

* Note J. Italian Rhymes.

And as we must not be partial in conferring such distinction, we mean on this matter to confer with our cousin of Sussex.'

That noble earl, who, since his arrival at Kenilworth, and indeed since the commencement of this progress, had found himself in a subordinate situation to Leicester, was now wearing a heavy cloud on his brow—a circumstance which had not escaped the queen, who hoped to appease his discontent, and to follow out her system of balancing policy by a mark of peculiar favour, the more gratifying as it was tendered at a moment when his rival's triumph appeared to be complete.

At the summons of Queen Elizabeth, Sussex hastily approached her person; and, being asked on which of his followers, being a gentleman and of merit, he would wish the honour of knighthood to be conferred, he answered, with more sincerity than policy, that he would have ventured to speak for Tressilian, to whom he conceived he owed his own life, and who was a distinguished soldier and scholar, besides a man of unstained lineage, 'only,' he said, 'he feared the events of that night'—— And then he stopped.

'I am glad your lordship is thus considerate,' said Elizabeth; 'the events of this night would make us, in the eyes of our subjects, as mad as this poor brain-sick gentleman himself—for we ascribe his conduct to no malice—should we choose this moment to do him grace.'

'In that case,' said the Earl of Sussex, somewhat discountenanced, 'your Majesty will allow me to name my master of the horse, Master Nicholas Blount, a gentleman of fair estate and ancient name, who has served your Majesty both in Scotland and Ireland, and brought away bloody marks on his person, all honourably taken and requited.'

The queen could not help shrugging her shoulders slightly even at this second suggestion; and the Duchess of Rutland, who read in the queen's manner that she had expected Sussex would have named Raleigh, and thus would have enabled her to gratify her own wish while she honoured his recommendation, only waited the queen's assent to what he had proposed, and then said, that she hoped, since these two high nobles had been each permitted to suggest a candidate for the honours of chivalry, she, in behalf of the ladies in presence, might have a similar indulgence.

'I were no woman to refuse you such a boon,' said the queen, smiling.

'Then,' pursued the duchess, 'in the name of these fair ladies present, I request your Majesty to confer the rank of knighthood on Walter Raleigh, whose birth, deeds of arms, and promptitude to serve our sex with sword or pen, deserve such distinction from us all.'

'Gramercy, fair ladies,' said Elizabeth, smiling, 'your boon is granted, and the gentle Squire Lack-Cloak shall become the good Knight Lack-Cloak, at your desire. Let the two aspirants for the honour of chivalry step forward.'

Blount was not as yet returned from seeing Tressilian, as he conceived, safely disposed of; but Raleigh came forth, and, kneeling down, received at the hand of the Virgin Queen that title of honour, which was never conferred on a more distinguished or more illustrious object.

Shortly afterwards, Nicholas Blount entered, and, hastily apprised by Sussex, who met him at the door of the hall, of the queen's gracious purpose regarding him, he was desired to advance towards the throne. It is a sight sometimes seen, and it is both ludicrous and pitiable, when an honest man of plain common sense is surprised by the coquetry of a pretty woman, or any other cause, into those frivolous fopperies which only sit well upon the youthful, the gay, and those to whom long practice has rendered them a second nature. Poor Blount was in this situation. His head was already giddy from a consciousness of unusual finery, and the supposed necessity of suiting his manners to the gaiety of his dress; and now this sudden view of promotion altogether completed the conquest of the newly-inhaled spirit of foppery over his natural disposition, and converted a plain, honest, awkward man into a coxcomb of a new and most ridiculous kind.

The knight-expectant advanced up the hall, the whole length of which he had unfortunately to traverse, turning out his toes with so much zeal, that he presented his leg at every step with its broad side foremost, so that he greatly resembled an old-fashioned table-knife with a curved point, when seen sideways. The rest of his gait was in proportion to this unhappy amble; and the implied mixture of bashful fear and self-satisfaction was so unutterably ridiculous, that Leicester's friends did not suppress a titter, in which many of Sussex's partisans were unable to resist joining, though ready to eat their nails with mortification. Sussex himself lost all patience, and could not forbear whispering into the ear of his friend, 'Curse thee! canst thou not walk like a man and a soldier?' an interjection which only made honest Blount start and stop, until a glance at his yellow roses and crimson stockings restored his self-confidence, when on he went at the same pace as before.

The queen conferred on poor Blount the honour of knighthood with a marked sense of reluctance. That wise princess was fully aware of the propriety of using great circumspection and economy in bestowing those titles of honour, which the Stuarts, who succeeded to her throne, distributed with an imprudent liberality, which greatly diminished their value. Blount had no sooner arisen and retired than she turned to the Duchess of Rutland, 'Our woman wit,' she said, 'dear Rutland, is sharper than that of those proud things in doublet and hose. Seest thou, out of these three knights, thine is the only true metal to stamp chivalry's imprint upon!'

'Sir Richard Varney, surely—the friend of my Lord of Leicester—surely *he* has merit?' replied the duchess.

'Varney has a sly countenance, and a smooth tongue,' replied the queen. 'I fear me he will prove a knave—but the promise was of ancient standing. My Lord of Sussex must have lost his own wits, I think, to recommend to us first a madman like Tressilian, and then a clownish fool like this other fellow. I protest, Rutland, that while he sat on his knees before me, mopping and mowing, as if he had scalding porridge

in his mouth, I had much ado to forbear cutting him over the pate, instead of striking his shoulder.'

'Your Majesty gave him a smart *accolade*,' said the duchess; 'we who stood behind heard the blade clatter on his collar-bone, and the poor man fidgeted too as if he felt it.'

'I could not help it, wench,' said the queen, laughing, 'but we will have this same Sir Nicholas sent to Ireland or Scotland, or somewhere, to rid our court of so antic a chevalier; he may be a good soldier in the field, though a preposterous ass in a banqueting-hall.'

The discourse became then more general, and soon after there was a summons to the banquet.

In order to obey this signal, the company were under the necessity of crossing the inner court of the castle, that they might reach the new buildings, containing the large banqueting-room, in which preparations for supper were made upon a scale of profuse magnificence, corresponding to the occasion.

The livery cupboards were loaded with plate of the richest description, and the most varied; some articles tasteful, some perhaps grotesque, in the invention and decoration, but all gorgeously magnificent, both from the richness of the work and value of the materials. Thus the chief table was adorned by a salt ship-fashion, made of mother-of-pearl, garnished with silver and divers warlike ensigns and other ornaments, anchors, sails, and sixteen pieces of ordnance. It bore a figure of Fortune, placed on a globe, with a flag in her hand. Another salt was fashioned of silver, in form of a swan in full sail. That chivalry might not be omitted amid this splendour, a silver Saint George was presented, mounted and equipped in the usual fashion in which he bestrides the dragon. The figures were moulded to be in some sort useful. The horse's tail was managed to hold a case of knives, while the breast of the dragon presented a similar accommodation for oyster knives.

In the course of the passage from the hall of reception to the banqueting-room, and especially in the court-yard, the new-made knights were assailed by the heralds, pursuivants, minstrels, etc., with the usual cry of *Largesse, largesse, chevaliers très hardis!* an ancient invocation, intended to awaken the bounty of the acolytes of chivalry towards those whose business it was to register their armorial bearings, and celebrate the deeds by which they were illustrated. The call was of course liberally and courteously answered by those to whom it was addressed. Varney gave his largesse with an affectation of complaisance and humility. Raleigh bestowed his with the graceful ease peculiar to one who has attained his own place, and is familiar with its dignity. Honest Blount gave what his tailor had left him of his half-year's rent, dropping some pieces in his hurry, then stooping down to look for them, and then distributing them amongst the various claimants, with the anxious face and mien of the parish beadle dividing a dole among paupers.

These donations were accepted with the usual clamour and *vivats* of applause common on such occasions; but as the parties gratified were chiefly dependents of Lord Leicester, it was Varney whose name was repeated with the loudest acclamations. Lambourne, especially, distinguished himself by his vociferations of 'Long life to Sir Richard Varney!—Health and honour to Sir Richard!—Never was a more worthy knight dubbed!'—then, suddenly sinking his voice, he added,—'since the valiant Sir Pandarus of Troy,'—a winding-up of his clamorous applause, which set all men a-laughing who were within hearing of it.

It is unnecessary to say anything further of the festivities of the evening, which were so brilliant in themselves, and received with such obvious and willing satisfaction by the queen, that Leicester retired to his own apartment, with all the giddy raptures of successful ambition. Varney, who had changed his splendid attire, and now waited on his patron in a very modest and plain undress, attended to do the honours of the earl's *coucher*.

'How, Sir Richard!' said Leicester, smiling, 'your new rank scarce suits the humility of this attendance.'

'I would disown that rank, my lord,' said Varney, 'could I think it was to remove me to a distance from your lordship's person.'

'Thou art a grateful fellow,' said Leicester; 'but I must not allow you to do what would abate you in the opinion of others.'

While thus speaking, he still accepted, without hesitation, the offices about his person, which the new-made knight seemed to render as eagerly as if he had really felt, in discharging the task, that pleasure which his words expressed.

'I am not afraid of men's misconstruction,' he said, in answer to Leicester's remark, 'since there is not—(permit me to undo the collar)—a man within the castle, who does not expect very soon to see persons of a rank far superior to that which, by your goodness, I now hold, rendering the duties of the bed-chamber to you, and accounting it an honour.'

'It might, indeed, so have been,' said the earl, with an involuntary sigh; and then presently added, 'My gown, Varney—I will look out on the night. Is not the moon near to the full?'

'I think so, my lord, according to the calendar,' answered Varney.

There was an abutting window, which opened on a small projecting balcony of stone, battlemented as is usual in Gothic castles. The earl undid the lattice, and stepped out into the open air. The station he had chosen commanded an extensive view of the lake and woodlands beyond, where the bright moonlight rested on the clear blue waters and the distant masses of oak and elm trees. The moon rode high in the heavens, attended by thousands and thousands of inferior luminaries. All seemed already to be hushed in the nether world, excepting occasionally the voice of the watch (for the Yeomen of the Guard performed that duty wherever the queen was present in person), and the distant baying of the hounds, disturbed by the preparations amongst the grooms and prickers for a magnificent hunt, which was to be the amusement of the next day.

Leicester looked out on the blue arch of heaven, with gestures and a countenance expressive of anxious exultation, while Varney, who remained

within the darkened apartment, could (himself unnoticed), with a secret satisfaction, see his patron stretch his hands with earnest gesticulation towards the heavenly bodies.

'Ye distant orbs of living fire,' so ran the muttered invocation of the ambitious earl, 'ye are silent while you wheel your mystic rounds, but wisdom has given to you a voice. Tell me, then, to what end is my high course destined? Shall the greatness to which I have aspired be bright, pre-eminent, and stable as your own; or am I but doomed to draw a brief and glittering train along the nightly darkness, and then to sink down to earth, like the base refuse of those artificial fires with which men emulate your rays?'

He looked on the heavens in profound silence for a minute or two longer, and then again stepped into the apartment, where Varney seemed to have been engaged in putting the earl's jewels into a casket.

'What said Alasco of my horoscope?' demanded Leicester. 'You already told me, but it has escaped me, for I think but lightly of that art.'

'Many learned and great men have thought otherwise,' said Varney; 'and, not to flatter your lordship, my own opinion leans that way.'

'Ay, Saul among the prophets!' said Leicester—'I thought thou wert sceptical in all such matters as thou couldst neither see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, and that thy belief was limited by thy senses?'

'Perhaps, my lord,' said Varney, 'I may be misled on the present occasion by my wish to find the predictions of astrology true. Alasco says that your favourite planet is culminating, and that the adverse influence—he would not use a plainer term—though not overcome, was evidently combust, I think he said, or retrograde.'

'It is even so,' said Leicester, looking at an abstract of astrological calculations which he had in his hand; 'the stronger influence will prevail, and, as I think, the evil hour pass away.—Lend me your hand, Sir Richard, to doff my gown—and remain an instant, if it is not too burdensome to your knighthood, while I compose myself to sleep. I believe the bustle of this day has fevered my blood, for it streams through my veins like a current of molten lead—remain an instant, I pray you—I would fain feel my eyes heavy ere I closed them.'

Varney officiously assisted his lord to bed, and placed a massive silver night-lamp, with a short sword, on a marble table which stood close by the head of the couch. Either in order to avoid the light of the lamp, or to hide his countenance from Varney, Leicester drew the curtain, heavy with entwined silk and gold, so as completely to shade his face. Varney took a seat near the bed, but with his back towards his master, as if to intimate that he was not watching him, and quietly waited till Leicester himself led the way to the topic by which his mind was engrossed.

'And so, Varney,' said the earl, after waiting in vain till his dependent should commence the conversation, 'men talk of the Queen's favour towards me?'

'Ay, my good lord,' said Varney; 'of what can they else, since it is so strongly manifested?'

'She is indeed my good and gracious mistress,' said Leicester, after another pause; 'but it is written, "Put not thy trust in princes."'

'A good sentence and a true,' said Varney, 'unless you can unite their interest with yours so absolutely, that they must needs sit on your wrist like hooded hawks.'

'I know what thou meanest,' said Leicester impatiently, 'though thou art to-night so prudentially careful of what thou sayest to me—Thou wouldst intimate, I might marry the Queen if I would?'

'It is your speech, my lord, not mine,' answered Varney; 'but whose soever be the speech, it is the thought of ninety-nine out of an hundred men throughout broad England.'

'Ay, but,' said Leicester, turning himself in his bed, 'the hundredth man knows better. Thou, for example, knowest the obstacle that cannot be overleaped.'

'It must, my lord, if the stars speak true,' said Varney composedly.

'What, talk'st thou of them,' said Leicester, 'that believest not in them or in aught else?'

'You mistake, my lord, under your gracious pardon,' said Varney; 'I believe in many things that predict the future. I believe, if showers fall in April, that we shall have flowers in May; that if the sun shines, grain will ripen; and I believe in much natural philosophy to the same effect, which, if the stars swear to me, I will say the stars speak the truth. And in like manner, I will not disbelieve that which I see wished for and expected on earth, solely because the astrologers have read it in the heavens.'

'Thou art right,' said Leicester, again tossing himself on his couch—'Earth does wish for it. I have had advices from the Reformed Churches of Germany—from the Low Countries—from Switzerland, urging this as a point on which Europe's safety depends. France will not oppose it—The ruling party in Scotland look to it as their best security—Spain fears it, but cannot prevent it—and yet thou knowest it is impossible.'

'I know not that, my lord,' said Varney; 'the countess is indisposed.'

'Villain!' said Leicester, starting up on his couch, and seizing the sword which lay on the table beside him, 'go thy thoughts that way?—thou wouldst not do murder!'

'For whom or what do you hold me, my lord?' said Varney, assuming the superiority of an innocent man subjected to unjust suspicion. 'I said nothing to deserve such a horrid imputation as your violence infers. I said but that the countess was ill. And countess though she be—lovely and beloved as she is—surely your lordship must hold her to be mortal? She may die, and your lordship's hand become once more your own.'

'Away! away!' said Leicester; 'let me have no more of this!'

'Good-night, my lord,' said Varney, seeming to understand this as a command to depart; but Leicester's voice interrupted his purpose.

'Thou 'scapest me not thus, Sir Fool,' said he; 'I think thy knighthood hath addled thy brains.

—Confess thou hast talked of impossibilities, as of things which may come to pass.'

'My lord, long live your fair countess,' said Varney; 'but neither your love nor my good wishes can make her immortal. But God grant she live long to be happy herself, and to render you so! I see not but you may be King of England notwithstanding.'

'Nay, now, Varney, thou art stark mad,' said Leicester.

'I would I were myself within the same nearness to a good estate of freehold,' said Varney. 'Have we not known in other countries, how a left-handed marriage might subsist betwixt persons of differing degree?—ay, and be no hindrance to prevent the husband from conjoining himself afterwards with a more suitable partner?'

'I have heard of such things in Germany,' said Leicester.

'Ay, and the most learned doctors in foreign universities justify the practice from the Old Testament,' said Varney. 'And, after all, where is the harm? The beautiful partner, whom you have chosen for true love, has your secret hours of relaxation and affection. Her fame is safe—her conscience may slumber securely—You have wealth to provide royally for your issue, should Heaven bless you with offspring. Meanwhile you may give to Elizabeth ten times the leisure, and ten thousand times the affection, that ever Don Philip of Spain spared to her sister Mary; yet you know how she doted on him, though so cold and neglectful. It requires but a close mouth and an open brow, and you keep your Eleanor and your fair Rosamond far enough separate.—Leave me to build you a bower to which no jealous queen shall find a clue.'

Leicester was silent for a moment, then sighed, and said, 'It is impossible.—Good-night, Sir Richard Varney—yet stay—Can you guess what meant Tressilian by showing himself in such careless guise before the Queen to-day?—to strike her tender heart, I should guess, with all the sympathies due to a lover, abandoned by his mistress, and abandoning himself.'

Varney, smothering a sneering laugh, answered, 'He believed Master Tressilian had no such matter in his head.'

'How!' said Leicester; 'what mean'st thou? There is ever knavery in that laugh of thine, Varney.'

'I only meant, my lord,' said Varney, 'that Tressilian has taken the sure way to avoid heart-breaking. He hath had a companion—a female companion—a mistress—a sort of player's wife or sister, as I believe—with him in Mervyn's Bower, where I quartered him for certain reasons of my own.'

'A mistress!—mean'st thou a paramour?'

'Ay, my lord; what female else waits for hours in a gentleman's chamber?'

'By my faith, time and space fitting, this were a good tale to tell,' said Leicester. 'I ever distrusted those bookish, hypocritical, seeming-virtuous scholars. Well, Master Tressilian makes somewhat familiar with my house—if I look it over, he is indebted to it for certain recollections. I would not harm him more than I can help. Keep eye on him, however, Varney.'

'I lodged him for that reason,' said Varney, 'in Mervyn's Tower, where he is under the eye of my very vigilant, if he were not also my very drunken, servant, Michael Lambourne, whom I have told your Grace of.'

'Grace!' said Leicester; 'what mean'st thou by that epithet?'

'It came unawares, my lord; and yet it sounds so very natural that I cannot recall it.'

'It is thine own preferment that hath turned thy brain,' said Leicester, laughing; 'new honours are as heady as new wine.'

'May your lordship soon have cause to say so from experience,' said Varney; and wishing his patron good-night, he withdrew.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Here stands the victim—there the proud betrayer,
E'en as the hind pull'd down by strangling dogs
Lies at the hunter's feet—who courteous proffers
To some high dame, the Dian of the chace,
To whom he looks for guerdon, his sharp blade,
To gash the sobbing throat.

THE WOODSMAN.

We are now to return to Mervyn's Bower, the apartment, or rather the prison, of the unfortunate Countess of Leicester, who for some time kept within bounds her uncertainty and her impatience. She was aware that, in the tumult of the day, there might be some delay ere her letter could be safely conveyed to the hands of Leicester, and that some time more might elapse ere he could extricate himself from the necessary attendance on Elizabeth to come and visit her in her secret bower. 'I will not expect him,' she said, 'till night—he cannot be absent from his royal guest, even to see me. He will, I know, come earlier, if it be possible, but I will not expect him before night.'—And yet all the while she did expect him; and, while she tried to argue herself into a contrary belief, each hasty noise, of the hundred which she heard, sounded like the hurried step of Leicester on the staircase, hasting to fold her in her arms.

The fatigue of body which Amy had lately undergone, with the agitation of mind natural to so cruel a state of uncertainty, began by degrees strongly to affect her nerves, and she almost feared her total inability to maintain the necessary self-command through the scenes which might lie before her. But, although spoiled by an over-indulgent system of education, Amy had naturally a mind of great power, united with a frame which her share in her father's woodland exercises had rendered uncommonly healthy. She summoned to her aid such mental and bodily resources; and not unconscious how much the issue of her fate might depend on her own self-possession, she prayed internally for strength of body and for mental fortitude, and resolved, at the same time, to yield to no nervous impulse which might weaken either.

Yet when the great bell of the castle, which was placed in Cæsar's Tower, at no great distance from that called Mervyn's, began to send its

* Note K. Furniture of Kenilworth.

pealing clamour abroad, in signal of the arrival of the royal procession, the din was so painfully acute to ears rendered nervously sensitive by anxiety, that she could hardly forbear shrieking with anguish, in answer to every stunning clash of the relentless peal.

Shortly afterwards, when the small apartment was at once enlightened by the shower of artificial fires with which the air was suddenly filled, and which crossed each other like fiery spirits, each bent on his own separate mission, or like salamanders executing a frolic dance in the region of the sylphs, the countess felt at first as if each rocket shot close by her eyes, and discharged its sparks and flashes so nigh that she could feel a sense of the heat. But she struggled against these fantastic terrors, and compelled herself to arise, stand by the window, look out, and gaze upon a sight, which at another time would have appeared to her at once captivating and fearful. The magnificent towers of the castle were enveloped in garlands of artificial fire, or shrouded with tiaras of pale smoke. The surface of the lake glowed like molten iron, while many fireworks (then thought extremely wonderful, though now common), whose flame continued to exist in the opposing element, dived and rose, hissed and roared, and spouted fire, like so many dragons of enchantment, sporting upon a burning lake.

Even Amy was for a moment interested by what was to her so new a scene. 'I had thought it magical art,' she said, 'but poor Tressilian taught me to judge of such things as they are. Great God! and may not these idle splendours resemble my own hoped-for happiness,—a single spark, which is instantly swallowed up by surrounding darkness,—a precarious glow, which rises but for a brief space into the air, that its fall may be the lower? O, Leicester! after all—all that thou hast said—hast sworn—that Amy was thy love, thy life, can it be that thou art the magician at whose nod these enchantments arise, and that she sees them, as an outcast, if not a captive!'

The sustained, prolonged, and repeated bursts of music, from so many different quarters, and at so many varying points of distance, which sounded as if not the Castle of Kenilworth only, but the whole country around, had been at once the scene of solemnizing some high national festival, carried the same oppressive thought still closer to her heart, while some notes would melt in distant and falling tones, as if in compassion for her sorrows, and some burst close and near upon her, as if mocking her misery, with all the insolence of unlimited mirth. 'Those sounds,' she said, 'are mine—mine, because they are HIS; but I cannot say,—Be still, these loud strains suit me not;—and the voice of the meanest peasant that mingles in the dance, would have more power to modulate the music, than the command of her who is mistress of all.'

By degrees the sounds of revelry died away, and the countess withdrew from the window at which she had sat listening to them. It was night, but the moon afforded considerable light in the room, so that Amy was able to make the arrangement which she judged necessary. There was hope that Leicester might come to her apartment as soon as the revel in the castle had subsided; but there was also risk she might be disturbed by some unauthorized intruder. She had lost confidence in the key, since Tressilian had entered so easily, though the door was locked on the inside; yet all the additional security she could think of, was to place the table across the door, that she might be warned by the noise, should any one attempt to enter. Having taken these necessary precautions, the unfortunate lady withdrew to her couch, stretched herself down on it, mused in anxious expectation, and counted more than one hour after midnight, till exhausted nature proved too strong for love, for grief, for fear, nay, even for uncertainty, and she slept.

Yes, she slept. The Indian sleeps at the stake, in the intervals between his tortures; and mental torments, in like manner, exhaust by long continuance the sensibility of the sufferer, so that an interval of lethargic repose must necessarily ensue, ere the pangs which they inflict can again be renewed.

The countess slept, then, for several hours, and dreamed that she was in the ancient house at Cumnor Place, listening for the low whistle with which Leicester often used to announce his presence in the court-yard, when arriving suddenly on one of his stolen visits. But on this occasion, instead of a whistle, she heard the peculiar blast of a bugle-horn, such as her father used to wind on the fall of the stag, and which huntsmen then called a *mort*. She ran, as she thought, to a window that looked into the court-yard, which she saw filled with men in mourning garments. The old curate seemed about to read the funeral service. Mumblazen, tricked out in an antique dress, like an ancient herald, held aloft a scutcheon, with its usual decorations of skulls, cross-bones, and hour-glasses, surrounding a coat-of-arms, of which she could only distinguish that it was surmounted with an earl's coronet. The old man looked at her with a ghastly smile, and said, 'Amy, are they not rightly quartered?' Just as he spoke, the horns again poured on her ear the melancholy yet wild strain of the *mort*, or death-note, and she awoke.

The countess awoke to hear a real bugle-note, or rather the combined breath of many bugles, sounding not the *mort*, but the jolly *réveillée*, to remind the inmates of the Castle of Kenilworth that the pleasures of the day were to commence with a magnificent stag-hunting in the neighbouring chase. Amy started up from her couch, listened to the sound, saw the first beams of the summer morning already twinkle through the lattice of her window, and recollected, with feelings of giddy agony, where she was, and how circumstanced.

'He thinks not of *me*,' she said—'he will not come nigh me! A Queen is his guest; and what cares he in what corner of his huge castle a wretch like me pines in doubt, which is fast fading into despair?' At once a sound at the door, as of some one attempting to open it softly, filled her with an ineffable mixture of joy and fear; and, hastening to remove the obstacle she had placed against the door, and to unlock it, she had the precaution to ask, 'Is it thou, my love?'

'Yes, my countess,' murmured a whisper in reply.

She threw open the door, and exclaiming, 'Leicester!' flung her arms around the neck of the man who stood without, muffled in his cloak.

'No—not quite Leicester,' answered Michael Lambourne, for he it was, returning the caress with vehemence,—'not quite Leicester, my lovely and most loving duchess, but as good a man.'

With an exertion of force, of which she would at another time have thought herself incapable, the countess freed herself from the profane and profaning grasp of the drunken debauchee, and retreated into the midst of her apartment, where despair gave her courage to make a stand.

As Lambourne, on entering, dropped the lap of his cloak from his face, she knew Varney's profligate servant; the very last person, excepting his detested master, by whom she would have wished to be discovered. But she was still closely muffled in her travelling dress, and as Lambourne had scarce ever been admitted to her presence at Cumnor Place, her person, she hoped, might not be so well known to him as his was to her, owing to Janet's pointing him frequently out as he crossed the court, and telling stories of his wickedness. She might have had still greater confidence in her disguise, had her experience enabled her to discover that he was much intoxicated; but this could scarce have consoled her for the risk which she might incur, from such a character, in such a time, place, and circumstances.

Lambourne flung the door behind him as he entered, and folding his arms, as if in mockery of the attitude of distraction into which Amy had thrown herself, he proceeded thus:—'Hark ye, most fair Callipolis—or most lovely countess of clouts, and divine duchess of dark corners—if thou takest all that trouble of skewering thyself together, like a trussed fowl, that there may be more pleasure in the carving, even save thyself the labour. I love thy first frank manner the best—like thy present as little'—(he made a step towards her, and staggered)—'as little as—such a damned uneven floor as this, where a gentleman may break his neck, if he does not walk as upright as a posture-master on the tight-rope.'

'Stand back!' said the countess; 'do not approach nearer to me on thy peril!'

'My peril!—and stand back!—Why, how now, madam? Must you have a better mate than honest Mike Lambourne? I have been in America, girl, where the gold grows, and have brought off such a load on't'——

'Good friend,' said the countess, in great terror at the ruffian's determined and audacious manner, 'I prithee begone, and leave me.'

'And so I will, pretty one, when we are tired of each other's company—not a jot sooner.'—He seized her by the arm, while, incapable of further defence, she uttered shriek upon shriek. 'Nay, scream away if you like it,' said he, still holding her fast; 'I have heard the sea at the loudest, and I mind a squalling woman no more than a miauling kitten—Damn me!—I have heard fifty or a hundred screaming at once, when there was a town stormed.'

The cries of the countess, however, brought unexpected aid, in the person of Lawrence Staples, who had heard her exclamations from his apartment below, and entered in good time to save her from being discovered, if not from more atrocious violence. Lawrence was drunk also from the debauch of the preceding night, but fortunately his intoxication had taken a different turn from that of Lambourne.

'What the devil's noise is this in the ward?' he said.—'What! man and woman together in the same cell? that is against rule. I will have decency under my rule, by Saint Peter of the Fetters!'

'Get thee down-stairs, thou drunken beast,' said Lambourne; 'seest thou not the lady and I would be private?'

'Good sir, worthy sir!' said the countess, addressing the jailor, 'do but save me from him, for the sake of mercy!'

'She speaks fairly,' said the jailor, 'and I will take her part. I love my prisoners; and I have had as good prisoners under my key as they have had in Newgate or the Compter. And so, being one of my lambkins, as I say, no one shall disturb her in her pen-fold. So, let go the woman, or I'll knock your brains out with my keys.'

'I'll make a blood-pudding of thy midriff first,' answered Lambourne, laying his left hand on his dagger, but still detaining the countess by the arm with his right—'So have at thee, thou old ostrich, whose only living is upon a bunch of iron keys!'

Lawrence raised the arm of Michael, and prevented him from drawing his dagger; and as Lambourne struggled and strove to shake him off, the countess made a sudden exertion on her side, and, slipping her hand out of the glove on which the ruffian still kept hold, she gained her liberty, and, escaping from the apartment, ran down-stairs; while at the same moment she heard the two combatants fall on the floor with a noise which increased her terror. The outer wicket offered no impediment to her flight, having been opened for Lambourne's admittance; so that she succeeded in escaping down the stair, and fled into the Pleasance, which seemed to her hasty glance the direction in which she was most likely to avoid pursuit.

Meanwhile, Lawrence and Lambourne rolled on the floor of the apartment, closely grappled together. Neither had, happily, opportunity to draw their daggers; but Lawrence found space enough to dash his heavy keys across Michael's face, and Michael, in return, grasped the turnkey so felly by the throat, that the blood gushed from nose and mouth; so that they were both gory and filthy spectacles, when one of the other officers of the household, attracted by the noise of the fray, entered the room, and with some difficulty effected the separation of the combatants.

'A murrain on you both,' said the charitable mediator, 'and especially on you, Master Lambourne! What the fiend lie you here for, fighting on the floor like two butcher's curs in the kennel of the shambles?'

Lambourne arose, and, somewhat sobered by the interposition of a third party, looked with something less than his usual brazen impudence of visage. 'We fought for a wench, an thou must know,' was his reply.

'A wench! Where is she?' said the officer.

'Why, vanished, I think,' said Lambourne, looking around him; 'unless Lawrence hath swallowed her. That filthy paunch of his devours as many distressed damsels and oppressed orphans, as e'er a giant in King Arthur's history: they are his prime food; he worries them body, soul, and substance.'

'Ay, ay! It's no matter,' said Lawrence, gathering up his huge ungainly form from the floor; 'but I have had your betters, Master Michael Lambourne, under the little turn of my forefinger and thumb; and I shall have thee, before all's done, under my hatches. The impudence of thy brow will not always save thy shin-bones from iron, and thy foul thirsty gullet from a hempen cord.' The words were no sooner out of his mouth, than Lambourne again made at him.

'Nay, go not to it again,' said the sewer, 'or I will call for him shall tame you both, and that is Master Varney—Sir Richard, I mean—he is stirring, I promise you—I saw him cross the court just now.'

'Didst thou, by G—!' said Lambourne, seizing on the basin and ewer which stood in the apartment; 'nay, then, element, do thy work—I thought I had enough of thee last night when I floated about for Orion, like a cork on a fermenting cask of ale.'

So saying, he fell to work to cleanse from his face and hands the signs of the fray, and got his apparel into some order.

'What hast thou done to him?' said the sewer, speaking aside to the jailor; 'his face is fearfully swelled.'

'It is but the imprint of the key of my cabinet—too good a mark for his gallows-face. No man shall abuse or insult my prisoners; they are my jewels, and I lock them in safe casket accordingly. And so, mistress, leave off your wailing—Hey! why, surely, there was a woman here!'

'I think you are all mad this morning,' said the sewer; 'I saw no woman here, nor no man neither in a proper sense, but only two beasts rolling on the floor.'

'Nay, then, I am undone,' said the jailor; 'the prison's broken, that is all. Kenilworth prison is broken,' he continued, in a tone of maudlin lamentation, 'which was the strongest jail betwixt this and the Welsh marches—ay, and a house that has had knights, and earls, and kings sleeping in it, as secure as if they had been in the Tower of London. It is broken, the prisoners fled, and the jailor in much danger of being hanged!'

So saying, he retreated down to his own den, to conclude his lamentations, or to sleep himself sober. Lambourne and the sewer followed him close, and it was well for them, since the jailor, out of mere habit, was about to lock the wicket after him; and had they not been within the reach of interfering, they would have had the pleasure of being shut up in the turret-chamber, from which the countess had been just delivered.

That unhappy lady, as soon as she found herself at liberty, fled, as we have already mentioned, into the Pleasance. She had seen this richly-ornamented space of ground from the window of Mervyn's Tower; and it occurred to her at the moment of her escape, that among its numerous arbours, bowers, fountains, statues, and grottoes, she might find some recess, in which she could lie concealed until she had an opportunity of addressing herself to a protector, to whom she might communicate as much as she dared of her forlorn situation, and through whose means she might supplicate an interview with her husband.

'If I could see my guide,' she thought, 'I would learn if he had delivered my letter. Even did I but see Tressilian, it were better to risk Dudley's anger, by confiding my whole situation to one who is the very soul of honour, than to run the hazard of further insult among the insolent menials of this ill-ruled place. I will not again venture into an enclosed apartment. I will wait, I will watch—amidst so many human beings, there must be some kind heart which can judge and compassionate what mine endures.'

In truth, more than one party entered and traversed the Pleasance. But they were in joyous groups of four or five persons together, laughing and jesting in their own fulness of mirth and lightness of heart.

The retreat which she had chosen gave her the easy alternative of avoiding observation. It was but stepping back to the farthest recess of a grotto, ornamented with rustic work and moss-seats, and terminated by a fountain, and she might easily remain concealed, or at her pleasure discover herself to any solitary wanderer whose curiosity might lead him to that romantic retirement. Anticipating such an opportunity, she looked into the clear basin, which the silent fountain held up to her like a mirror, and felt shocked at her own appearance, and doubtful at the same time, muffled and disfigured as her disguise made her seem to herself, whether any female (and it was from the compassion of her own sex that she chiefly expected sympathy) would engage in conference with so suspicious an object. Reasoning thus like a woman, to whom external appearance is scarcely in any circumstances a matter of unimportance, and like a beauty who had some confidence in the power of her own charms, she laid aside her travelling cloak and capotaine hat, and placed them beside her, so that she could assume them in an instant, ere one could penetrate from the entrance of the grotto to its extremity, in case the intrusion of Varney or of Lambourne should render such disguise necessary. The dress which she wore under these vestments was somewhat of a theatrical cast, so as to suit the assumed personage of one of the females who was to act in the pageant. Wayland had found the means of arranging it thus upon the second day of their journey, having experienced the service arising from the assumption of such a character on the preceding day. The fountain, acting both as a mirror and ewer, afforded Amy the means of a brief toilette, of which she availed herself as hastily as possible; then took in her hand her small casket of jewels, in case she might find them useful intercessors, and, retiring to the darkest and most sequestered nook, sat down on a seat of moss, and awaited till fate should give her some chance of rescue, or of propitiating an intercessor.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

> Have you not seen the partridge quake,
> Viewing the hawk approaching nigh?
> She cuddles close beneath the brake,
> Afraid to sit, afraid to fly.
>
> PRIOR.

IT chanced upon that memorable morning, that one of the earliest of the huntress train, who appeared from her chamber in full array for the chase, was the princess for whom all these pleasures were instituted, England's Maiden Queen. I know not if it were by chance, or out of the befitting courtesy due to a mistress by whom he was so much honoured, that she had scarcely made one step beyond the threshold of her chamber ere Leicester was by her side, and proposed to her, until the preparations for the chase had been completed, to view the Pleasance, and the gardens which it connected with the castle-yard.

To this new scene of pleasures they walked, the earl's arm affording his sovereign the occasional support which she required, where flights of steps, then a favourite ornament in a garden, conducted them from terrace to terrace, and from parterre to parterre. The ladies in attendance, gifted with prudence, or endowed perhaps with the amiable desire of acting as they would be done by, did not conceive their duty to the queen's person required them, though they lost not sight of her, to approach so near as to share, or perhaps disturb, the conversation betwixt the queen and the earl, who was not only her host, but also her most trusted, esteemed, and favoured servant. They contented themselves with admiring the grace of this illustrious couple, whose robes of state were now exchanged for hunting suits, almost equally magnificent.

Elizabeth's sylvan dress, which was of a pale blue silk, with silver lace and *aiguillettes*, approached in form to that of the ancient Amazons; and was, therefore, well suited at once to her height and to the dignity of her mien, which her conscious rank and long habits of authority had rendered in some degree too masculine to be seen to the best advantage in ordinary female weeds. Leicester's hunting-suit of Lincoln-green, richly embroidered with gold, and crossed by the gay baldric, which sustained a bugle-horn, and a wood-knife instead of a sword, became its master, as did his other vestments of court or of war. For such were the perfections of his form and mien, that Leicester was always supposed to be seen to the greatest advantage in the character and dress which for the time he represented or wore.

The conversation of Elizabeth and the favourite earl has not reached us in detail. But those who watched at some distance (and the eyes of courtiers and court ladies are right sharp) were of opinion, that on no occasion did the dignity of Elizabeth, in gesture and motion, seem so decidedly to soften away into a mien expressive of indecision and tenderness. Her step was not only slow, but even unequal, a thing most unwonted in her carriage; her looks seemed bent on the ground, and there was a timid disposition to withdraw from her companion, which external gesture in females often indicates exactly the opposite tendency in the secret mind. The Duchess of Rutland, who ventured nearest, was even heard to aver, that she discerned a tear in Elizabeth's eye, and a blush on her cheek; and still further, 'She bent her looks on the ground to avoid mine,' said the duchess; 'she who, in her ordinary mood, could look down a lion.' To what conclusion these symptoms led is sufficiently evident; nor were they probably entirely groundless. The progress of private conversation, betwixt two persons of different sexes, is often decisive of their fate, and gives it a turn very different perhaps from what they themselves anticipated. Gallantry becomes mingled with conversation, and affection and passion to mix with gallantry. Nobles, as well as shepherd swains, will, in such a trying moment, say more than they intended; and queens, like village maidens, will listen longer than they should.

Horses in the meanwhile neighed, and champed the bits with impatience in the base-court; hounds yelled in their couples; and yeomen, rangers, and prickers lamented the exhaling of the dew, which would prevent the scent from lying. But Leicester had another chase in view, or, to speak more justly towards him, had become engaged in it without premeditation, as the high-spirited hunter which follows the cry of the hounds that have crossed his path by accident. The queen — an accomplished and handsome woman — the pride of England, the hope of France and Holland, and the dread of Spain, had probably listened with more than usual favour to that mixture of romantic gallantry with which she always loved to be addressed; and the earl had, in vanity, in ambition, or in both, thrown in more and more of that delicious ingredient, until his importunity became the language of love itself.

'No, Dudley,' said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents — 'No, I must be the mother of my people. Other ties, that make the lowly maiden happy, are denied to her sovereign—No, Leicester, urge it no more—Were I, as others, free to seek my own happiness—then, indeed—but it cannot—cannot be.—Delay the chase—delay it for half-an-hour—and leave me, my lord.'

'How, leave you, madam!' said Leicester—'Has my madness offended you?'

'No, Leicester, not so!' answered the queen hastily; 'but it is madness, and must not be repeated. Go—but go not far from hence—and meantime let no one intrude on my privacy.'

While she spoke thus, Dudley bowed deeply, and retired with a slow and melancholy air. The queen stood gazing after him, and murmured to herself—'Were it possible—were it *but* possible!—but no—no—Elizabeth must be the wife and mother of England alone.'

As she spoke thus, and in order to avoid some one whose step she heard approaching, the queen turned into the grotto in which her hapless, and yet but too successful, rival lay concealed.

The mind of England's Elizabeth, if somewhat shaken by the agitating interview to which she had just put a period, was of that firm and decided character which soon recovers its natural

tone. It was like one of those ancient druidical monuments, called rocking-stones. The finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her feelings in motion, but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium. As she advanced with a slow pace towards the inmost extremity of the grotto, her countenance, ere she had proceeded half the length, had recovered its dignity of look, and her mien its air of command.

It was then the queen became aware that a female figure was placed beside, or rather partly behind, an alabaster column, at the foot of which arose the pellucid fountain, which occupied the inmost recess of the twilight grotto. The classical mind of Elizabeth suggested the story of Numa and Egeria, and she doubted not that some Italian sculptor had here represented the Naiad, whose inspirations gave laws to Rome. As she advanced, she became doubtful whether she beheld a statue or a form of flesh and blood. The unfortunate Amy, indeed, remained motionless, betwixt the desire which she had to make her condition known to one of her own sex, and her awe for the stately form which approached her, and which, though her eyes had never before beheld, her fears instantly suspected to be the personage she really was. Amy had arisen from her seat with the purpose of addressing the lady, who entered the grotto alone, and, as she at first thought, so opportunely. But when she recollected the alarm which Leicester had expressed at the queen's knowing aught of their union, and became more and more satisfied that the person whom she now beheld was Elizabeth herself, she stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head, and hands perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster pedestal against which she leaned. Her dress was of pale sea-green silk, little distinguished in that imperfect light, and somewhat resembled the drapery of a Grecian nymph, such an antique disguise having been thought the most secure, where so many masquers and revellers were assembled; so that the queen's doubt of her being a living form was well justified by all contingent circumstances, as well as by the bloodless cheek and fixed eye.

Elizabeth remained in doubt, even after she had approached within a few paces, whether she did not gaze on a statue so cunningly fashioned, that by the doubtful light it could not be distinguished from reality. She stopped, therefore, and fixed upon this interesting object her princely look with so much keenness, that the astonishment which had kept Amy immoveable gave way to awe, and she gradually cast down her eyes and drooped her head under the commanding gaze of the sovereign. Still, however, she remained in all respects, saving this slow and profound inclination of the head, motionless and silent.

From her dress, and the casket which she instinctively held in her hand, Elizabeth naturally conjectured that the beautiful but mute figure which she beheld was a performer in one of the various theatrical pageants which had been placed in different situations to surprise her with their homage, and that the poor player, overcome with awe at her presence, had either forgot the part assigned her, or lacked courage to go through it. It was natural and courteous to give her some encouragement; and Elizabeth accordingly said, in a tone of condescending kindness,—'How now, fair nymph of this lovely grotto—art thou spellbound and struck with dumbness by the wicked enchanter whom men term Fear?—We are his sworn enemy, maiden, and can reverse his charm. Speak, we command thee.'

Instead of answering her by speech, the unfortunate countess dropped on her knee before the queen, let her casket fall from her hand, and, clasping her palms together, looked up in the queen's face with such a mixed agony of fear and supplication, that Elizabeth was considerably affected.

'What may this mean?' she said; 'this is a stronger passion than befits the occasion. Stand up, damsel—what wouldst thou have with us?'

'Your protection, madam,' faltered forth the unhappy petitioner.

'Each daughter of England has it while she is worthy of it,' replied the queen; 'but your distress seems to have a deeper root than a forgotten task. Why, and in what, do you crave our protection?'

Amy hastily endeavoured to recall what she were best to say, which might secure herself from the imminent dangers that surrounded her, without endangering her husband; and, plunging from one thought to another, amidst the chaos which filled her mind, she could at length, in answer to the queen's repeated inquiries in what she sought protection, only falter out, 'Alas! I know not.'

'This is folly, maiden,' said Elizabeth impatiently; for there was something in the extreme confusion of the suppliant, which irritated her curiosity, as well as interested her feelings. 'The sick man must tell his malady to the physician, nor are WE accustomed to ask questions so oft, without receiving an answer.'

'I request—I implore,' stammered forth the unfortunate countess,—'I beseech your gracious protection—against—against one Varney.' She choked well-nigh as she uttered the fatal word, which was instantly caught up by the queen.

'What, Varney,—Sir Richard Varney—the servant of Lord Leicester!—What, damsel, are you to him, or he to you?'

'I—I—was his prisoner—and he practised on my life—and I broke forth to—to'——

'To throw thyself on my protection, doubtless,' said Elizabeth. 'Thou shalt have it—that is, if thou art worthy; for we will sift this matter to the uttermost.—Thou art,' she said, bending on the countess an eye which seemed designed to pierce her very inmost soul,—'Thou art Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?'

'Forgive me—forgive me—most gracious princess!' said Amy, dropping once more on her knee, from which she had arisen.

'For what should I forgive thee, silly wench?' said Elizabeth; 'for being the daughter of thine own father? Thou art brain-sick, surely. Well, I see I must wring the story from thee by inches—Thou didst deceive thine old and honoured father—thy look confesses it—cheated Master Tressilian—thy blush avouches it—and married this same Varney.'

Amy sprung on her feet, and interrupted the

queen eagerly, with, 'No, madam, no—as there is a God above us, I am not the sordid wretch you would make me! I am not the wife of that contemptible slave — of that most deliberate villain! I am not the wife of Varney! I would rather be the bride of Destruction!'

The queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy's vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then replied, 'Why, God ha' mercy, woman!—I see thou canst talk fast enough when the theme likes thee. Nay, tell me, woman,' she continued, for to the impulse of curiosity was now added that of an undefined jealousy that some deception had been practised on her,—'tell me, woman—for by God's day, I WILL know—whose wife or whose paramour art thou? Speak out, and be speedy—Thou wert better dally with a lioness than with Elizabeth.'

Urged to this extremity, dragged as it were by irresistible force to the verge of a precipice, which she saw but could not avoid,—permitted not a moment's respite by the eager words and menacing gestures of the offended queen, Amy at length uttered in despair, 'The Earl of Leicester knows it all.'

'The Earl of Leicester!' said Elizabeth, in utter astonishment—'The Earl of Leicester!' she repeated, with kindling anger,—'Woman, thou art set on to this—thou dost belie him—he takes no keep of such things as thou art. Thou art suborned to slander the noblest lord, and the truest-hearted gentleman, in England! But were he the right hand of our trust, or something yet dearer to us, thou shalt have thy hearing, and that in his presence. Come with me—come with me instantly!'

As Amy shrunk back with terror, which the incensed queen interpreted as that of conscious guilt, Elizabeth rapidly advanced, seized on her arm, and hastened with swift and long steps out of the grotto, and along the principal alley of the Pleasance, dragging with her the terrified countess, whom she still held by the arm, and whose utmost exertions could but just keep pace with those of the indignant queen.

Leicester was at this moment the centre of a splendid group of lords and ladies assembled together under an arcade, or portico, which closed the alley. The company had drawn together in that place, to attend the commands of her Majesty when the hunting party should go forward, and their astonishment may be imagined, when, instead of seeing Elizabeth advance towards them with her usual measured dignity of motion, they beheld her walking so rapidly, that she was in the midst of them ere they were aware; and then observed, with fear and surprise, that her features were flushed betwixt anger and agitation, that her hair was loosened by her haste of motion, and that her eyes sparkled as they were wont when the spirit of Henry VIII. mounted highest in his daughter. Nor were they less astonished at the appearance of the pale, attenuated, half dead, yet still lovely female, whom the queen upheld by main strength with one hand, while with the other she waved aside the ladies and nobles who pressed towards her, under the idea that she was taken suddenly ill.—'Where is my Lord of Leicester?' she said, in a tone that thrilled with astonishment all the courtiers who stood around—'Stand forth, my Lord of Leicester!'

If, in the midst of the most serene day of summer, when all is light and laughing around, a thunderbolt were to fall from the clear blue vault of heaven, and rend the earth at the very feet of some careless traveller, he could not gaze upon the smouldering chasm, which so unexpectedly yawned before him, with half the astonishment and fear which Leicester felt at the sight that so suddenly presented itself. He had that instant been receiving, with a political affectation of disavowing and misunderstanding their meaning, the half uttered, half intimated congratulations of the courtiers, upon the favour of the queen, carried apparently to its highest pitch during the interview of that morning; from which most of them seemed to augur that he might soon arise from their equal in rank to become their master. And now, while the subdued yet proud smile with which he disclaimed those inferences was yet curling his cheek, the queen shot into the circle, her passions excited to the uttermost; and, supporting with one hand, and apparently without an effort, the pale and sinking form of his almost expiring wife, and pointing with the finger of the other to her half-dead features, demanded, in a voice that sounded to the ear of the astounded statesman like the last dread trumpet-call, that is to summon body and spirit to the judgment-seat, 'Knowest thou this woman?'

As, at the blast of that last trumpet, the guilty shall call upon the mountains to cover them, Leicester's inward thoughts invoked the stately arch which he had built in his pride, to burst its strong conjunction, and overwhelm them in its ruins. But the cemented stones, architrave and battlement, stood fast; and it was the proud master himself, who, as if some actual pressure had bent him to the earth, kneeled down before Elizabeth, and prostrated his brow to the marble flag-stones on which she stood.

'Leicester,' said Elizabeth, in a voice which trembled with passion, 'could I think thou hast practised on me—on me thy sovereign—on me thy confiding, thy too partial mistress—the base and ungrateful deception which thy present confusion surmises—by all that is holy, false lord, that head of thine were in as great peril as ever was thy father's!'

Leicester had not conscious innocence, but he had pride to support him. He raised slowly his brow and features, which were black and swollen with contending emotions, and only replied, 'My head cannot fall but by the sentence of my peers—to them I will plead, and not to a princess who thus requites my faithful service.'

'What! my lords,' said Elizabeth, looking around, 'we are defied, I think—defied in the castle we have ourselves bestowed on this proud man?—My Lord Shrewsbury, you are marshal of England, attach him of high treason.'

'Whom does your Grace mean?' said Shrewsbury, much surprised, for he had that instant joined the astonished circle.

'Whom should I mean, but that traitor Dudley, Earl of Leicester!—Cousin of Hunsdon, order out your band of Gentlemen Pensioners,

and take him into instant custody.—I say, villain, make haste!'

Hunsdon, a rough old noble, who, from his relationship to the Boleyns, was accustomed to use more freedom with the queen than almost any other dared to do, replied bluntly, 'And it is like your Grace might order me to the Tower to-morrow, for making too much haste. I do beseech you to be patient.'

'Patient—God's life!' exclaimed the queen, 'name not the word to me—thou know'st not of what he is guilty!'

Amy, who had by this time in some degree recovered herself, and who saw her husband, as she conceived, in the utmost danger from the rage of an offended sovereign, instantly (and alas, how many women have done the same!) forgot her own wrongs, and her own danger, in her apprehensions for him, and, throwing herself before the queen, embraced her knees, while she exclaimed, 'He is guiltless, madam, he is guiltless—no one can lay aught to the charge of the noble Leicester.'

'Why, minion,' answered the queen, 'didst not thou thyself say that the Earl of Leicester was privy to thy whole history?'

'Did I say so?' repeated the unhappy Amy, laying aside every consideration of consistency and of self-interest; 'O, if I did, I foully belied him. May God so judge me, as I believe he was never privy to a thought that would harm me!'

'Woman!' said Elizabeth, 'I will know who has moved thee to this; or my wrath—and the wrath of kings is a flaming fire—shall wither and consume thee like a weed in the furnace.'

As the queen uttered this threat, Leicester's better angel called his pride to his aid, and reproached him with the utter extremity of meanness which would overwhelm him for ever, if he stooped to take shelter under the generous interposition of his wife, and abandoned her, in return for her kindness, to the resentment of the queen. He had already raised his head, with the dignity of a man of honour, to avow his marriage, and proclaim himself the protector of his countess, when Varney, born, as it appeared, to be his master's evil genius, rushed into the presence, with every mark of disorder on his face and apparel.

'What means this saucy intrusion?' said Elizabeth.

Varney, with the air of a man overwhelmed with grief and confusion, prostrated himself before her feet, exclaiming, 'Pardon, my liege, pardon!—or at least let your justice avenge itself on me, where it is due; but spare my noble, my generous, my innocent patron and master!'

Amy, who was yet kneeling, started up as she saw the man whom she deemed most odious place himself so near her, and was about to fly towards Leicester, when, checked at once by the uncertainty and even timidity which his looks had reassumed as soon as the appearance of his confidant seemed to open a new scene, she hung back, and, uttering a faint scream, besought of her Majesty to cause her to be imprisoned in the lowest dungeon of the castle—to deal with her as the worst of criminals—'But spare,' she exclaimed, 'my sight and hearing, what will destroy the little judgment I have left—the sight of that unutterable and most shameless villain!'

'And why, sweetheart?' said the queen, moved by a new impulse; 'what hath he, this false knight, since such thou accountest him, done to thee?'

'O, worse than sorrow, madam, and worse than injury—he has sown dissension where most there should be peace. I shall go mad if I look longer on him.'

'Beshrew me, but I think thou art distraught already,' answered the queen.—'My Lord Hunsdon, look to this poor distressed young woman, and let her be safely bestowed and in honest keeping, till we require her to be forthcoming.'

Two or three of the ladies in attendance, either moved by compassion for a creature so interesting, or by some other motive, offered their services to look after her; but the queen briefly answered, 'Ladies, under favour, no.—You have all (give God thanks) sharp ears and nimble tongues—our kinsman Hunsdon has ears of the dullest, and a tongue somewhat rough, but yet of the slowest.—Hunsdon, look to it that none have speech of her.'

'By Our Lady!' said Hunsdon, taking in his strong sinewy arms the fading and almost swooning form of Amy, 'she is a lovely child; and though a rough nurse, your Grace hath given her a kind one. She is safe with me as one of my own lady-birds of daughters.'

So saying, he carried her off, unresistingly and almost unconsciously; his war-worn locks and long grey beard mingling with her light-brown tresses, as her head reclined on his strong, square shoulder. The queen followed him with her eye—she had already, with that self-command which forms so necessary a part of a sovereign's accomplishments, suppressed every appearance of agitation, and seemed as if she desired to banish all traces of her burst of passion from the recollection of those who had witnessed it. 'My Lord of Hunsdon says well,' she observed, 'he is indeed but a rough nurse for so tender a babe.'

'My Lord of Hunsdon,' said the Dean of Saint Asaph, 'I speak it not in defamation of his more noble qualities, hath a broad licence in speech, and garnishes his discourse somewhat too freely with the cruel and superstitious oaths, which savour both of profaneness and of old papistrie.'

'It is the fault of his blood, Master Dean,' said the queen, turning sharply round upon the reverend dignitary as she spoke; 'and you may blame mine for the same distemperature. The Boleyns were ever a hot and plain-spoken race, more hasty to speak their mind than careful to choose their expressions. And, by my word—I hope there is no sin in that affirmation—I question if it were much cooled by mixing with that of Tudor.'

As she made this last observation she smiled graciously, and stole her eyes almost insensibly round to seek those of the Earl of Leicester, to whom she now began to think she had spoken with hasty harshness upon the unfounded suspicion of a moment.

The queen's eye found the earl in no mood to accept the implied offer of conciliation. His own looks had followed, with late and rueful repent-

ance, the faded form which Hunsdon had just borne from the presence; they now reposed gloomily on the ground, but more—so at least it seemed to Elizabeth—with the expression of one who has received an unjust affront, than of him who is conscious of guilt. She turned her face angrily from him, and said to Varney, 'Speak, Sir Richard, and explain these riddles—thou hast sense and the use of speech, at least, which elsewhere we look for in vain.'

As she said this, she darted another resentful glance towards Leicester, while the wily Varney hastened to tell his own story.

'Your Majesty's piercing eye,' he said, 'has already detected the cruel malady of my beloved lady; which, unhappy that I am, I would not suffer to be expressed in the certificate of her physician, seeking to conceal what has now broken out with so much the more scandal.'

'She is then distraught?' said the queen—'indeed, we doubted not of it—her whole demeanour bears it out. I found her moping in a corner of yonder grotto; and every word she spoke—which indeed I dragged from her as by the rack—she instantly recalled and forswore. But how came she hither? Why had you her not in safe keeping?'

'My gracious liege,' said Varney, 'the worthy gentleman under whose charge I left her, Master Anthony Foster, has come hither but now, as fast as man and horse can travel, to show me of her escape, which she managed with the art peculiar to many who are afflicted with this malady. He is at hand for examination.'

'Let it be for another time,' said the queen. 'But, Sir Richard, we envy you not your domestic felicity; your lady railed on you bitterly, and seemed ready to swoon at beholding you.'

'It is the nature of persons in her disorder, so please your Grace,' answered Varney, 'to be ever most inveterate in their spleen against those whom, in their better moments, they hold nearest and dearest.'

'We have heard so, indeed,' said Elizabeth, 'and give faith to the saying.'

'May your Grace then be pleased,' said Varney, 'to command my unfortunate wife to be delivered into the custody of her friends?'

Leicester partly started; but, making a strong effort, he subdued his emotion, while Elizabeth answered sharply, 'You are something too hasty, Master Varney; we will have first a report of the lady's health and state of mind from Masters, our own physician, and then determine what shall be thought just. You shall have licence, however, to see her, that if there be any matrimonial quarrel betwixt you—such things we have heard do occur, even betwixt a loving couple—you may make it up, without further scandal to our court, or trouble to ourselves.'

Varney bowed low, and made no other answer.

Elizabeth again looked towards Leicester, and said, with a degree of condescension which could only arise out of the most heartfelt interest, 'Discord, as the Italian poet says, will find her way into peaceful convents, as well as into the privacy of families; and we fear our own guards and ushers will hardly exclude her from courts. My Lord of Leicester, you are offended with us, and we have right to be offended with you. We will take the lion's part upon us, and be the first to forgive.'

Leicester smoothed his brow, as if by an effort, but the trouble was too deep-seated that its placidity should at once return. He said, however, that which fitted the occasion, 'that he could not have the happiness of forgiving, because she who commanded him to do so, could commit no injury towards him.'

Elizabeth seemed content with this reply, and intimated her pleasure that the sports of the morning should proceed. The bugles sounded—the hounds bayed—the horses pranced—but the courtiers and ladies sought the amusements to which they were summoned with hearts very different from those which had leaped to the morning's *réveil*. There was doubt, and fear, and expectation on every brow, and surmise and intrigue in every whisper.

Blount took an opportunity to whisper into Raleigh's ear, 'This storm came like a levanter in the Mediterranean.'

'*Varium et mutabile*,' answered Raleigh, in a similar tone.

'Nay, I know nought of your Latin,' said Blount; 'but I thank God Tressilian took not the sea during that hurricane. He could scarce have missed shipwreck, knowing as he does so little how to trim his sails to a court gale.'

'Thou wouldst have instructed him?' said Raleigh.

'Why, I have profited by my time as well as thou, Sir Walter,' replied honest Blount. 'I am knight as well as thou and of the earlier creation.'

'Now, God further thy wit,' said Raleigh; but for Tressilian, I would I knew what were the matter with him. He told me this morning he would not leave his chamber for the space of twelve hours or thereby, being bound by a promise. This lady's madness, when he shall learn it, will not, I fear, cure his infirmity. The moon is at the fullest, and men's brains are working like yeast. But hark! they sound to mount. Let us to horse, Blount; we young knights must deserve our spurs.'

CHAPTER XXXV.

——— Sincerity,
Thou first of virtues! let no mortal leave
Thy onward path, although the earth should gape,
And from the gulf of hell destruction cry,
To take dissimulation's winding way.

DOUGLAS.

It was not till after a long and successful morning's sport, and a prolonged repast which followed the return of the queen to the castle, that Leicester at length found himself alone with Varney, from whom he now learned the whole particulars of the countess's escape, as they had been brought to Kenilworth by Foster, who, in his terror for the consequences, had himself posted thither with the tidings. As Varney, in his narrative, took especial care to be silent concerning those practices on the countess's health which had driven her to so desperate a resolution,

Leicester, who could only suppose that she had adopted it out of jealous impatience, to attain the avowed state and appearance belonging to her rank, was not a little offended at the levity with which his wife had broken his strict commands, and exposed him to the resentment of Elizabeth.

'I have given,' he said, 'to this daughter of an obscure Devonshire gentleman, the proudest name in England. I have made her sharer of my bed and of my fortunes. I ask but of her a little patience, ere she launches forth upon the full current of her grandeur, and the infatuated woman will rather hazard her own shipwreck and mine, will rather involve me in a thousand whirlpools, shoals, and quicksands, and compel me to a thousand devices which shame me in mine own eyes, than tarry for a little space longer in the obscurity to which she was born. So lovely, so delicate, so fond, so faithful—yet to lack in so grave a matter the prudence which one might hope from the veriest fool—it puts me beyond my patience.'

'We may post it over yet well enough,' said Varney, 'if my lady will be but ruled, and take on her the character which the time commands.'

'It is but too true, Sir Richard,' said Leicester, 'there is indeed no other remedy. I have heard her termed thy wife in my presence without contradiction. She must bear the title until she is far from Kenilworth.'

'And long afterwards, I trust,' said Varney; then instantly added, 'For I cannot but hope it will be long after ere she bear the title of Lady Leicester—I fear me it may scarce be with safety during the life of this Queen. But your lordship is best judge, you alone knowing what passages have taken place betwixt Elizabeth and you.'

'You are right, Varney,' said Leicester; 'I have this morning been both fool and villain; and when Elizabeth hears of my unhappy marriage, she cannot but think herself treated with that premeditated slight which women never forgive. We have once this day stood upon terms little short of defiance; and to those, I fear, we must again return.'

'Is her resentment, then, so implacable?' said Varney.

'Far from it,' replied the earl; 'for, being what she is in spirit and in station, she has even this day been but too condescending, in giving me opportunities to repair what she thinks my faulty heat of temper.'

'Ay,' answered Varney; 'the Italians say right—in lovers' quarrels, the party that loves most is always most willing to acknowledge the greater fault.—So then, my lord, if this union with the lady could be concealed, you stand with Elizabeth as you did?'

Leicester sighed, and was silent for a moment ere he replied.

'Varney, I think thou art true to me, and I will tell thee all. I do *not* stand where I did. I have spoken to Elizabeth—under what mad impulse I know not—on a theme which cannot be abandoned without touching every female feeling to the quick, and which yet I dare not and cannot prosecute. She can never, never forgive me, for having caused and witnessed those yieldings to human passion.'

'We must do something, my lord,' said Varney, 'and that speedily.'

'There is nought to be done,' answered Leicester despondingly; 'I am like one that has long toiled up a dangerous precipice, and when he is within one perilous stride of the top, finds his progress arrested when retreat has become impossible. I see above me the pinnacle which I cannot reach—beneath me the abyss into which I must fall, as soon as my relaxing grasp and dizzy brain join to hurl me from my present precarious stance.'

'Think better of your situation, my lord,' said Varney—'let us try the experiment in which you have but now acquiesced. Keep we your marriage from Elizabeth's knowledge, and all may yet be well. I will instantly go to the lady myself—She hates me, because I have been earnest with your lordship, as she truly suspects, in opposition to what she terms her rights. I care not for her prejudices—She *shall* listen to me; and I will show her such reasons for yielding to the pressure of the times, that I doubt not to bring back her consent to whatever measures these exigencies may require.'

'No, Varney,' said Leicester; 'I have thought upon what is to be done, and I will myself speak with Amy.'

It was now Varney's turn to feel, upon his own account, the terrors which he affected to participate solely on account of his patron. 'Your lordship will not yourself speak with the lady?'

'It is my fixed purpose,' said Leicester; 'fetch me one of the livery cloaks; I will pass the sentinel as thy servant. Thou art to have free access to her.'

'But, my lord'——

'I will have no *buts*,' replied Leicester; 'it shall be even thus, and not otherwise. Hunsdon sleeps, I think, in Saintlowe's Tower. We can go thither from these apartments by the private passage, without risk of meeting any one. Or what if I do meet Hunsdon? he is more my friend than enemy, and thick-witted enough to adopt any belief that is thrust on him. Fetch me the cloak instantly.'

Varney had no alternative save obedience. In a few minutes Leicester was muffled in the mantle, pulled his bonnet over his brows, and followed Varney along the secret passage of the castle which communicated with Hunsdon's apartments, in which there was scarce a chance of meeting any inquisitive person, and hardly light enough for any such to have satisfied their curiosity. They emerged at a door where Lord Hunsdon had, with military precaution, placed a sentinel, one of his own northern retainers as it fortuned, who readily admitted Sir Richard Varney and his attendant, saying only, in his northern dialect, 'I would, man, thou couldst make the mad lady be still yonder; for her moans do sae dirl through my head, that I would rather keep watch on a snow-drift in the wastes of Catlowdie.'

They hastily entered and shut the door behind them.

'Now, good devil, if there be one,' said Varney, within himself, 'for once help a votary at a dead pinch, for my boat is among the breakers!'

The Countess Amy, with her hair and her garments dishevelled, was seated upon a sort of couch, in an attitude of the deepest affliction, out of which she was startled by the opening of the door. She turned hastily round, and, fixing her eye on Varney, exclaimed, 'Wretch! art thou come to frame some new plan of villany?'

Leicester cut short her reproaches by stepping forward and dropping his cloak, while he said, in a voice rather of authority than of affection, 'It is with me, madam, you have to commune, not with Sir Richard Varney.'

The change effected on the countess's look and manner was like magic. 'Dudley!' she exclaimed, 'Dudley! and art thou come at last?' And with the speed of lightning she flew to her husband, clung around his neck, and, unheeding the presence of Varney, overwhelmed him with caresses, while she bathed his face in a flood of tears; muttering, at the same time, but in broken and disjointed monosyllables, the fondest expressions which love teaches his votaries.

Leicester, as it seemed to him, had reason to be angry with his lady for transgressing his commands, and thus placing him in the perilous situation in which he had that morning stood. But what displeasure could keep its ground before these testimonies of affection from a being so lovely, that even the negligence of dress, and the withering effects of fear, grief, and fatigue, which would have impaired the beauty of others, rendered hers but the more interesting? He received and repaid her caresses with fondness, mingled with melancholy, the last of which she seemed scarcely to observe, until the first transport of her own joy was over; when, looking anxiously in his face, she asked if he was ill.

'Not in my body, Amy,' was his answer.

'Then I will be well too.—O Dudley! I have been ill!—very ill, since we last met!—for I call not this morning's horrible vision a meeting. I have been in sickness, in grief, and in danger—But thou art come, and all is joy, and health, and safety!'

'Alas, Amy!' said Leicester, 'thou hast undone me!'

'I, my lord?' said Amy, her cheek at once losing its transient flush of joy,—'how could I injure that which I love better than myself?'

'I would not upbraid you, Amy,' replied the earl; 'but are you not here contrary to my express commands—and does not your presence here endanger both yourself and me?'

'Does it, does it indeed?' she exclaimed eagerly; 'then why am I here a moment longer? O, if you knew by what fears I was urged to quit Cumnor Place!—But I will say nothing of myself—only that if it might be otherwise, I would not willingly return *thither*;—yet if it concern your safety'——

'We will think, Amy, of some other retreat,' said Leicester; 'and you shall go to one of my northern castles, under the personage—it will be but needful, I trust, for a very few days—of Varney's wife.'

'How, my Lord of Leicester!' said the lady, disengaging herself from his embraces; 'is it to your wife you give the dishonourable counsel to acknowledge herself the bride of another—and of all men the bride of that Varney?'

'Madam, I speak it in earnest—Varney is my true and faithful servant, trusted in my deepest secrets. I had better lose my right hand than his service at this moment. You have no cause to scorn him as you do.'

'I could assign one, my lord,' replied the countess; 'and I see he shakes even under that assured look of his. But he that is necessary as your right hand to your safety, is free from any accusation of mine. May he be true to you; and that he may be true, trust him not too much or too far. But it is enough to say, that I will not go with him unless by violence, nor would I acknowledge him as my husband, were all'——

'It is a temporary deception, madam,' said Leicester, irritated by her opposition, 'necessary for both our safeties, endangered by you through female caprice, or the premature desire to seize on a rank to which I gave you title, only under condition that our marriage, for a time, should continue secret. If my proposal disgust you, it is yourself has brought it on both of us. There is no other remedy—you must do what your own impatient folly hath rendered necessary—I command you.'

'I cannot put your commands, my lord,' said Amy, 'in balance with those of honour and conscience. I will NOT, in this instance, obey you. You may achieve your own dishonour, to which these crooked policies naturally tend, but I will do nought that can blemish mine. How could you again, my lord, acknowledge me as a pure and chaste matron, worthy to share your fortunes, when, holding that high character, I had strolled the country the acknowledged wife of such a profligate fellow as your servant Varney?'

'My lord,' said Varney, interposing, 'my lady is too much prejudiced against me, unhappily, to listen to what I can offer; yet it may please her better than what she proposes. She has good interest with Master Edmund Tressilian, and could doubtless prevail on him to consent to be her companion to Lidcote Hall, and there she might remain in safety until time permitted the development of this mystery.'

Leicester was silent, but stood looking eagerly on Amy, with eyes which seemed suddenly to glow as much with suspicion as with pleasure.

The countess only said, 'Would to God I were in my father's house!—When I left it, I little thought I was leaving peace of mind and honour behind me!'

Varney proceeded with a tone of deliberation. 'Doubtless this will make it necessary to take strangers into my lord's counsels; but surely the countess will be warrant for the honour of Master Tressilian and such of her father's family'——

'Peace, Varney,' said Leicester; 'by Heaven, I will strike my dagger into thee, if again thou namest Tressilian as a partner of my counsels!'

'And wherefore not?' said the countess; 'unless they be counsels fitter for such as Varney, than for a man of stainless honour and integrity.—My lord, my lord, bend no angry brows on me—it is the truth, and it is I who speak it. I once did Tressilian wrong for your sake—I will not do him the further injustice of being silent when his honour is brought in question. I can forbear,' she said, looking at Varney, 'to pull

the mask off hypocrisy, but I will not permit virtue to be slandered in my hearing.'

There was a dead pause. Leicester stood displeased, yet undetermined, and too conscious of the weakness of his cause; while Varney, with a deep and hypocritical affectation of sorrow, mingled with humility, bent his eyes on the ground.

It was then that the Countess Amy displayed, in the midst of distress and difficulty, the natural energy of character, which would have rendered her, had fate allowed, a distinguished ornament of the rank which she held. She walked up to Leicester with a composed step, a dignified air, and looks in which strong affection essayed in vain to shake the firmness of conscious truth and rectitude of principle. 'You have spoke your mind, my lord,' she said, 'in these difficulties, with which, unhappily, I have found myself unable to comply. This gentleman—this person, I would say—has hinted at another scheme, to which I object not but as it displeases you. Will your lordship be pleased to hear what a young and timid woman, but your most affectionate wife, can suggest in the present extremity?'

Leicester was silent, but bent his head towards the countess, as an intimation that she was at liberty to proceed.

'There hath been but one cause for all these evils, my lord,' she proceeded, 'and it resolves itself into the mysterious duplicity with which you have been induced to surround yourself. Extricate yourself at once, my lord, from the tyranny of these disgraceful trammels. Be like a true English gentleman, knight, and earl, who holds that truth is the foundation of honour, and that honour is dear to him as the breath of his nostrils. Take your ill-fated wife by the hand, lead her to the footstool of Elizabeth's throne—Say, that in a moment of infatuation, moved by supposed beauty, of which none perhaps can now trace even the remains, I gave my hand to this Amy Robsart.—You will then have done justice to me, my lord, and to your own honour; and should law or power require you to part from me, I will oppose no objection—since I may then with honour hide a grieved and broken heart in those shades from which your love withdrew me. Then—have but a little patience, and Amy's life will not long darken your brighter prospects.'

There was so much of dignity, so much of tenderness, in the countess's remonstrance, that it moved all that was noble and generous in the soul of her husband. The scales seemed to fall from his eyes, and the duplicity and tergiversation of which he had been guilty, stung him at once with remorse and shame. 'I am not worthy of you, Amy,' he said, 'that could weigh aught which ambition has to give against such a heart as thine. I have a bitter penance to perform, in disentangling, before sneering foes and astounded friends, all the meshes of my own deceitful policy.—And the Queen—but let her take my head, as she has threatened.'

'Your head, my lord!' said the countess; 'because you used the freedom and liberty of an English subject in choosing a wife? For shame; it is this distrust of the Queen's justice, this apprehension of danger, which cannot but be imaginary, that, like scarecrows, have induced you to forsake the straightforward path, which, as it is the best, is also the safest.'

'Ah, Amy, thou little knowest!' said Dudley; but, instantly checking himself, he added, 'Yet she shall not find in me a safe or easy victim of arbitrary vengeance.—I have friends—I have allies—I will not, like Norfolk, be dragged to the block, as a victim to sacrifice. Fear not, Amy; thou shalt see Dudley bear himself worthy of his name. I must instantly communicate with some of those friends on whom I can best rely; for, as things stand, I may be made prisoner in my own castle.'

'O, my good lord,' said Amy, 'make no faction in a peaceful state! There is no friend can help us so well as our own candid truth and honour. Bring but these to our assistance, and you are safe amidst a whole army of the envious and malignant. Leave these behind you, and all other defence will be fruitless. Truth, my noble lord, is well painted unarmed.'

'But Wisdom, Amy,' answered Leicester, 'is arrayed in panoply of proof. Argue not with me on the means I shall use to render my confession—since it must be called so—as safe as may be; it will be fraught with enough of danger, do what we will.—Varney, we must hence.—Farewell, Amy, whom I am to vindicate as mine own, at an expense and risk of which thou alone couldst be worthy. You shall soon hear further from me.'

He embraced her fervently, muffled himself as before, and accompanied Varney from the apartment. The latter, as he left the room, bowed low, and, as he raised his body, regarded Amy with a peculiar expression, as if he desired to know how far his own pardon was included in the reconciliation which had taken place betwixt her and her lord. The countess looked upon him with a fixed eye, but seemed no more conscious of his presence than if there had been nothing but vacant air on the spot where he stood.

'She has brought me to the crisis,' he muttered—'She or I are lost. There was something—I wot not if it was fear or pity—that prompted me to avoid this fatal crisis. It is now decided—She or I must *perish*.'

While he thus spoke, he observed with surprise, that a boy, repulsed by the sentinel, made up to Leicester, and spoke with him. Varney was one of those politicians whom not the slightest appearances escape without inquiry. He asked the sentinel what the lad wanted with him, and received for answer, that the boy had wished him to transmit a parcel to the mad lady; but that he cared not to take charge of it, such communication being beyond his commission. His curiosity satisfied in that particular, he approached his patron, and heard him say—'Well, boy, the packet shall be delivered.'

'Thanks, good Master Serving-man,' said the boy, and was out of sight in an instant.

Leicester and Varney returned with hasty steps to the earl's private apartment, by the same passage which had conducted them to Saintlowe's Tower.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

—I have said
This is an adult'ress—I have said with whom;
More, she's a traitor, and Camillo is
A federary with her, and one that knows
What she should shame to know herself.
WINTER'S TALE.

THEY were no sooner in the earl's cabinet, than, taking his tablets from his pocket, he began to write, speaking partly to Varney, and partly to himself: 'There are many of them close bounden to me, and especially those in good estate and high office; many who, if they look back towards my benefits, or forward towards the perils which may befall themselves, will not, I think, be disposed to see me stagger unsupported. Let me see—Knollis is sure, and through his means Guernsey and Jersey—Horsey commands in the Isle of Wight—My brother-in-law, Huntingdon, and Pembroke, have authority in Wales—Through Bedford I lead the puritans, with their interest, so powerful in all the boroughs—My brother of Warwick is equal, well-nigh, to myself, in wealth, followers, and dependencies—Sir Owen Hopton is at my devotion; he commands the Tower of London, and the national treasure deposited there—My father and grandfather needed never to have stooped their heads to the block, had they thus forecast their enterprises.—Why look you so sad, Varney? I tell thee, a tree so deep rooted is not so easily to be torn up by the tempest!'

'Alas, my lord!' said Varney, with well-acted passion, and then resumed the same look of despondency which Leicester had before noted.

'Alas!' repeated Leicester; 'and wherefore alas, Sir Richard? Doth your new spirit of chivalry supply no more vigorous ejaculation, when a noble struggle is impending? Or, if *alas* means thou wilt flinch from the conflict, thou mayest leave the castle, or go join mine enemies, whichever thou thinkest best.'

'Not so, my lord,' answered his confidant; 'Varney will be found fighting or dying by your side. Forgive me, if in love to you, I see more fully than your noble heart permits you to do, the inextricable difficulties with which you are surrounded. You are strong, my lord, and powerful; yet, let me say it without offence, you are so only by the reflected light of the queen's favour. While you are Elizabeth's favourite, you are all, save in name, like an actual sovereign. But let her call back the honours she has bestowed, and the prophet's gourd did not wither more suddenly. Declare against the queen, and I do not say that in the wide nation, or in this province alone, you would find yourself instantly deserted and outnumbered; but I will say, that even in this very castle, and in the midst of your vassals, kinsmen, and dependents, you would be a captive, nay, a sentenced captive, should she please to say the word. Think upon Norfolk, my lord—upon the powerful Northumberland—the splendid Westmoreland;—think on all who have made head against this sage princess. They are dead, captive, or fugitive. This is not like other thrones, which can be overturned by a combination of powerful nobles; the broad foundations which support it are in the extended love and affections of the people. You might share it with Elizabeth if you would; but neither yours nor any other power, foreign or domestic, will avail to overthrow, or even to shake it.'

He paused, and Leicester threw his tablets from him with an air of reckless despite. 'It may be as thou sayest,' he said; 'and, in sooth, I care not whether truth or cowardice dictate thy forebodings. But it shall not be said I fell without a struggle.—Give orders, that those of my retainers who served under me in Ireland be gradually drawn into the main keep, and let our gentlemen and friends stand on their guard, and go armed, as if they expected an onset from the followers of Sussex. Possess the townspeople with some apprehension; let them take arms, and be ready, at a given signal, to overpower the Pensioners and Yeomen of the Guard.'

'Let me remind you, my lord,' said Varney, with the same appearance of deep and melancholy interest, 'that you have given me orders to prepare for disarming the Queen's guard. It is an act of high treason, but you shall nevertheless be obeyed.'

'I care not,' said Leicester desperately;—'I care not. Shame is behind me, ruin before me; I must on.'

Here there was another pause, which Varney at length broke with the following words:—'It is come to the point I have long dreaded. I must either witness, like an ungrateful beast, the downfall of the best and kindest of masters, or I must speak what I would have buried in the deepest oblivion, or told by any other mouth than mine.'

'What is that thou sayest, or wouldst say?' replied the earl; 'we have no time to waste on words, when the times call us to action.'

'My speech is soon made, my lord—would to God it were as soon answered! Your marriage is the sole cause of the threatened breach with your sovereign, my lord, is it not?'

'Thou knowest it is!' replied Leicester. 'What needs so fruitless a question?'

'Pardon me, my lord,' said Varney; 'the use lies here. Men will wager their lands and lives in defence of a rich diamond, my lord; but were it not first prudent to look if there is no flaw in it?'

'What means this?' said Leicester, with eyes sternly fixed on his dependent; 'of whom dost thou dare to speak?'

'It is——of the Countess Amy, my lord, of whom I am unhappily bound to speak; and of whom I *will* speak, were your lordship to kill me for my zeal.'

'Thou mayest happen to deserve it at my hand,' said the earl; 'but speak on, I will hear thee.'

'Nay, then, my lord, I will be bold. I speak for my own life as well as for your lordship's. I like not this lady's tampering and trickstering with this same Edmund Tressilian. You know him, my lord. You know he had formerly an interest in her, which it cost your lordship some pains to supersede. You know the eagerness with which he has pressed on the suit against me in behalf of this lady, the open object of

which is to drive your lordship to an avowal of what I must ever call your most unhappy marriage, the point to which my lady also is willing, at any risk, to urge you.'

Leicester smiled constrainedly. 'Thou meanest well, good Sir Richard, and wouldst, I think, sacrifice thine own honour, as well as that of any other person, to save me from what thou think'st a step so terrible. But, remember,'—he spoke these words with the most stern decision,—'you speak of the Countess of Leicester.'

'I do, my lord,' said Varney; 'but it is for the welfare of the Earl of Leicester. My tale is but begun. I do most strongly believe that this Tressilian has, from the beginning of his moving in her cause, been in connivance with her ladyship the countess.'

'Thou speak'st wild madness, Varney, with the sober face of a preacher. Where or how could they communicate together?'

'My lord,' said Varney, 'unfortunately I can show that but too well. It was just before the supplication was presented to the Queen, in Tressilian's name, that I met him, to my utter astonishment, at the postern-gate which leads from the demesne at Cumnor Place.'

'Thou mett'st him, villain! and why didst thou not strike him dead?' exclaimed Leicester.

'I drew on him, my lord, and he on me; and had not my foot slipped, he would not, perhaps, have been again a stumbling-block in your lordship's path.'

Leicester seemed struck dumb with surprise. At length he answered, 'What other evidence hast thou of this, Varney, save thine own assertion?—for, as I will punish deeply, I will examine coolly and warily. Sacred Heaven! but no—I will examine coldly and warily—coldly and warily.' He repeated these words more than once to himself, as if in the very sound there was a sedative quality; and again compressing his lips, as if he feared some violent expression might escape from them, he asked again, 'What further proof?'

'Enough, my lord,' said Varney, 'and to spare. I would it rested with me alone, for with me it might have been silenced for ever. But my servant, Michael Lambourne, witnessed the whole, and was, indeed, the means of first introducing Tressilian into Cumnor Place; and therefore I took him into my service, and retained him in it, though something of a debauched fellow, that I might have his tongue always under my own command.' He then acquainted Lord Leicester how easy it was to prove the circumstances of their interview true, by evidence of Anthony Foster, with the corroborative testimonies of the various persons at Cumnor, who had heard the wager laid, and had seen Lambourne and Tressilian set off together. In the whole narrative, Varney hazarded nothing fabulous, excepting that, not indeed by direct assertion, but by inference, he led his patron to suppose that the interview betwixt Amy and Tressilian at Cumnor Place had been longer than the few minutes to which it was in reality limited.

'And wherefore was I not told of all this?' said Leicester sternly. 'Why did all of ye—and in particular thou, Varney—keep back from me such material information?'

'Because, my lord,' replied Varney, "the countess pretended to Foster and to me that Tressilian had intruded himself upon her; and I concluded their interview had been in all honour, and that she would at her own time tell it to your lordship. Your lordship knows with what unwilling ears we listen to evil surmises against those whom we love; and I thank Heaven, I am no make-bate or informer, to be the first to sow them.'

'You are but too ready to receive them, however, Sir Richard,' replied his patron. 'How knowest thou that this interview was not in all honour, as thou hast said? Methinks the wife of the Earl of Leicester might speak for a short time with such a person as Tressilian, without injury to me or suspicion to herself.'

'Questionless, my lord,' answered Varney; 'had I thought otherwise, I had been no keeper of the secret. But here lies the rub—Tressilian leaves not the place without establishing a correspondence with a poor man, the landlord of an inn in Cumnor, for the purpose of carrying off the lady. He sent down an emissary of his, whom I trust soon to have in right sure keeping under Mervyn's Tower. Killigrew and Lambsbey are scouring the country in quest of him. The host is rewarded with a ring for keeping counsel—your lordship may have noted it on Tressilian's hand—here it is. This fellow, this agent, makes his way to the place as a pedlar, holds conferences with the lady, and they make their escape together by night—rob a poor fellow of a horse by the way, such was their guilty haste; and at length reach this castle, where the Countess of Leicester finds refuge—I dare not say in what place.'

'Speak, I command thee,' said Leicester; 'speak while I retain sense enough to hear thee.'

'Since it must be so,' answered Varney, 'the lady resorted immediately to the apartment of Tressilian, where she remained many hours, partly in company with him, and partly alone. I told you Tressilian had a paramour in his chamber—I little dreamed that paramour was'——

'Amy, thou wouldst say,' answered Leicester; 'but it is false, false as the smoke of hell! Ambitious she may be—fickle and impatient—'tis a woman's fault; but false to me!—never, never.—The proof—the proof of this?' he exclaimed hastily.

'Carrol, the deputy marshal, ushered her thither, by her own desire, on yesterday afternoon—Lambourne and the warder both found her there at an early hour this morning.'

'Was Tressilian there with her?' said Leicester, in the same hurried tone.

'No, my lord. You may remember,' answered Varney, 'that he was that night placed with Sir Nicholas Blount, under a species of arrest.'

'Did Carrol, or the other fellows, know who she was?' demanded Leicester.

'No, my lord,' replied Varney; 'Carrol and the warder had never seen the countess, and Lambourne knew her not in her disguise; but, in seeking to prevent her leaving the cell, he obtained possession of one of her gloves, which, I think, your lordship may know.'

He gave the glove which had the Bear and Ragged Staff, the earl's impress, embroidered upon it in seed pearls.

'I do, I do recognise it,' said Leicester. 'They were my own gift. The fellow of it was on the arm which she threw this very day around my neck!'—He spoke this with violent agitation.

'Your lordship,' said Varney, 'might yet further inquire of the lady herself, respecting the truth of these passages.'

'It needs not—it needs not,' said the tortured earl; 'it is written in characters of burning light, as if they were branded on my very eyeballs! I see her infamy—I can see nought else; and—gracious Heaven!—for this vile woman was I about to commit to danger the lives of so many noble friends—shake the foundation of a lawful throne—carry the sword and torch through the bosom of a peaceful land—wrong the kind mistress who made me what I am—and would, but for that hell-framed marriage, have made me all that man can be! All this I was ready to do for a woman, who trinkets and traffics with my worst foes!—And thou, villain, why didst thou not speak sooner?'

'My lord,' said Varney, 'a tear from my lady would have blotted out all I could have said. Besides, I had not these proofs until this very morning, when Anthony Foster's sudden arrival, with the examinations and declarations, which he had extorted from the innkeeper Gosling, and others, explained the manner of her flight from Cumnor Place, and my own researches discovered the steps which she had taken here.'

'Now, may God be praised for the light he has given! so full, so satisfactory, that there breathes not a man in England who shall call my proceeding rash, or my revenge unjust.—And yet, Varney, so young, so fair, so fawning, and so false! Hence, then, her hatred to thee, my trusty, my well-beloved servant, because you withstood her plots, and endangered her paramour's life!'

'I never gave her any other cause of dislike, my lord,' replied Varney; 'but she knew that my counsels went directly to diminish her influence with your lordship; and that I was, and have been, ever ready to peril my life against your enemies.'

'It is too, too apparent,' replied Leicester; 'yet, with what an air of magnanimity she exhorted me to commit my head to the Queen's mercy, rather than wear the veil of falsehood a moment longer! Methinks the angel of truth himself can have no such tones of high-souled impulse. Can it be so, Varney?—Can falsehood use thus boldly the language of truth?—Can infamy thus assume the guise of purity?—Varney, thou hast been my servant from a child—I have raised thee high—can raise thee higher. Think, think for me! Thy brain was ever shrewd and piercing—May she not be innocent? Prove her so, and all I have yet done for thee shall be as nothing—nothing—in comparison of thy recompense!'

The agony with which his master spoke had some effect even on the hardened Varney, who, in the midst of his own wicked and ambitious designs, really loved his patron as well as such a wretch was capable of loving anything; but he comforted himself, and subdued his self-reproaches, with the reflection, that if he inflicted upon the earl some immediate and transitory pain, it was in order to pave his way to the throne, which, were this marriage dissolved by death or otherwise, he deemed Elizabeth would willingly share with his benefactor. He therefore persevered in his diabolical policy; and, after a moment's consideration, answered the anxious queries of the earl with a melancholy look, as if he had in vain sought some exculpation for the countess; then suddenly raising his head, he said with an expression of hope, which instantly communicated itself to the countenance of his patron—'Yet wherefore, if guilty, should she have perilled herself by coming hither? Why not rather have fled to her father's or elsewhere?—though that, indeed, might have interfered with her desire to be acknowledged as Countess of Leicester.'

'True, true, true!' exclaimed Leicester, his transient gleam of hope giving way to the utmost bitterness of feeling and expression; 'thou art not fit to fathom a woman's depth of wit, Varney. I see it all. She would not quit the estate and title of the wittol who had wedded her. Ay, and if in my madness I had started into rebellion, or if the angry Queen had taken my head, as she this morning threatened, the wealthy dower which law would have assigned to the Countess Dowager of Leicester, had been no bad windfall to the beggarly Tressilian. Well might she goad me on to danger, which could not end otherwise than profitably to her.—Speak not for her, Varney! I will have her blood!'

'My lord,' replied Varney, 'the wildness of your distress breaks forth in the wildness of your language.'

'I say, speak not for her!' replied Leicester; 'she has dishonoured me—she would have murdered me—all ties are burst between us. She shall die the death of a traitress and adulteress, well merited both by the laws of God and man! And—what is this casket,' he said, 'which was even now thrust into my hand by a boy, with the desire I would convey it to Tressilian, as he could not give it to the countess? By Heaven! the words surprised me as he spoke them, though other matters chased them from my brain; but now they return with double force.—It is her casket of jewels!—Force it open, Varney; force the hinges open with thy poniard.'

'She refused the aid of my dagger once,' thought Varney, as he unsheathed the weapon to cut the string which bound a letter, 'but now it shall work a mightier ministry in her fortunes.'

With this reflection, by using the three-cornered stiletto-blade as a wedge, he forced open the slender silver hinges of the casket. The earl no sooner saw them give way, than he snatched the casket from Sir Richard's hand, wrenched off the cover, and, tearing out the splendid contents, flung them on the floor in a transport of rage, while he eagerly searched for some letter or billet, which should make the fancied guilt of his innocent countess yet more

apparent. Then stamping furiously on the gems, he exclaimed, 'Thus I annihilate the miserable toys for which thou hast sold thyself, body and soul, consigned thyself to an early and timeless death, and me to misery and remorse for ever! —Tell me not of forgiveness, Varney—She is doomed!'

So saying, he left the room, and rushed into an adjacent closet, the door of which he locked and bolted.

Varney looked after him, while something of a more human feeling seemed to contend with his habitual sneer. 'I am sorry for his weakness,' he said, 'but love has made him a child. He throws down and treads on these costly toys—with the same vehemence would he dash to pieces this frailest toy of all, of which he used to rave so fondly. But that taste also will be forgotten when its object is no more. Well, he has no eye to value things as they deserve, and that nature has given to Varney. When Leicester shall be a sovereign, he will think as little of the gales of passion through which he gained that royal port, as ever did sailor in harbour of the perils of a voyage. But these tell-tale articles must not remain here—they are rather too rich vails for the drudges who dress the chamber.'

While Varney was employed in gathering together and putting them into a secret drawer of a cabinet that chanced to be open, he saw the door of Leicester's closet open, the tapestry pushed aside, and the earl's face thrust out, but with eyes so dead, and lips and cheeks so bloodless and pale, that he started at the sudden change. No sooner did his eyes encounter the earl's than the latter withdrew his head, and shut the door of the closet. This manœuvre Leicester repeated twice, without speaking a word, so that Varney began to doubt whether his brain was not actually affected by his mental agony. The third time, however, he beckoned, and Varney obeyed the signal. When he entered, he soon found his patron's perturbation was not caused by insanity, but by the fellness of purpose which he entertained, contending with various contrary passions. They passed a full hour in close consultation; after which the Earl of Leicester, with an incredible exertion, dressed himself, and went to attend his royal guest.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
With most admired disorder.

MACBETH.

IT was afterwards remembered, that during the banquets and revels which occupied the remainder of this eventful day, the bearing of Leicester and Varney was totally different from their usual demeanour. Sir Richard Varney had been held rather a man of counsel and of action, than a votary of pleasure. Business, whether civil or military, seemed always to be his proper sphere; and while in festivals and revels, although he well understood how to trick them up and present them, his own part was that of a mere spectator; or if he exercised his wit, it was in a rough, caustic, and severe manner, rather as if he scoffed at the exhibition and the guests, than shared the common pleasure.

But upon the present day his character seemed changed. He mixed among the younger courtiers and ladies, and appeared for the moment to be actuated by a spirit of light-hearted gaiety, which rendered him a match for the liveliest. Those who had looked upon him as a man given up to graver and more ambitious pursuits, a bitter sneerer and passer of sarcasms at the expense of those who, taking life as they find it, were disposed to snatch at each pastime it presents, now perceived with astonishment that his wit could carry as smooth an edge as their own, his laugh be as lively, and his brow as unclouded. By what art of damnable hypocrisy he could draw this veil of gaiety over the black thoughts of one of the worst of human bosoms, must remain unintelligible to all but his compeers, if any such ever existed; but he was a man of extraordinary powers, and those powers were unhappily dedicated in all their energy to the very worst of purposes.

It was entirely different with Leicester. However habituated his mind usually was to play the part of a good courtier, and appear gay, assiduous, and free from all care but that of enhancing the pleasure of the moment, while his bosom internally throbbed with the pangs of unsatisfied ambition, jealousy, or resentment, his heart had now a yet more dreadful guest, whose workings could not be overshadowed or suppressed; and you might read in his vacant eye and troubled brow, that his thoughts were far absent from the scenes in which he was compelling himself to play a part. He looked, moved, and spoke, as if by a succession of continued efforts; and it seemed as if his will had in some degree lost the promptitude of command over the acute mind and goodly form of which it was the regent. His actions and gestures, instead of appearing the consequence of simple volition, seemed, like those of an automaton, to wait the revolution of some internal machinery ere they could be performed; and his words fell from him piecemeal, interrupted, as if he had first to think what he was to say, then how it was to be said, and as if, after all, it was only by an effort of continued attention that he completed a sentence without forgetting both the one and the other.

The singular effects which these distractions of mind produced upon the behaviour and conversation of the most accomplished courtier of England, as they were visible to the lowest and dullest menial who approached his person, could not escape the notice of the most intelligent princess of the age. Nor is there the least doubt that the alternate negligence and irregularity of his manner would have called down Elizabeth's severe displeasure on the Earl of Leicester, had it not occurred to her to account for it by supposing that the apprehension of that displeasure which she had expressed towards him with such vivacity that very morning, was dwelling upon the spirits of her fav[illegible] and, spite of his efforts to the contrary, dis[illegible] the usual graceful tenor of his mien and charms of his conversation. When this

so flattering to female vanity, had once obtained possession of her mind, it proved a full and satisfactory apology for the numerous errors and mistakes of the Earl of Leicester; and the watchful circle around observed with astonishment that, instead of resenting his repeated negligence, and want of even ordinary attention (although these were points on which she was usually extremely punctilious), the queen sought, on the contrary, to afford him time and means to recollect himself, and deigned to assist him in doing so, with an indulgence which seemed altogether inconsistent with her usual character. It was clear, however, that this could not last much longer, and that Elizabeth must finally put another and more severe construction on Leicester's uncourteous conduct, when the earl was summoned by Varney to speak with him in a different apartment.

After having had the message twice delivered to him, he rose, and was about to withdraw, as it were by instinct—then stopped, and, turning round, entreated permission of the queen to absent himself for a brief space upon matters of pressing importance.

'Go, my lord,' said the queen; 'we are aware our presence must occasion sudden and unexpected occurrences, which require to be provided for on the instant. Yet, my lord, as you would have us believe ourself your welcome and honoured guest, we entreat you to think less of our good cheer, and favour us with more of your good countenance, than we have this day enjoyed; for whether prince or peasant be the guest, the welcome of the host will always be the better part of the entertainment. Go, my lord; and we trust to see you return with an unwrinkled brow, and those free thoughts which you are wont to have at the disposal of your friends.'

Leicester only bowed low in answer to this rebuke, and retired. At the door of the apartment he was met by Varney, who eagerly drew him apart, and whispered in his ear, 'All is well!'

'Has Masters seen her?' said the earl.

'He has, my lord; and as she would neither answer his queries, nor allege any reason for her refusal, he will give full testimony that she labours under a mental disorder, and may be best committed to the charge of her friends. The opportunity is therefore free, to remove her as we proposed.'

'But Tressilian?' said Leicester.

'He will not know of her departure for some time,' replied Varney; 'it shall take place this very evening, and to-morrow he shall be cared for.'

'No, by my soul,' answered Leicester; 'I will take vengeance on him with mine own hand!'

'You, my lord, and on so inconsiderable a man as Tressilian! No, my lord, he hath long wished to visit foreign parts. Trust him to me—I will take care he returns not hither to tell tales.'

'Not so, by Heaven, Varney!' exclaimed Leicester. 'Inconsiderable do you call an enemy, that hath had power to wound me so deeply, that my whole after life must be one scene of remorse and misery!—No; rather than forego the right of doing myself justice with my hand on that accursed villain, I will unfold the whole truth at Elizabeth's footstool, and let her vengeance descend at once on them and on myself.'

Varney saw with great alarm that his lord was wrought up to such a pitch of agitation, that, if he gave not way to him, he was perfectly capable of adopting the desperate resolution which he had announced, and which was instant ruin to all the schemes of ambition which Varney had formed for his patron and for himself. But the earl's rage seemed at once uncontrollable and deeply concentrated; and while he spoke, his eyes shot fire, his voice trembled with excess of passion, and the light foam stood on his lip.

His confidant made a bold and successful effort to obtain the mastery of him even in this hour of emotion.—'My lord,' he said, leading him to a mirror, 'behold your reflection in that glass, and think if these agitated features belong to one who, in a condition so extreme, is capable of forming a resolution for himself.'

'What, then, wouldst thou make me?' said Leicester, struck at the change in his own physiognomy, though offended at the freedom with which Varney made the appeal. 'Am I to be thy ward, thy vassal,—the property and subject of my servant?'

'No, my lord,' said Varney firmly, 'but be master of yourself, and of your own passion. My lord, I, your born servant, am shamed to see how poorly you bear yourself in the storm of fury. Go to Elizabeth's feet, confess your marriage—impeach your wife and her paramour of adultery—and avow yourself, amongst all your peers, the wittol who married a country girl, and was cozened by her and her book-learned gallant.—Go, my lord—but first take farewell of Richard Varney, with all the benefits you ever conferred on him. He served the noble, the lofty, the high-minded Leicester, and was more proud of depending on him than he would be of commanding thousands. But the abject lord who stoops to every adverse circumstance, whose judicious resolves are scattered like chaff before every wind of passion, him Richard Varney serves not. He is as much above him in constancy of mind, as beneath him in rank and fortune.'

Varney spoke thus without hypocrisy, for, though the firmness of mind which he boasted was hardness and impenetrability, yet he really felt the ascendency which he vaunted; while the interest which he actually felt in the fortunes of Leicester gave unusual emotion to his voice and manner.

Leicester was overpowered by his assumed superiority; it seemed to the unfortunate earl as if his last friend was about to abandon him. He stretched his hand towards Varney, as he uttered the words, 'Do not leave me—What wouldst thou have me do?'

'Be thyself, my noble master,' said Varney, touching the earl's hand with his lips, after having respectfully grasped it in his own; 'be yourself, superior to those storms of passion which wreck inferior minds. Are you the first who has been cozened in love? The first whom a vain and licentious woman has cheated into an affection, which she has afterwards scorned and misused? And will you suffer yourself to be driven frantic, because you have not been

wiser than the wisest men whom the world has seen? Let her be as if she had not been—let her pass from your memory as unworthy of ever having held a place there. Let your strong resolve of this morning, which I have both courage, zeal, and means enough to execute, be like the fiat of a superior being, a passionless act of justice. She hath deserved death—let her die!'

While he was speaking, the earl held his hand fast, compressed his lips hard, and frowned, as if he laboured to catch from Varney a portion of the cold, ruthless, and dispassionate firmness which he recommended. When he was silent, the earl still continued to grasp his hand, until, with an effort at calm decision, he was able to articulate, 'Be it so—she dies!—But one tear might be permitted.'

'Not one, my lord,' interrupted Varney, who saw, by the quivering eye and convulsed cheek of his patron, that he was about to give way to a burst of emotion,—'Not a tear—the time permits it not—Tressilian must be thought of'——

'That indeed is a name,' said the earl, 'to convert tears into blood. Varney, I have thought on this, and I have determined—neither entreaty nor argument shall move me—Tressilian shall be my own victim.'

'It is madness, my lord; but you are too mighty for me to bar your way to your revenge. Yet resolve at least to choose fitting time and opportunity, and to forbear him until these shall be found.'

'Thou shalt order me in what thou wilt,' said Leicester, 'only thwart me not in this.'

'Then, my lord,' said Varney, 'I first request of you to lay aside the wild, suspected, and half-frenzied demeanour, which hath this day drawn the eyes of all the court upon you; and which, but for the Queen's partial indulgence, which she hath extended towards you in a degree far beyond her nature, she had never given you the opportunity to atone for.'

'Have I indeed been so negligent?' said Leicester, as one who awakes from a dream; 'I thought I had coloured it well; but fear nothing, my mind is now eased—I am calm. My horoscope shall be fulfilled; and that it may be fulfilled, I will tax to the highest every faculty of my mind. Fear me not, I say,—I will to the Queen instantly—not thine own looks and language shall be more impenetrable than mine. —Hast thou aught else to say?'

'I must crave your signet-ring,' said Varney gravely, 'in token to those of your servants whom I must employ, that I possess your full authority in commanding their aid.'

Leicester drew off the signet-ring which he commonly used, and gave it to Varney with a haggard and stern expression of countenance, adding only, in a low, half-whispered tone, but with terrific emphasis, the words, 'What thou dost, do quickly.'*

Some anxiety and wonder took place, meanwhile, in the presence-hall, at the prolonged absence of the noble lord of the castle, and great was the delight of his friends when they saw him enter, as a man from whose bosom, to all human seeming, a weight of care had been just removed. Amply did Leicester that day redeem the pledge he had given to Varney, who soon saw himself no longer under the necessity of maintaining a character so different from his own, as that which he had assumed in the earlier part of the day, and gradually relapsed into the same grave, shrewd, caustic observer of conversation and incident, which constituted his usual part in society.

With Elizabeth, Leicester played his game as one to whom her natural strength of talent, and her weakness in one or two particular points, were well known. He was too wary to exchang on a sudden the sullen personage which he had played before he retired with Varney; but, on approaching her, it seemed softened into a melancholy, which had a touch of tenderness in it, and which, in the course of conversing with Elizabeth, and as she dropped in compassion one mark of favour after another to console him, passed into a flow of affectionate gallantry, the most assiduous, the most delicate, the most insinuating, yet at the same time the most respectful, with which a queen was ever addressed by a subject. Elizabeth listened, as in a sort of enchantment; her jealousy of power was lulled asleep; her resolution to forsake all social or domestic ties, and dedicate herself exclusively to the care of her people, began to be shaken, and once more the star of Dudley culminated in the court horizon.

But Leicester did not enjoy this triumph over nature and over conscience, without its being embittered to him, not only by the internal rebellion of his feelings against the violence which he exercised over them, but by many accidental circumstances, which, in the course of the banquet, and during the subsequent amusements of the evening, jarred upon that nerve, the least vibration of which was agony.

The courtiers were, for example, in the great hall, after having left the banqueting-room, awaiting the appearance of a splendid masque, which was the expected entertainment of this evening, when the queen interrupted a wild career of wit, which the Earl of Leicester was running against Lord Willoughby, Raleigh, and some other courtiers, by saying—'We will impeach you of high treason, my lord, if you proceed in this attempt to slay us with laughter. And here comes a thing may make us all grave at his pleasure, our learned physician Masters, with news belike of our poor suppliant, Lady Varney—nay, my lord, we will not have you leave us, for this being a dispute betwixt married persons, we do not hold our own experience deep enough to decide thereon, without good counsel. —How now, Masters, what think'st thou of the runaway bride?'

The smile with which Leicester had been speaking, when the queen interrupted him, remained arrested on his lips, as if it had been carved there by the chisel of Michael Angelo or of Chantrey; and he listened to the speech of the physician with the same immoveable cast of countenance.

'The Lady Varney, gracious sovereign,' said the court physician Masters, 'is sullen, and would hold little conference with me touching the state of her health, talking wildly of being soon to plead her own cause before your own presence, and of answering no meaner person's inquiries.'

'Now, the heavens forfend!' said the queen; 'we have already suffered from the misconstructions and broils which seem to follow this poor brain-sick lady wherever she comes.—Think you not so, my lord?' she added, appealing to Leicester, with something in her look that indicated regret, even tenderly expressed, for their disagreement of that morning. Leicester compelled himself to bow low. The utmost force he could exert was inadequate to the further effort of expressing in words his acquiescence in the queen's sentiment.

'You are vindictive,' she said, 'my lord; but we will find time and place to punish you. But once more to this same trouble-mirth, this Lady Varney—What of her health, Masters?'

'She is sullen, madam, as I already said,' replied Masters, 'and refuses to answer interrogatories, or be amenable to the authority of the mediciner. I conceive her to be possessed with a delirium, which I incline to term rather *hypochondria* than *phrenesis;* and I think she were best cared for by her husband in his own house, and removed from all this bustle of pageants, which disturbs her weak brain with the most fantastic phantoms. She drops hints as if she were some great person in disguise—some countess or princess perchance. God help them, such are often the hallucinations of these infirm persons!'

'Nay, then,' said the queen, 'away with her with all speed. Let Varney care for her with fitting humanity; but let them rid the castle of her forthwith. She will think herself lady of all, I warrant you. It is pity so fair a form, however, should have an infirm understanding.—What think you, my lord?'

'It is pity indeed,' said the earl, repeating the words like a task which was set him.

'But perhaps,' said Elizabeth, 'you do not join with us in our opinion of her beauty; and indeed we have known men prefer a statelier and more Juno-like form, to that drooping fragile one, that hung its head like a broken lily. Ay, men are tyrants, my lord, who esteem the animation of the strife above the triumph of an unresisting conquest, and, like sturdy champions, love best those women who can wage contest with them.—I could think with you, Rutland, that, give my Lord of Leicester such a piece of painted wax for a bride, he would have wished her dead ere the end of the honeymoon.'

As she said this, she looked on Leicester so expressively, that, while his heart revolted against the egregious falsehood, he did himself so much violence as to reply in a whisper, that Leicester's love was more lowly than her Majesty deemed, since it was settled where he could never command, but must ever obey.

The queen blushed, and bid him be silent; yet looked as if she expected that he would not obey her commands. But at that moment the flourish of trumpets and kettledrums from a high balcony which overlooked the hall, announced the entrance of the masquers, and relieved Leicester from the horrible state of constraint and dissimulation in which the result of his own duplicity had placed him.

The masque which entered consisted of four separate bands, which followed each other at brief intervals, each consisting of six principal persons and as many torch-bearers, and each representing one of the various nations by which England had at different times been occupied.

The aboriginal Britons, who first entered, were ushered in by two ancient Druids, whose hoary hair was crowned with a chaplet of oak, and who bore in their hands branches of mistletoe. The masquers who followed these venerable figures were succeeded by two bards, arrayed in white, and bearing harps, which they occasionally touched, singing at the same time certain stanzas of an ancient hymn to Belus, or the Sun. The aboriginal Britons had been selected from amongst the tallest and most robust young gentlemen in attendance on the court. Their masks were accommodated with long shaggy beards and hair; their vestments were of the hides of wolves and bears; while their legs, arms, and the upper parts of their bodies, being sheathed in flesh-coloured silk, on which were traced in grotesque lines representations of the heavenly bodies, and of animals and other terrestrial objects, gave them the lively appearance of our painted ancestors, whose freedom was first trenched upon by the Romans.

The sons of Rome, who came to civilise as well as to conquer, were next produced before the princely assembly; and the manager of the revels had correctly imitated the high crest and military habits of that celebrated people, accommodating them with the light yet strong buckler, and the short two-edged sword, the use of which had made them victors of the world. The Roman eagles were borne before them by two standard-bearers, who recited a hymn to Mars, and the classical warriors followed with the grave and haughty step of men who aspired at universal conquest.

The third quadrille represented the Saxons, clad in the bearskins which they had brought with them from the German forests, and bearing in their hands the redoubtable battle-axes which made such havoc among the natives of Britain. They were preceded by two scalds, who chanted the praises of Odin.

Last came the knightly Normans, in their mail-shirts and hoods of steel, with all the panoply of chivalry, and marshalled by two minstrels, who sung of war and ladies' love.

These four bands entered the spacious hall with the utmost order, a short pause being made, that the spectators might satisfy their curiosity as to each quadrille before the appearance of the next. They then marched completely round the hall, in order the more fully to display themselves, regulating their steps to organs, shalms, hautboys, and virginals, the music of the Lord Leicester's household. At length the four quadrilles of masquers, ranging their torch-bearers behind them, drew up in their several ranks, on the two opposite sides of the hall, so that the Romans confronting the Britons, and the Saxons the Normans, seemed to look on each other with eyes of wonder, which presently appeared to kindle into anger, expressed by menacing gestures. At the burst of a strain of martial music from the gallery, the masquers drew their swords on all sides, and advanced against each other in the measured steps of a sort of Pyrrhic

or military dance, clashing their swords against their adversaries' shields, and clattering them against their blades as they passed each other in the progress of the dance. It was a very pleasant spectacle to see how the various bands, preserving regularity amid motions which seemed to be totally irregular, mixed together, and then, disengaging themselves, resumed each their own original rank as the music varied.

In this symbolical dance were represented the conflicts which had taken place among the various nations which had anciently inhabited Britain.

At length, after many mazy evolutions, which afforded great pleasure to the spectators, the sound of a loud-voiced trumpet was heard, as if it blew for instant battle, or for victory won. The masquers instantly ceased their mimic strife, and, collecting themselves under their original leaders, or presenters, for such was the appropriate phrase, seemed to share the anxious expectation which the spectators experienced concerning what was next to appear.

The doors of the hall were thrown wide, and no less a person entered than the fiend-born Merlin, dressed in a strange and mystical attire, suited to his ambiguous birth and magical power. About him and behind him fluttered or gambolled many extraordinary forms, intended to represent the spirits who waited to do his powerful bidding; and so much did this part of the pageant interest the menials and others of the lower class then in the castle, that many of them forgot even the reverence due to the queen's presence, so far as to thrust themselves into the lower part of the hall.

The Earl of Leicester, seeing his officers had some difficulty to repel these intruders without more disturbance than was fitting where the queen was in presence, arose and went himself to the bottom of the hall; Elizabeth, at the same time, with her usual feeling for the common people, requesting that they might be permitted to remain undisturbed to witness the pageant. Leicester went under this pretext; but his real motive was to gain a moment to himself, and to relieve his mind, were it but for an instant, from the dreadful task of hiding, under the guise of gaiety and gallantry, the lacerating pangs of shame, anger, remorse, and thirst for vengeance. He imposed silence by his look and sign upon the vulgar crowd at the lower end of the apartment; but instead of instantly returning to wait on her Majesty, he wrapped his cloak around him, and, mixing with the crowd, stood in some degree an undistinguished spectator of the progress of the masque.

Merlin having entered, and advanced into the midst of the hall, summoned the presenters of the contending bands around him by a wave of his magical rod, and announced to them, in a poetic speech, that the isle of Britain was now commanded by a Royal Maiden, to whom it was the will of fate that they should all do homage, and request of her to pronounce on the various pretensions which each set forth to be esteemed the pre-eminent stock from which the present natives, the happy subjects of that angelical princess, derived their lineage.

In obedience to this mandate, the bands, each moving to solemn music, passed in succession before Elizabeth; doing her as they passed, each after the fashion of the people whom they represented, the lowest and most devotional homage, which she returned with the same gracious courtesy that had marked her whole conduct since she came to Kenilworth.

The presenters of the several masques or quadrilles then alleged, each in behalf of his own troop, the reasons which they had for claiming pre-eminence over the rest; and when they had been all heard in turn, she returned them this gracious answer: 'That she was sorry she was not better qualified to decided upon the doubtful question which had been propounded to her by the direction of the famous Merlin, but that it seemed to her that no single one of these celebrated nations could claim pre-eminence over the others, as having most contributed to form the Englishman of her own time, who unquestionably derived from each of them some worthy attribute of his character. Thus,' she said, 'the Englishman had from the ancient Briton his bold and tameless spirit of freedom,—from the Roman his disciplined courage in war, with his love of letters and civilisation in time of peace,—from the Saxon his wise and equitable laws,—and from the chivalrous Norman his love of honour and courtesy, with his generous desire for glory.'

Merlin answered with readiness, that it did indeed require that so many choice qualities should meet in the English, as might render them in some measure the muster of the perfections of other nations, since that alone could render them in some degree deserving of the blessings they enjoyed under the reign of England's Elizabeth.

The music then sounded, and the quadrilles, together with Merlin and his assistants, had begun to remove from the crowded hall, when Leicester, who was, as we have mentioned, stationed for the moment near the bottom of the hall, and consequently engaged in some degree in the crowd, felt himself pulled by the cloak, while a voice whispered in his ear, 'My lord, I do desire some instant conference with you.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

How is 't with me, when every noise appals me?
MACBETH.

'I DESIRE some conference with you.' The words were simple in themselves, but Lord Leicester was in that alarmed and feverish state of mind when the most ordinary occurrences seem fraught with alarming import; and he turned hastily round to survey the person by whom they had been spoken. There was nothing remarkable in the speaker's appearance, which consisted of a black silk doublet and short mantle, with a black vizard on his face; for it appeared he had been among the crowd of masks who had thronged into the hall in the retinue of Merlin, though he did not wear any of the extravagant disguises by which most of them were distinguished.

'Who are you, or what do you want with me?' said Leicester, not without betraying, by his accents, the hurried state of his spirits.

'No evil, my lord,' answered the mask, 'but much good and honour, if you will rightly understand my purpose. But I must speak with you more privately.'

'I can speak with no nameless stranger, answered Leicester, dreading he knew not precisely what from the request of the stranger 'and those who are known to me must seek another and a fitter time to ask an interview.'

He would have hurried away, but the mask still detained him

'Those who talk to your lordship of what your own honour demands, have a right over your time, whatever occupations you may lay aside in order to indulge them.'

'How! my honour? Who dare impeach it?' said Leicester.

'Your own conduct alone can furnish grounds for accusing it, my lord, and it is that topic on which I would speak with you.'

'You are insolent,' said Leicester, 'and abuse the hospitable licence of the time, which prevents me from having you punished. I demand your name!'

'Edmund Tressilian of Cornwall,' answered the mask. 'My tongue has been bound by a promise for four-and-twenty hours,—the space is passed,—I now speak, and do your lordship the justice to address myself first to you.'

The thrill of astonishment which had penetrated to Leicester's very heart at hearing that name pronounced by the voice of the man he most detested, and by whom he conceived himself so deeply injured, at first rendered him immoveable, but instantly gave way to such a thirst for revenge as the pilgrim in the desert feels for the water-brooks. He had but sense and self-government enough left to prevent his stabbing to the heart the audacious villain, who, after the ruin he had brought upon him, dared, with such unmoved assurance, thus to practise upon him further. Determined to suppress for the moment every symptom of agitation, in order to perceive the full scope of Tressilian's purpose, as well as to secure his own vengeance, he answered in a tone so altered by restrained passion as scarce to be intelligible,—'And what does Master Edmund Tressilian require at my hand?'

'Justice, my lord,' answered Tressilian calmly but firmly.

'Justice,' said Leicester, 'all men are entitled to—You, Master Tressilian, are peculiarly so, and be assured you shall have it.'

'I expect nothing less from your nobleness,' answered Tressilian; 'but time presses, and I must speak with you to-night—May I wait on you in your chamber?'

'No,' answered Leicester sternly, 'not under a roof, and that roof mine own—We will meet under the free cope of heaven.'

'You are discomposed or displeased, my lord,' replied Tressilian; 'yet there is no occasion for distemperature. The place is equal to me, so you allow me one half-hour of your time uninterrupted.'

'A shorter time will, I trust, suffice,' answered Leicester—'Meet me in the Pleasance, when the Queen has retired to her chamber.'

'Enough,' said Tressilian, and withdrew; while a sort of rapture seemed for the moment to occupy the mind of Leicester.

'Heaven,' he said, 'is at last favourable to me, and has put within my reach the wretch who has branded me with this deep ignominy—who has inflicted on me this cruel agony. I will blame fate no more, since I am afforded the means of tracing the wiles by which he means still further to practise on me, and then of at once convicting and punishing his villany. To my task—to my task!—I will not sink under it now, since midnight, at furthest, will bring me vengeance.'

While these reflections thronged through Leicester's mind, he again made his way amid the obsequious crowd, which divided to give him passage, and resumed his place, envied and admired, beside the person of his sovereign. But, could the bosom of him thus admired and envied, have been laid open before the inhabitants of that crowded hall, with all its dark thoughts of guilty ambition, blighted affection, deep vengeance, and conscious sense of meditated cruelty, crossing each other like spectres in the circle of some foul enchantress; which of them, from the most ambitious noble in the courtly circle, down to the most wretched menial, who lived by shifting of trenchers, would have desired to change characters with the favourite of Elizabeth, and the lord of Kenilworth?

New tortures awaited him as soon as he had rejoined Elizabeth.

'You come in time, my lord,' she said, 'to decide a dispute between us ladies. Here has Sir Richard Varney asked our permission to depart from the castle with his infirm lady, having, as he tells us, your lordship's consent to his absence, so he can obtain ours. Certes, we have no will to withhold him from the affectionate charge of this poor young person—but you are to know that Sir Richard Varney hath this day shown himself so much captivated with these ladies of ours, that here is our Duchess of Rutland says, he will carry his poor insane wife no farther than the lake, plunge her in, to tenant the crystal palaces that the enchanted nymph told us of, and return a jolly widower, to dry his tears, and to make up the loss among our train. How say you, my lord?—We have seen Varney under two or three different guises—you know what are his proper attributes—think you he is capable of playing his lady such a knave's trick?'

Leicester was confounded, but the danger was urgent, and a reply absolutely necessary. 'The ladies,' he said, 'think too lightly of one of their own sex, in supposing she could deserve such a fate, or too ill of ours, to think it could be inflicted upon an innocent female.'

'Hear him, my ladies,' said Elizabeth; 'like all his sex, he would excuse their cruelty by imputing fickleness to us.'

'Say not *us*, madam,' replied the earl; 'we say that meaner women, like the lesser lights of heaven, have revolutions and phases, but who shall impute mutability to the sun, or to Elizabeth?'

The discourse presently afterwards assumed a less perilous tendency, and Leicester continued to support his part in it with spirit, at whatever expense of mental agony. So pleasing did it seem to Elizabeth, that the castle bell had sounded midnight ere she retired from the company, a circumstance unusual in her quiet and regular habits of disposing of time. Her departure was of course the signal for breaking up the company, who dispersed to their several places of repose, to dream over the pastimes of the day, or to anticipate those of the morrow.

The unfortunate lord of the castle, and founder of the proud festival, retired to far different thoughts. His direction to the valet who attended him, was to send Varney instantly to his apartment. The messenger returned after some delay, and informed him that an hour had elapsed since Sir Richard Varney had left the castle, by the postern-gate, with three other persons, one of whom was transported in a horse-litter.

'How came he to leave the castle after the watch was set?' said Leicester; 'I thought he went not till daybreak.'

'He gave satisfactory reasons, as I understand,' said the domestic, 'to the guard, and, as I hear, showed your lordship's signet'——

'True — true,' said the earl; 'yet he has been hasty. Do any of his attendants remain behind?'

'Michael Lambourne, my lord,' said the valet, 'was not to be found when Sir Richard Varney departed, and his master was much incensed at his absence. I saw him but now saddling his horse to gallop after his master.'

'Bid him come hither instantly,' said Leicester; 'I have a message to his master.'

The servant left the apartment, and Leicester traversed it for some time in deep meditation—'Varney is over-zealous,' he said, 'over-pressing. He loves me, I think—but he hath his own ends to serve, and he is inexorable in pursuit of them. If I rise he rises, and he hath shown himself already but too eager to rid me of this obstacle which seems to stand betwixt me and sovereignty. Yet I will not stoop to bear this disgrace. She shall be punished, but it shall be more advisedly. I already feel, even in anticipation, that over-haste would light the flames of hell in my bosom. No—one victim is enough at once, and that victim already waits me.'

He seized upon writing materials, and hastily traced these words:—'Sir Richard Varney, we have resolved to defer the matter entrusted to your care, and strictly command you to proceed no further in relation to our countess, until our further order. We also command your instant return to Kenilworth, as soon as you have safely bestowed that with which you are entrusted. But if the safe placing of your present charge shall detain you longer than we think for, we command you, in that case, to send back our signet-ring by a trusty and speedy messenger, we having present need of the same. And requiring your strict obedience in these things, and commending you to God's keeping, we rest your assured good friend and master,

R. LEICESTER.

'Given at our Castle of Kenilworth, the tenth of July, in the year of Salvation one thousand five hundred and seventy-five.'

As Leicester had finished and sealed this mandate, Michael Lambourne, booted up to mid-thigh, having his riding cloak girthed around him with a broad belt, and a felt cap on his head, like that of a courier, entered his apartment, ushered in by the valet.

'What is thy capacity of service?' said the earl.

'Equerry to your lordship's master of the horse,' answered Lambourne, with his customary assurance.

'Tie up thy saucy tongue, sir,' said Leicester; 'the jests that may suit Sir Richard Varney's presence, suit not mine. How soon wilt thou overtake thy master?'

'In one hour's riding, my lord, if man and horse hold good,' said Lambourne, with an instant alteration of demeanour, from an approach to familiarity to the deepest respect. The earl measured him with his eye from top to toe.

'I have heard of thee,' he said; 'men say thou art a prompt fellow in thy service, but too much given to brawling and to wassail to be trusted with things of moment.'

'My lord,' said Lambourne, 'I have been soldier, sailor, traveller, and adventurer; and these are all trades in which men enjoy to-day, because they have no surety of to-morrow. But though I may misuse my own leisure, I have never neglected the duty I owe my master.'

'See that it be so in this instance,' said Leicester, 'and it shall do thee good. Deliver this letter speedily and carefully into Sir Richard Varney's hands.'

'Does my commission reach no further?' said Lambourne.

'No,' answered Leicester; 'but it deeply concerns me that it be carefully as well as hastily executed.'

'I will spare neither care nor horse-flesh,' answered Lambourne, and immediately took his leave.

'So, this is the end of my private audience, from which I hoped so much!' he muttered to himself, as he went through the long gallery, and down the back staircase. 'Cogs bones! I thought the Earl had wanted a cast of mine office in some secret intrigue, and it all ends in carrying a letter! Well, his pleasure shall be done, however, and, as his lordship well says, it may do me good another time. The child must creep ere he walk, and so must your infant courtier. I will have a look into this letter, however, which he hath sealed so sloven-like.' Having accomplished this, he clapped his hands together in ecstasy, exclaiming, 'The countess—the countess!—I have the secret that shall make or mar me. But come forth, Bayard,' he added, leading his horse into the court-yard, 'for your flanks and my spurs must be presently acquainted.'

Lambourne mounted, accordingly, and left the castle by the postern-gate, where his free passage was permitted, in consequence of a message to that effect left by Sir Richard Varney.

as Lambourne and the valet had left

the apartment, Leicester proceeded to change his dress for a very plain one, threw his mantle around him, and, taking a lamp in his hand, went by the private passage of communication to a small secret postern-door, which opened into the court-yard, near to the entrance of the Pleasance. His reflections were of a more calm and determined character than they had been at any late period, and he endeavoured to claim, even in his own eyes, the character of a man more sinned against than sinning.

'I have suffered the deepest injury,' such was the tenor of his meditations, 'yet I have restricted the instant revenge which was in my power, and have limited it to that which is manly and noble. But shall the union which this false woman has this day disgraced, remain an abiding fetter on me, to check me in the noble career to which my destinies invite me? No!—there are other means of disengaging such ties, without unloosing the cords of life. In the sight of God, I am no longer bound by the union she has broken. Kingdoms shall divide us—oceans roll betwixt us, and their waves, whose abysses have swallowed whole navies, shall be the sole depositories of the deadly mystery.'

By such a train of argument did Leicester labour to reconcile his conscience to the prosecution of plans of vengeance, so hastily adopted, and of schemes of ambition, which had become so woven in with every purpose and action of his life, that he was incapable of the effort of relinquishing them; until his revenge appeared to him to wear a face of justice, and even of generous moderation.

In this mood the vindictive and ambitious earl entered the superb precincts of the Pleasance, then illumined by the full moon. The broad yellow light was reflected on all sides from the white freestone, of which the pavement, balustrades, and architectural ornaments of the place were constructed; and not a single fleecy cloud was visible in the azure sky, so that the scene was nearly as light as if the sun had but just left the horizon. The numerous statues of white marble glimmered in the pale light, like so many sheeted ghosts just arisen from their sepulchres, and the fountains threw their jets into the air, as if they sought that their waters should be brightened by the moonbeams, ere they fell down again upon their basins in showers of sparkling silver. The day had been sultry, and the gentle night-breeze, which sighed along the terrace of the Pleasance, raised not a deeper breath than the fan in the hand of youthful beauty. The bird of summer night had built many a nest in the bowers of the adjacent garden, and the tenants now indemnified themselves for silence during the day, by a full chorus of their own unrivalled warblings, now joyous, now pathetic, now united, now responsive to each other, as if to express their delight in the placid and delicious scene to which they poured their melody.

Musing on matters far different from the fall of waters, the gleam of moonlight, or the song of the nightingale, the stately Leicester walked slowly from the one end of the terrace to the other, his cloak wrapped around him, and his sword under his arm, without seeing anything resembling the human form.

'I have been fooled by my own generosity,' he said, 'if I have suffered the villain to escape me—ay, and perhaps to go to the rescue of the adulteress, who is so poorly guarded.'

These were his thoughts, which were instantly dispelled, when, turning to look back towards the entrance, he saw a human form advancing slowly from the portico, and darkening the various objects with its shadow, as passing them successively, in its approach towards him.

'Shall I strike ere I again hear his detested voice?' was Leicester's thought, as he grasped the hilt of the sword. 'But no! I will see which way his vile practice tends. I will watch, disgusting as it is, the coils and mazes of the loathsome snake, ere I put forth my strength and crush him.'

His hand quitted the sword-hilt, and he advanced slowly towards Tressilian, collecting, for their meeting, all the self-possession he could command, until they came front to front with each other.

Tressilian made a profound reverence, to which the earl replied with a haughty inclination of the head, and the words, 'You sought secret conference with me, sir—I am here and attentive.'

'My lord,' said Tressilian, 'I am so earnest in that which I have to say, and so desirous to find a patient, nay, a favourable hearing, that I will stoop to exculpate myself from whatever might prejudice your lordship against me. You think me your enemy?'

'Have I not some apparent cause?' answered Leicester, perceiving that Tressilian paused for a reply.

'You do me wrong, my lord. I am a friend, but neither a dependent nor partisan of the Earl of Sussex, whom courtiers call your rival; and it is some considerable time since I ceased to consider either courts, or court intrigues, as suited to my temper and genius.'

'No doubt, sir,' answered Leicester; 'there are other occupations more worthy a scholar, and for such the world holds Master Tressilian—Love has his intrigues as well as ambition.'

'I perceive, my lord,' replied Tressilian, 'you give much weight to my early attachment for the unfortunate young person of whom I am about to speak, and perhaps think I am prosecuting her cause out of rivalry, more than a sense of justice.'

'No matter for my thoughts, sir,' said the earl; 'proceed. You have as yet spoken of yourself only; an important and worthy subject doubtless, but which, perhaps, does not altogether so deeply concern me, that I should postpone my repose to hear it. Spare me further prelude, sir, and speak to the purpose, if indeed you have aught to say that concerns me. When you have done, I, in my turn, have something to communicate.'

'I will speak, then, without further prelude, my lord,' answered Tressilian; 'having to say that which, as it concerns your lordship's honour, I am confident you will not think your time wasted in listening to. I have to request an account from your lordship of the unhappy Amy Robsart, whose history is too well known to you. I regret deeply that I did not at once take this course, and make yourself judge between me and

the villain by whom she is injured. My lord, she extricated herself from an unlawful and most perilous state of confinement, trusting to the effects of her own remonstrance upon her unworthy husband, and extorted from me a promise that I would not interfere in her behalf until she had used her own efforts to have her rights acknowledged by him.'

'Ha!' said Leicester, 'remember you to whom you speak?'

'I speak of her unworthy husband, my lord,' repeated Tressilian, 'and my respect can find no softer language. The unhappy young woman is withdrawn from my knowledge, and sequestered in some secret place of this castle,—if she be not transferred to some place of seclusion better fitted for bad designs. This must be reformed, my lord,—I speak it as authorised by her father,—and this ill-fated marriage must be avouched and proved in the Queen's presence, and the lady placed without restraint, and at her own free disposal. And, permit me to say, it concerns no one's honour that these most just demands of mine should be complied with, so much as it does that of your lordship.'

The earl stood as if he had been petrified, at the extreme coolness with which the man, whom he considered as having injured him so deeply, pleaded the cause of his criminal paramour, as if she had been an innocent woman, and he a disinterested advocate; nor was his wonder lessened by the warmth with which Tressilian seemed to demand for her the rank and situation which she had disgraced, and the advantages of which she was doubtless to share with the lover who advocated her cause with such effrontery. Tressilian had been silent for more than a minute ere the earl recovered from the excess of his astonishment; and, considering the prepossessions with which his mind was occupied, there is little wonder that his passion gained the mastery of every other consideration. 'I have heard you, Master Tressilian,' said he, 'without interruption, and I bless God that my ears were never before made to tingle by the words of so frontless a villain. The task of chastising you is fitter for the hangman's scourge than the sword of a nobleman, but yet——Villain, draw and defend thyself!'

As he spoke the last words, he dropped his mantle on the ground, struck Tressilian smartly with his sheathed sword, and, instantly drawing his rapier, put himself into a posture of assault. The vehement fury of his language at first filled Tressilian, in his turn, with surprise equal to what Leicester had felt when he addressed him. But astonishment gave place to resentment, when the unmerited insults of his language were followed by a blow, which immediately put to flight every thought save that of instant combat. Tressilian's sword was instantly drawn, and, though perhaps somewhat inferior to Leicester in the use of the weapon, he understood it well enough to maintain the contest with great spirit, the rather that of the two he was for the time the more cool, since he could not help imputing Leicester's conduct either to actual frenzy, or to the influence of some strong delusion.

The rencontre had continued for several minutes, without either party receiving a wound, when, of a sudden, voices were heard beneath the portico, which formed the entrance of the terrace, mingled with the steps of men advancing hastily. 'We are interrupted,' said Leicester to his antagonist; 'follow me.'

At the same time a voice from the portico said, 'The jackanape is right—they are tilting here.'

Leicester, meanwhile, drew off Tressilian into a sort of recess behind one of the fountains, which served to conceal them, while six of the Yeomen of the Queen's Guard passed along the middle walk of the Pleasance, and they could hear one say to the rest, 'We shall never find them tonight among all these squirting funnels, squirrel-cages, and rabbit-holes; but if we light not on them before we reach the farther end, we will return, and mount a guard at the entrance, and so secure them till morning.'

'A proper matter,' said another, 'the drawing of swords so near the Queen's presence, ay, and in her very palace, as 'twere!—Hang it, they must be some poor drunken game-cocks fallen to sparring—'twere pity almost we should find them – the penalty is chopping off a hand, is it not? —'twere hard to lose hand for handling a bit of steel, that comes so natural to one's gripe.'

'Thou art a brawler thyself, George,' said another; 'but take heed, for the law stands as thou sayest.'

'Ay,' said the first, 'an the act be not mildly construed; for thou know'st 'tis not the Queen's palace, but my Lord of Leicester's.'

'Why, for that matter, the penalty may be as severe,' said another; 'for an our gracious mistress be Queen, as she is, God save her, my Lord of Leicester is as good as king.'

'Hush, thou knave!' said a third; 'how knowest thou who may be within hearing?'

They passed on, making a kind of careless search, but seemingly more intent on their own conversation than bent on discovering the persons who had created the nocturnal disturbance.

They had no sooner passed forward along the terrace, than Leicester, making a sign to Tressilian to follow him, glided away in an opposite direction, and escaped through the portico undiscovered. He conducted Tressilian to Mervyn's Tower, in which he was now again lodged; and then, ere parting with him, said these words, 'If thou hast courage to continue and bring to an end what is thus broken off, be near me when the court goes forth to-morrow—we shall find a time, and I will give you a signal when it is fitting.'

'My lord,' said Tressilian, 'at another time I might have inquired the meaning of this strange and furious inveteracy against me. But you have laid that on my shoulder, which only blood can wash away; and were you as high as your proudest wishes ever carried you, I would have from you satisfaction for my wounded honour.'

On these terms they parted, but the adventures of the night were not yet ended with Leicester. He was compelled to pass by Saintlowe's Tower, in order to gain the private passage which led to his own chamber, and in the entrance thereof he met Lord Hunsdon, half clothed, and with a naked sword under his arm.

'Are you awakened, too, with this 'larum, my Lord of Leicester?' said the old soldier. ''Tis well—By gog's nails, the nights are as noisy as

the day in this castle of yours. Some two hours since I was awakened by the screams of that poor brain-sick Lady Varney, whom her husband was forcing away. I promise you, it required both your warrant and the Queen's to keep me from entering into the game, and cutting that Varney of yours over the head; and now there is a brawl down in the Pleasance, or what call you the stone terrace-walk, where all yonder gimcracks stand?'

The first part of the old man's speech went through the earl's heart like a knife; to the last he answered that he himself had heard the clash of swords, and had come down to take order with those who had been so insolent so near the queen's presence.

'Nay, then,' said Hunsdon, 'I will be glad of your lordship's company.'

Leicester was thus compelled to turn back with the rough old lord to the Pleasance, where Hunsdon heard from the Yeomen of the Guard, who were under his immediate command, the unsuccessful search they had made for the authors of the disturbance; and bestowed for their pains some round dozen of curses on them, as lazy knaves and blind whoresons. Leicester also thought it necessary to seem angry that no discovery had been effected; but at length suggested to Lord Hunsdon, that after all it could only be some foolish young men, who had been drinking healths pottle-deep, and who would be sufficiently scared by the search which had taken place after them. Hunsdon, who was himself attached to his cup, allowed that a pint-flagon might cover many of the follies which it had caused. 'But,' added he, 'unless your lordship will be less liberal in your housekeeping, and restrain the overflow of ale, and wine, and wassail, I foresee it will end in my having some of these good fellows into the guard-house, and treating them to a dose of the strappado—And with this warning, good-night to you.'

Joyful at being rid of his company, Leicester took leave of him at the entrance of his lodging, where they had first met, and, entering the private passage, took up the lamp which he had left there, and by its expiring light found the way to his own apartment.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Room! room! for my horse will wince
If he come within so many yards of a prince;
. . . .
For to tell you true, and in rhyme,
He was foal'd in Queen Elizabeth's time;
When the great Earl of Lester
In his castle did feast her.

MASQUE OF OWLS—BEN JONSON.

THE amusement with which Elizabeth and her court were next day to be regaled, was an exhibition by the true-hearted men of Coventry, who were to represent the strife between the English and the Danes, agreeably to a custom long preserved in their ancient borough, and warranted for truth by old histories and chronicles. In this pageant, one party of the townsfolk presented the Saxons and the other the Danes, and set forth, both in rude rhymes and with hard blows, the contentions of these two fierce nations, and the Amazonian courage of the English women, who, according to the story, were the principal agents in the general massacre of the Danes, which took place at Hocktide, in the year of God 1012. This sport, which had been long a favourite pastime with the men of Coventry, had, it seems, been put down by the influence of some zealous clergymen of the more precise cast, who chanced to have considerable influence with the magistrates. But the generality of the inhabitants had petitioned the queen that they might have their play again, and be honoured with permission to represent it before her Highness. And when the matter was canvassed in the little council, which usually attended the queen for despatch of business, the proposal, although opposed by some of the stricter sort, found favour in the eyes of Elizabeth, who said that such toys occupied, without offence, the minds of many, who, lacking them, might find worse subjects of pastime; and that their pastors, however commendable for learning and godliness, were somewhat too sour in preaching against the pastimes of their flocks; and so the pageant was permitted to proceed.

Accordingly, after a morning repast, which Master Laneham calls an ambrosial breakfast, the principal persons of the court in attendance upon her Majesty pressed to the Gallery Tower, to witness the approach of the two contending parties of English and Danes; and, after a signal had been given, the gate which opened in the circuit of the chase was thrown wide to admit them. On they came, foot and horse; for some of the more ambitious burghers and yeomen had put themselves into fantastic dresses, imitating knights, in order to resemble the chivalry of the two different nations. However, to prevent fatal accidents, they were not permitted to appear on real horses, but had only licence to accoutre themselves with those hobby-horses, as they are called, which anciently formed the chief delight of a morrice-dance, and which still are exhibited on the stage, in the grand battle fought at the conclusion of Mr. Bayes's tragedy. The infantry followed in similar disguises. The whole exhibition was to be considered as a sort of anti-masque, or burlesque of the more stately pageants, in which the nobility and gentry bore part in the show, and, to the best of their knowledge, imitated with accuracy the personages whom they represented. The Hocktide play was of a different character, the actors being persons of inferior degree, and their habits the better fitted for the occasion, the more incongruous and ridiculous that they were in themselves. Accordingly their array, which the progress of our tale allows us no time to describe, was ludicrous enough, and their weapons, though sufficiently formidable to deal sound blows, were long alder-poles instead of lances, and sound cudgels for swords; and for fence, both cavalry and infantry were well equipped with stout headpieces and targets, both made of thick leather.

Captain Coxe,* that celebrated humorist of

* [Captain Coxe was a Warwickshire gentleman, who by his knowledge of old legends and customs, contributed to the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle. He had a collection of old books curious at the time. See Laneham's Letter and Ben Jonson's The Masque of Owls.]

Coventry, whose library of ballads, almanacs, and penny histories, fairly wrapped up in parchment, and tied round for security with a piece of whipcord, remains still the envy of antiquaries, being himself the ingenious person under whose direction the pageant had been set forth, rode valiantly on his hobby-horse before the bands of English, high trussed, saith Laneham, and brandishing his long sword, as became an experienced man of war, who had fought under the queen's father, bluff King Henry, at the siege of Boulogne. This chieftain was, as right and reason craved, the first to enter the lists, and, passing the gallery at the head of his myrmidons, kissed the hilt of his sword to the queen, and executed at the same time a gambade, the like whereof had never been practised by two-legged hobby-horse. Then, passing on with all his followers of cavaliers and infantry, he drew them up with martial skill at the opposite extremity of the bridge or tilt-yard, until his antagonists should be fairly prepared for the onset.

This was no long interval; for the Danish cavalry and infantry, no way inferior to the English in number, valour, and equipment, instantly arrived, with the northern bagpipe blowing before them in token of their country, and headed by a cunning master of defence, only inferior to the renowned Captain Coxe, if to him, in the discipline of war. The Danes, as invaders, took their station under the Gallery Tower, and opposite to that of Mortimer; and, when their arrangements were completely made, a signal was given for the encounter.

Their first charge upon each other was rather moderate, for either party had some dread of being forced into the lake. But as reinforcements came up on either side, the encounter grew from a skirmish into a blazing battle. They rushed upon one another, as Master Laneham testifies, like rams inflamed by jealousy, with such furious encounter, that both parties were often overthrown, and the clubs and targets made a most horrible clatter. In many instances that happened which had been dreaded by the more experienced warriors, who began the day of strife. The rails which defended the ledges of the bridge had been, perhaps on purpose, left but slightly fastened, and gave way under the pressure of those who thronged to the combat, so that the hot courage of many of the combatants received a sufficient cooling. These incidents might have occasioned more serious damage than became such an affray, for many of the champions who met with this mischance could not swim, and those who could were encumbered with their suits of leathern and paper armour; but the case had been provided for, and there were several boats in readiness to pick up the unfortunate warriors, and convey them to the dry land, where, dripping and dejected, they comforted themselves with the hot ale and strong waters which were liberally allowed to them, without showing any desire to re-enter so desperate a conflict.

Captain Coxe alone, that paragon of black-letter antiquaries, after twice experiencing, horse and man, the perilous leap from the bridge into the lake, equal to any extremity to which the favourite heroes of chivalry, whose exploits he studied in an abridged form, whether Amadis, Belianis, Bevis, or his own Guy of Warwick, had ever been subjected to—Captain Coxe, we repeat, did alone, after two such mischances, rush again into the heat of conflict, his bases and the foot-cloth of his hobby-horse dropping water, and twice reanimated by voice and example the drooping spirits of the English; so that at last their victory over the Danish invaders became, as was just and reasonable, complete and decisive. Worthy he was to be rendered immortal by the pen of Ben Johnson, who, fifty years afterwards, deemed that a masque, exhibited at Kenilworth, could be ushered in by none with so much propriety, as by the ghost of Captain Coxe, mounted upon his redoubted hobby-horse.

These rough rural gambols may not altogether agree with the reader's preconceived idea of an entertainment presented before Elizabeth, in whose reign letters revived with such brilliancy, and whose court, governed by a female whose sense of propriety was equal to her strength of mind, was no less distinguished for delicacy and refinement than her councils for wisdom and fortitude. But whether from the political wish to seem interested in popular sports, or whether from a spark of old Henry's rough masculine spirit which Elizabeth sometimes displayed, it is certain the queen laughed heartily at the imitation, or rather burlesque of chivalry, which was presented in the Coventry play. She called near her person the Earl of Sussex and Lord Hunsdon, partly perhaps to make amends to the former for the long and private audiences with which she had indulged the Earl of Leicester, by engaging him in conversation upon a pastime, which better suited his taste than those pageants that were furnished forth from the stores of antiquity. The disposition which the queen showed to laugh and jest with her military leaders, gave the Earl of Leicester the opportunity he had been watching for withdrawing from the royal presence, which to the court around, so well had he chosen his time, had the graceful appearance of leaving his rival free access to the queen's person, instead of availing himself of his right as her landlord, to stand perpetually betwixt others and the light of her countenance.

Leicester's thoughts, however, had a far different object from mere courtesy; for no sooner did he see the queen fairly engaged in conversation with Sussex and Hunsdon, behind whose back stood Sir Nicholas Blount, grinning from ear to ear at each word which was spoken, than, making a sign to Tressilian, who, according to appointment, watched his motions at a little distance, he extricated himself from the press, and, walking towards the chase, made his way through the crowds of ordinary spectators, who, with open mouth, stood gazing on the battle of the English and the Danes. When he had accomplished this, which was a work of some difficulty, he shot another glance behind him to see that Tressilian had been equally successful, and as soon as he saw him also free from the crowd, he led the way to a small thicket, behind which stood a lackey, with two horses ready saddled. He flung himself on the one, and made signs to Tressilian to mount the other, who obeyed without speaking a single word.

Leicester then spurred his horse, and galloped without stopping until he reached a sequestered spot, environed by lofty oaks, about a mile's distance from the castle, and in an opposite direction from the scene to which curiosity was drawing every spectator. He there dismounted, bound his horse to a tree, and only pronouncing the words, 'Here there is no risk of interruption,' laid his cloak across his saddle, and drew his sword.

Tressilian imitated his example punctually, yet could not forbear saying, as he drew his weapon, 'My lord, as I have been known to many as one who does not fear death, when placed in balance with order, methinks I may, without derogation, ask wherefore, in the name of all that is honourable, your lordship has dared to offer me such a mark of disgrace, as places us on these terms with respect to each other?'

'If you like not such marks of my scorn,' replied the earl, 'betake yourself instantly to your weapon, lest I repeat the usage you complain of.'

'It shall not need, my lord,' said Tressilian. 'God judge betwixt us! and your blood, if you fall, be on your head.'

He had scarce completed the sentence when they instantly closed in combat.

But Leicester, who was a perfect master of defence among all other exterior accomplishments of the time, had seen, on the preceding night, enough of Tressilian's strength and skill to make him fight with more caution than heretofore, and prefer a secure revenge to a hasty one. For some minutes they fought with equal skill and fortune, till, in a desperate lounge which Leicester successfully put aside, Tressilian exposed himself at disadvantage; and, in a subsequent attempt to close, the earl forced his sword from his hand, and stretched him on the ground. With a grim smile he held the point of his rapier within two inches of the throat of his fallen adversary, and, placing his foot at the same time upon his breast, bid him confess his villanous wrongs towards him, and prepare for death.

'I have no villany nor wrong towards thee to confess,' answered Tressilian, 'and am better prepared for death than thou. Use thine advantage as thou wilt, and may God forgive you! I have given you no cause for this.'

'No cause!' exclaimed the earl, 'no cause!—but why parley with such a slave?—Die a liar, as thou hast lived!'

He had withdrawn his arm for the purpose of striking the fatal blow, when it was suddenly seized from behind.

The earl turned in wrath to shake off the unexpected obstacle, but was surprised to find that a strange-looking boy had hold of his sword-arm, and clung to it with such tenacity of grasp, that he could not shake him off without a considerable [illegible] in the course of which Tressilian had [illegible]nity to rise and possess himself once more [illegible] weapon. Leicester again turned towards him with looks of unabated ferocity, and the combat would have recommenced with still more desperation on both sides, had not the boy clung to Lord Leicester's knees, and in a shrill tone implored him to listen one moment ere he prosecuted this quarrel.

'Stand up, and let me go,' said Leicester, 'or, by Heaven, I will pierce thee with my rapier!—What hast thou to do to bar my way to revenge?'

'Much—much!' exclaimed the undaunted boy; 'since my folly has been the cause of these bloody quarrels between you, and perchance of worse evils. O, if you would ever again enjoy the peace of an innocent mind, if you hope again to sleep in peace and unhaunted by remorse, take so much leisure as to peruse this letter, and then do as you list.'

While he spoke in this eager and earnest manner, to which his singular features and voice gave a goblin-like effect, he held up to Leicester a packet, secured with a long tress of woman's hair, of a beautiful light brown colour. Enraged as he was, nay, almost blinded with fury to see his destined revenge so strangely frustrated, the Earl of Leicester could not resist this extraordinary supplicant. He snatched the letter from his hand—changed colour as he looked on the superscription—undid, with faltering hand, the knot which secured it—glanced over the contents, and staggering back, would have fallen, had he not rested against the trunk of a tree, where he stood for an instant, his eyes bent on the letter, and his sword-point turned to the ground, without seeming to be conscious of the presence of an antagonist, towards whom he had shown little mercy, and who might in turn have taken him at advantage. But for such revenge Tressilian was too noble-minded—he also stood still in surprise, waiting the issue of this strange fit of passion, but holding his weapon ready to defend himself in case of need, against some new and sudden attack on the part of Leicester, whom he again suspected to be under the influence of actual frenzy. The boy, indeed, he easily recognised as his old acquaintance Dickon, whose face, once seen, was scarcely to be forgotten; but how he came hither at so critical a moment, why his interference was so energetic, and, above all, how it came to produce so powerful an effect upon Leicester, were questions which he could not solve.

But the letter was of itself powerful enough to work effects yet more wonderful. It was that which the unfortunate Amy had written to her husband, in which she alleged the reasons and manner of her flight from Cumnor Place, informed him of her having made her way to Kenilworth to enjoy his protection, and mentioned the circumstances which had compelled her to take refuge in Tressilian's apartment, earnestly requesting he would, without delay, assign her a more suitable asylum. The letter concluded with the most earnest expressions of devoted attachment, and submission to his will in all things, and particularly respecting her situation and place of residence, conjuring him only that she might not be placed under the guardianship or restraint of Varney.

The letter dropped from Leicester's hand when he had perused it. 'Take my sword,' he said, 'Tressilian, and pierce my heart, as I would but now have pierced yours!'

'My lord,' said Tressilian, 'you have done me great wrong; but something within my breast ever whispered that it was by egregious error.'

'Error, indeed!' said Leicester, and handed

him the letter; 'I have been made to believe a man of honour a villain, and the best and purest of creatures a false profligate.—Wretched boy, why comes this letter now, and where has the bearer lingered?'

'I dare not tell you, my lord,' said the boy, withdrawing, as if to keep beyond his reach;—'but here comes one who was the messenger.'

Wayland at the same moment came up; and, interrogated by Leicester, hastily detailed all the circumstances of his escape with Amy,—the fatal practices which had driven her to flight,—and her anxious desire to throw herself under the instant protection of her husband,—pointing out the evidence of the domestics of Kenilworth, 'who could not,' he observed, 'but remember her eager inquiries after the Earl of Leicester on her first arrival.'

'The villains!' exclaimed Leicester: 'but O, that worst of villains, Varney!—and she is even now in his power!'

'But not, I trust in God,' said Tressilian, 'with any commands of fatal import?'

'No, no, no!' exclaimed the earl hastily—'I said something in madness—but it was recalled, fully recalled, by a hasty messenger; and she is now—she must now be safe.'

'Yes,' said Tressilian, 'she *must* be safe, and I *must* be assured of her safety. My own quarrel with you is ended, my lord; but there is another to begin with the seducer of Amy Robsart, who has screened his guilt under the cloak of the infamous Varney.'

'The *seducer* of Amy!' replied Leicester, with a voice like thunder; 'say her husband!—her misguided, blinded, most unworthy husband!—She is as surely Countess of Leicester as I am belted Earl. Nor can you, sir, point out that manner of justice which I will not render her at my own free will. I need scarce say, I fear not your compulsion.'

The generous nature of Tressilian was instantly turned from consideration of anything personal to himself, and centred at once upon Amy's welfare. He had by no means undoubting confidence in the fluctuating resolutions of Leicester, whose mind seemed to him agitated beyond the government of calm reason; neither did he, notwithstanding the assurances he had received, think Amy safe in the hands of his dependents. 'My lord,' he said calmly, 'I mean you no offence, and am far from seeking a quarrel. But my duty to Sir Hugh Robsart compels me to carry this matter instantly to the Queen, that the Countess's rank may be acknowledged in her person.'

'You shall not need, sir,' replied the earl haughtily; 'do not dare to interfere. No voice but Dudley's shall proclaim Dudley's infamy—to Elizabeth herself will I tell it, and then for Cumnor Place with the speed of life and death!'

So saying, he unbound his horse from the tree, threw himself into the saddle, and rode at full gallop towards the castle.

'Take me before you, Master Tressilian,' said the boy, seeing Tressilian mount in the same haste—'my tale is not all told out, and I need your protection.'

Tressilian complied, and followed the earl, though at a less furious rate. By the way the boy confessed, with much contrition, that in resentment at Wayland's evading all his inquiries concerning the lady, after Dickon conceived he had in various ways merited his confidence, he had purloined from him in revenge the letter with which Amy had entrusted him for the Earl of Leicester. His purpose was to have restored it to him that evening, as he reckoned himself sure of meeting with him, in consequence of Wayland's having to perform the part of Arion in the pageant. He was indeed something alarmed when he saw to whom the letter was addressed; but he argued that, as Leicester did not return to Kenilworth until that evening, it would be again in the possession of the proper messenger, as soon as, in the nature of things, it could possibly be delivered. But Wayland came not to the pageant, having been in the interim expelled by Lambourne from the castle, and the boy not being able to find him, or to get speech of Tressilian, and finding himself in possession of a letter addressed to no less a person than the Earl of Leicester, became much afraid of the consequences of his frolic. The caution, and indeed the alarm, which Wayland had expressed respecting Varney and Lambourne, led him to judge that the letter must be designed for the earl's own hand, and that he might prejudice the lady by giving it to any of the domestics. He made an attempt or two to obtain an audience of Leicester, but the singularity of his features, and the meanness of his appearance, occasioned his being always repulsed by the insolent menials whom he applied to for that purpose. Once, indeed, he had nearly succeeded, when, in prowling about, he found in the grotto the casket which he knew to belong to the unlucky countess, having seen it on her journey; for nothing escaped his prying eye. Having strove in vain to restore it either to Tressilian or the countess, he put it into the hands, as we have seen, of Leicester himself, but unfortunately he did not recognise him in his disguise.

At length the boy thought he was on the point of succeeding, when the earl came down to the lower part of the hall; but just as he was about to accost him, he was prevented by Tressilian. As sharp in ear as in wit, the boy heard the appointment settled betwixt them, to take place in the Pleasance, and resolved to add a third to the party, in hopes that, either in coming or in returning, he might find an opportunity of delivering the letter to Leicester; for strange stories began to flit among the domestics, which alarmed him for the lady's safety. Accident, however, detained Dickon a little behind the earl, and as he reached the arcade he saw them engaged in combat; in consequence of which he hastened to alarm the guard, having little doubt that what bloodshed took place betwixt them might arise out of his own frolic. Continuing to lurk in the portico, he heard the second appointment which Leicester, at parting, assigned to Tressilian, and was keeping them in view during the encounter of the Coventry men, when, to his surprise, he recognised Wayland in the crowd, much disguised, indeed, but not sufficiently so to escape the prying glance of his old comrade. They drew aside out of the crowd to explain their situation to each other.

The boy confessed to Wayland what we have above told, and the artist in return informed him that his deep anxiety for the fate of the unfortunate lady had brought him back to the neighbourhood of the castle, upon his learning that morning at a village about ten miles distant, that Varney and Lambourne, whose violence he dreaded, had both left Kenilworth over-night.

While they spoke, they saw Leicester and Tressilian separate themselves from the crowd, dogged them until they mounted their horses, when the boy, whose speed of foot has been before mentioned, though he could not possibly keep up with them, yet arrived, as we have seen, soon enough to save Tressilian's life. The boy had just finished his tale when they arrived at the Gallery Tower.

CHAPTER XL.

High o'er the eastern steep the sun is beaming,
And darkness flies with her deceitful shadows,—
So truth prevails o'er falsehood.

OLD PLAY.

As Tressilian rode along the bridge, lately the scene of so much riotous sport, he could not but observe that men's countenances had singularly changed during the space of his brief absence. The mock fight was over, but the men, still habited in their masquing suits, stood together in groups, like the inhabitants of a city who have been just startled by some strange and alarming news.

When he reached the base-court, appearances were the same—domestics, retainers, and under officers, stood together and whispered, bending their eyes towards the windows of the great hall with looks which seemed at once alarmed and mysterious.

Sir Nicholas Blount was the first person of his own particular acquaintance Tressilian saw, who left him no time to make inquiries, but greeted him with, 'God help thy heart, Tressilian, thou art fitter for a clown than a courtier—thou canst not attend as becomes one who follows her Majesty.—Here you are called for, wished for, waited for—no man but you will serve the turn; and hither you come with a misbegotten brat on thy horse's neck, as if thou wert dry nurse to some sucking devil, and wert just returned from airing.'

'Why, what is the matter?' said Tressilian, letting go the boy, who sprung to ground like a feather, and himself dismounting at the same time.

'Why, no one knows the matter,' replied Blount; 'I cannot smell it out myself, though I have a nose like other courtiers. Only my Lord of Leicester has galloped along the bridge, as if he would have rode over all in his passage, demanding an audience of the Queen, and is closeted even now with her, and Burleigh, and Walsingham—and you are called for—but whether the matter be treason or worse, no one knows.'

'He speaks true, by Heaven!' said Raleigh, who that instant appeared; 'you must immediately to the Queen's presence.'

'Be not rash, Raleigh,' said Blount, 'remember his boots.—For Heaven's sake, go to my chamber, dear Tressilian, and don my new bloom-coloured silken hose—I have worn them but twice.'

'Pshaw!' answered Tressilian; 'do thou take care of this boy, Blount; be kind to him, and look he escapes you not—much depends on him.'

So saying, he followed Raleigh hastily, leaving honest Blount with the bridle of his horse in one hand, and the boy in the other. Blount gave a long look after him.

'Nobody,' he said, 'calls me to these mysteries—and he leaves me here to play horse-keeper and child-keeper at once. I could excuse the one, for I love a good horse naturally; but to be plagued with a bratchet whelp!—Whence come ye, my fair-favoured little gossip?'

'From the Fens,' answered the boy.

'And what didst thou learn there, forward imp?'

'To catch gulls, with their webbed feet and yellow stockings,' said the boy.

'Umph!' said Blount, looking down on his own immense roses.—'Nay, then the devil take him asks thee more questions.'

Meantime Tressilian traversed the full length of the great hall, in which the astonished courtiers formed various groups, and were whispering mysteriously together, while all kept their eyes fixed on the door which led from the upper end of the hall into the queen's withdrawing apartment. Raleigh pointed to the door—Tressilian knocked, and was instantly admitted. Many a neck was stretched to gain a view into the interior of the apartment; but the tapestry which covered the door on the inside was dropped too suddenly to admit the slightest gratification of curiosity.

Upon entrance, Tressilian found himself, not without a strong palpitation of heart, in the presence of Elizabeth, who was walking to and fro in a violent agitation, which she seemed to scorn to conceal, while two or three of her most sage and confidential counsellors exchanged anxious looks with each other, but delayed speaking till her wrath had abated. Before the empty chair of state in which she had been seated, and which was half pushed aside by the violence with which she had started from it, knelt Leicester, his arms crossed, and his brows bent on the ground, still and motionless as the effigies upon a sepulchre. Beside him stood the Lord Shrewsbury, then Earl Marshal of England, holding his baton of office—the earl's sword was unbuckled, and lay before him on the floor.

'Ho, sir!' said the queen, coming close up to Tressilian, and stamping on the floor with the action and manner of Henry himself; '*you* knew of this fair work—*you* are an accomplice in this deception which has been practised on us—*you* have been a main cause of our doing injustice?' Tressilian dropped on his knee before the queen, his sense showing him the risk of attempting any defence at that moment of irritation. 'Art dumb, sirrah?' she continued; 'thou know'st of this affair, dost thou not?'

'Not, gracious madam, that this poor lady was Countess of Leicester.'

'Nor shall any one know her for such,' said Elizabeth. 'Death of my life! Countess of

Leicester!—I say Dame Amy Dudley—and well if she hath not cause to write herself widow of the traitor Robert Dudley.'

'Madam,' said Leicester, 'do with me what it may be your will to do—but work no injury on this gentleman—he hath in no way deserved it.'

'And will he be the better for thy intercession,' said the queen, leaving Tressilian, who slowly arose, and rushing to Leicester, who continued kneeling—'the better for thy intercession, thou doubly false—thou doubly forsworn?—of thy intercession, whose villany hath made me ridiculous to my subjects, and odious to myself?—I could tear out mine eyes for their blindness!'

Burleigh here ventured to interpose.

'Madam,' he said, 'remember that you are a Queen—Queen of England—mother of your people. Give not way to this wild storm of passion.'

Elizabeth turned round to him, while a tear actually twinkled in her proud and angry eye. 'Burleigh,' she said, 'thou art a statesman—thou dost not, thou canst not, comprehend half the scorn—half the misery, that man has poured on me!'

With the utmost caution—with the deepest reverence, Burleigh took her hand at the moment he saw her heart was at the fullest, and led her aside to an oriel window, apart from the others.

'Madam,' he said, 'I am a statesman, but I am also a man—a man already grown old in your councils, who have not, and cannot have a wish on earth but your glory and happiness—I pray you to be composed.'

'Ah, Burleigh,' said Elizabeth, 'thou little knowest'—here her tears fell over her cheeks in despite of her.

'I do—I do know, my honoured sovereign. O, beware that you lead not others to guess that which they know not!'

'Ha!' said Elizabeth, pausing as if a new train of thought had suddenly shot across her brain. 'Burleigh, thou art right—thou art right—anything but disgrace—anything but a confession of weakness—anything rather than seem the cheated—slighted—'Sdeath! to think on it is distraction!'

'Be but yourself, my Queen,' said Burleigh; 'and soar far above a weakness which no Englishman will ever believe his Elizabeth could have entertained, unless the violence of her disappointment carries a sad conviction to his bosom.'

'What weakness, my lord?' said Elizabeth haughtily; 'would you too insinuate that the favour in which I held yonder proud traitor, derived its source from aught'—But here she could no longer sustain the proud tone which she had assumed, and again softened as she said, 'But why should I strive to deceive even thee, my good and wise servant?'

Burleigh stooped to kiss her hand with affection, and—rare in the annals of courts—a tear of true sympathy dropped from the eye of the minister on the hand of his sovereign.

It is probable that the consciousness of possessing this sympathy aided Elizabeth in supporting her mortification and suppressing her extreme resentment; but she was still more moved by fear that her passion should betray to the public the affront and the disappointment which, alike as a woman and a queen, she was so anxious to conceal. She turned from Burleigh, and sternly paced the hall till her features had recovered their usual dignity, and her mien its wonted stateliness of regular motion.

'Our sovereign is her noble self once more,' whispered Burleigh to Walsingham; 'mark what she does, and take heed you thwart her not.'

She then approached Leicester, and said, with calmness, 'My Lord Shrewsbury, we discharge you of your prisoner. My Lord of Leicester, rise and take up your sword—a quarter of an hour's restraint, under the custody of our marshal, my lord, is, we think, no high penance for months of falsehood practised upon us. We will now hear the progress of this affair.'—She then seated herself in her chair, and said, 'You, Tressilian, step forward, and say what you know.'

Tressilian told his story, generously suppressing as much as he could what affected Leicester, and saying nothing of their having twice actually fought together. It is very probable that, in doing so, he did the earl good service; for had the queen at that instant found anything on account of which she could vent her wrath upon him without laying open sentiments of which she was ashamed, it might have fared hard with him. She paused when Tressilian had finished his tale.

'We will take that Wayland,' she said, 'into our own service, and place the boy in our Secretary-office for instruction, that he may in future use discretion towards letters. For you, Tressilian, you did wrong in not communicating the whole truth to us, and your promise not to do so was both imprudent and undutiful. Yet, having given your word to this unhappy lady, it was the part of a man and a gentleman to keep it; and on the whole, we esteem you for the character you have sustained in this matter.—My Lord of Leicester, it is now your turn to tell us the truth, an exercise to which you seem of late to have been too much a stranger.'

Accordingly, she extorted, by successive questions, the whole history of his first acquaintance with Amy Robsart—their marriage—his jealousy—the causes on which it was founded, and many particulars besides. Leicester's confession, for such it might be called, was wrenched from him piecemeal, yet was upon the whole accurate, excepting that he totally omitted to mention that he had, by implication or otherwise, assented to Varney's designs upon the life of his countess. Yet the consciousness of this was what at that moment lay nearest to his heart; and although he trusted in great measure to the very positive counter-orders which he had sent by Lambourne, it was his purpose to set out for Cumnor Place in person, as soon as he should be dismissed from the presence of the queen, who, he concluded, would presently leave Kenilworth.

But the earl reckoned without his host. It is true, his presence and his communications were gall and wormwood to his once partial mistress. But, barred from every other and more direct mode of revenge, the queen perceived that she gave her false suitor torture by these inquiries, and dwelt on them for that reason, no more regarding the pain which she herself experienced, than the savage cares for the searing of his own

hands by grasping the hot pincers with which he tears the flesh of his captive enemy.

At length, however, the haughty lord, like a deer that turns to bay, gave intimation that his patience was failing. 'Madam,' he said, 'I have been much to blame—more than even your just resentment has expressed. Yet, madam, let me say, that my guilt, if it be unpardonable, was not unprovoked; and that, if beauty and condescending dignity could seduce the frail heart of a human being, I might plead both, as the causes of my concealing this secret from your Majesty.'

The queen was so much struck with this reply, which Leicester took care should be heard by no one but herself, that she was for the moment silenced, and the earl had the temerity to pursue his advantage. 'Your Grace, who has pardoned so much, will excuse my throwing myself on your royal mercy for those expressions, which were yester-morning accounted but a light offence.'

The queen fixed her eyes on him while she replied, 'Now, by Heaven, my lord, thy effrontery passes the bounds of belief, as well as patience! But it shall avail thee nothing.—What ho! my lords, come all and hear the news—My Lord of Leicester's stolen marriage has cost me a husband, and England a king. His lordship is patriarchal in his tastes—one wife at a time was insufficient, and he designed us the honour of his left hand. Now, is not this too insolent,—that I could not grace him with a few marks of court-favour, but he must presume to think my hand and crown at his disposal?—You, however, think better of me; and I can pity this ambitious man, as I could a child, whose bubble of soap has burst between his hands. We go to the presence-chamber—My Lord of Leicester, we command your close attendance on us.'

All was eager expectation in the hall, and what was the universal astonishment, when the queen said to those next her, 'The revels of Kenilworth are not yet exhausted, my lords and ladies—we are to solemnise the noble owner's marriage.'

There was a universal expression of surprise.

'It is true, on our royal word,' said the queen; 'he hath kept this a secret even from us, that he might surprise us with it at this very place and time. I see you are dying of curiosity to know the happy bride—It is Amy Robsart, the same who, to make up the May-game yesterday, figured in the pageant as the wife of his servant Varney.'

'For God's sake, madam,' said the earl, approaching her with a mixture of humility, vexation, and shame in his countenance, and speaking so low as to be heard by no one else, 'take my head, as you threatened in your anger, and spare me these taunts! Urge not a falling man—tread not on a crushed worm.'

'A worm, my lord!' said the queen, in the same tone; 'nay, a snake is the nobler reptile, and the more exact similitude—the frozen snake you wot of, which was warmed in a certain bosom'——

'For your own sake—for mine, madam,' said the earl—'while there is yet some reason left in me'——

'Speak aloud, my lord,' said Elizabeth, 'and at farther distance, so please you—your breath thaws our ruff. What have you to ask of us?'

'Permission,' said the unfortunate earl humbly, 'to travel to Cumnor Place.'

'To fetch home your bride, belike?—Why, ay, —that is but right—for, as we have heard, she is indifferently cared for there. But, my lord, you go not in person—we have counted upon passing certain days in this Castle of Kenilworth, and it were slight courtesy to leave us without a landlord during our residence here. Under your favour, we cannot think to incur such disgrace in the eyes of our subjects. Tressilian shall go to Cumnor Place instead of you, and with him some gentleman who hath been sworn of our chamber, lest my Lord of Leicester should be again jealous of his old rival.—Whom wouldst thou have to be in commission with thee, Tressilian?'

Tressilian, with humble deference, suggested the name of Raleigh.

'Why, ay,' said the queen; 'so God ha' me, thou hast made a good choice. He is a young knight besides, and to deliver a lady from prison is an appropriate first adventure.—Cumnor Place is little better than a prison, you are to know, my lords and ladies.—Besides, there are certain faitours there whom we would willingly have in fast keeping. You will furnish them, Master Secretary, with the warrant necessary to secure the bodies of Richard Varney and the foreign Alasco, dead or alive. Take a sufficient force with you, gentlemen—bring the lady here in all honour—lose no time, and God be with you!'

They bowed and left the presence.

Who shall describe how the rest of that day was spent at Kenilworth? The queen, who seemed to have remained there for the sole purpose of mortifying and taunting the Earl of Leicester, showed herself as skilful in that female art of vengeance, as she was in the science of wisely governing her people. The train of state soon caught the signal, and, as he walked among his own splendid preparations, the Lord of Kenilworth, in his own castle, already experienced the lot of a disgraced courtier, in the slight regard and cold manners of alienated friends, and the ill-concealed triumph of avowed and open enemies. Sussex, from his natural military frankness of disposition, Burleigh and Walsingham, from their penetrating and prospective sagacity, and some of the ladies, from the compassion of their sex, were the only persons in the crowded court who retained towards him the countenance they had borne in the morning.

So much had Leicester been accustomed to consider court-favour as the principal object of his life, that all other sensations were, for the time, lost in the agony which his haughty spirit felt at the succession of petty insults and studied neglects to which he had been subjected; but when he retired to his own chamber for the night, that long fair tress of hair which had once secured Amy's letter fell under his observation, and, with the influence of a counter-charm, awakened his heart to nobler and more natural feelings. He kissed it a thousand times; and while he recollected that he had it always in his power to shun the mortifications which he had that day undergone, by retiring into a dignified

and even prince-like seclusion, with the beautiful and beloved partner of his future life, he felt that he could rise above the revenge which Elizabeth had condescended to take.

Accordingly, on the following day, the whole conduct of the earl displayed so much dignified equanimity; he seemed so solicitous about the accommodations and amusements of his guests, yet so indifferent to their personal demeanour towards him; so respectfully distant to the queen, yet so patient of her harassing displeasure, that Elizabeth changed her manner to him, and, though cold and distant, ceased to offer him any direct affront. She intimated also with some sharpness to others around her, who thought they were consulting her pleasure in showing a neglectful conduct to the earl, that while they remained at Kenilworth, they ought to show the civility due from guests to the lord of the castle. In short, matters were so far changed in twenty-four hours, that some of the more experienced and sagacious courtiers foresaw a strong possibility of Leicester's restoration to favour, and regulated their demeanour towards him, as those who might one day claim merit for not having deserted him in adversity. It is time, however, to leave these intrigues, and follow Tressilian and Raleigh on their journey.

The troop consisted of six persons; for, besides Wayland, they had in company a royal pursuivant and two stout serving-men. All were well armed, and travelled as fast as it was possible with justice to their horses, which had a long journey before them. They endeavoured to procure some tidings as they rode along of Varney and his party, but could hear none, as they had travelled in the dark. At a small village about twelve miles from Kenilworth, where they gave some refreshment to their horses, a poor clergyman, the curate of the place, came out of a small cottage, and entreated any of the company who might know aught of surgery to look in for an instant on a dying man.

The empiric Wayland undertook to do his best, and, as the curate conducted him to the spot, he learned that the man had been found on the high road about a mile from the village, by labourers, as they were going to their work on the preceding morning, and the curate had given him shelter in his house. He had received a gun-shot wound which seemed to be obviously mortal, but whether in a broil or from robbers they could not learn, as he was in a fever, and spoke nothing connectedly. Wayland entered the dark and lowly apartment, and no sooner had the curate drawn aside the curtain, than he knew in the distorted features of the patient the countenance of Michael Lambourne. Under pretence of seeking something which he wanted, Wayland hastily apprised his fellow-travellers of this extraordinary circumstance; and both Tressilian and Raleigh, full of boding apprehensions, hastened to the curate's house to see the dying man.

The wretch was by this time in the agonies of death, from which a much better surgeon than Wayland could not have rescued him, for the bullet had passed clear through his body. He was sensible, however, at least in part, for he knew Tressilian, and made signs that he wished him to stoop over his bed. Tressilian did so, and after some inarticulate murmurs, in which the names of Varney and Lady Leicester were alone distinguishable, Lambourne bade him 'make haste, or he would come too late.' It was in vain Tressilian urged the patient for further information; he seemed to become in some degree delirious, and when he again made a signal to attract Tressilian's attention, it was only for the purpose of desiring him to inform his uncle, Giles Gosling of the Black Bear, that 'he had died without his shoes after all.' A convulsion verified his words a few minutes after, and the travellers derived nothing from having met with him, saving the obscure fears concerning the fate of the countess, which his dying words were calculated to convey, and which induced them to urge their journey with their utmost speed, pressing horses in the queen's name, when those which they rode became unfit for service.

CHAPTER XLI.

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
An aerial voice was heard to call,
And thrice the raven flapp'd its wing
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall.
MICKLE.

We are now to return to that part of our story where we intimated that Varney, possessed of the authority of the Earl of Leicester, and of the queen's permission to the same effect, hastened to secure himself against discovery of his perfidy, by removing the countess from Kenilworth Castle. He had proposed to set forth early in the morning, but reflecting that the earl might relent in the interim, and seek another interview with the countess, he resolved to prevent, by immediate departure, all chance of what would probably have ended in his detection and ruin. For this purpose he called for Lambourne, and was exceedingly incensed to find that his trusty attendant was abroad on some ramble in the neighbouring village, or elsewhere. As his return was expected, Sir Richard commanded that he should prepare himself for attending him on an immediate journey, and follow him in case he returned after his departure.

In the meanwhile, Varney used the ministry of a servant called Robin Tider, one to whom the mysteries of Cumnor Place were already in some degree known, as he had been there more than once in attendance on the earl. To this man, whose character resembled that of Lambourne, though he was neither quite so prompt nor altogether so profligate, Varney gave command to have three horses saddled, and to prepare a horse-litter, and have them in readiness at the postern-gate. The natural enough excuse of his lady's insanity, which was now universally believed, accounted for the secrecy with which she was to be removed from the castle, and he reckoned on the same apology in case the unfortunate Amy's resistance or screams should render such necessary. The agency of Anthony Foster was indispensable, and that Varney now went to secure.

This person, naturally of a sour, unsocial dis-

position, and somewhat tired, besides, with his journey from Cumnor to Warwickshire, in order to bring the news of the countess's escape, had early extricated himself from the crowd of wassailers, and betaken himself to his chamber, where he lay asleep, when Varney, completely equipped for travelling, and with a dark lantern in his hand, entered his apartment. He paused an instant to listen to what his associate was murmuring in his sleep, and could plainly distinguish the words, '*Ave Maria—ora pro nobis*— No—it runs not so—deliver us from evil—Ay, so it goes.'

'Praying in his sleep,' said Varney; 'and confounding his old and new devotions—He must have more need of prayer ere I am done with him.—What ho! holy man- most blessed penitent!—Awake—awake!—The devil has not discharged you from service yet.'

As Varney at the same time shook the sleeper by the arm, it changed the current of his ideas, and he roared out, 'Thieves!—thieves! I will die in defence of my gold—my hard-won gold, that has cost me so dear.—Where is Janet?—Is Janet safe?'

'Safe enough, thou bellowing fool!' said Varney; 'art thou not ashamed of thy clamour?'

Foster by this time was broad awake, and, sitting up in his bed, asked Varney the meaning of so untimely a visit. 'It augurs nothing good,' he added.

'A false prophecy, most sainted Anthony,' returned Varney; 'it augurs that the hour is come for converting thy leasehold into copyhold —What sayest thou to that?'

'Hadst thou told me this in broad day,' said Foster, 'I had rejoiced—but at this dead hour, and by this dim light, and looking on thy pale face, which is a ghastly contradiction to thy light words, I cannot but rather think of the work that is to be done, than the guerdon to be gained by it.'

'Why, thou fool, it is but to escort thy charge back to Cumnor Place.'

'Is that indeed all?' said Foster; 'thou look'st deadly pale, and thou art not moved by trifles—is that indeed all?'

'Ay, that—and maybe a trifle more,' said Varney.

'Ay, that trifle more!' said Foster; 'still thou look'st paler and paler.'

'Heed not my countenance,' said Varney, 'you see it by this wretched light. Up and be doing, man—Think of Cumnor Place—thine own proper copyhold—Why, thou mayest found a weekly lectureship, besides endowing Janet like a baron's daughter—Seventy pounds and odd.'

'Seventy-nine pounds, five shillings, and fivepence halfpenny, besides the value of the wood,' said Foster; 'and I am to have it all as copyhold?'

'All, man—squirrels and all—no gipsy shall cut the value of a broom—no boy so much as take a bird's nest, without paying thee a quittance.—Ay, that is right—don thy matters as fast as possible—horses and everything are ready, all save that accursed villain Lambourne, who is out on some infernal gambol.'

'Ay, Sir Richard,' said Foster, 'you would take no advice. I ever told you that drunken profligate would fail you at need. Now I could have helped you to a sober young man.'

'What, some slow-spoken, long-breathed brother of the congregation?—Why, we shall have use for such also, man—Heaven be praised, we shall lack labourers of every kind.—Ay, that is right, forget not your pistols.—Come now, and let us away.'

'Whither?' said Anthony.

'To my lady's chamber—and, mind—she *must* along with us. Thou art not a fellow to be startled by a shriek?'

'Not if Scripture reason can be rendered for it; and it is written, "wives, obey your husbands." But will my lord's commands bear us out if we use violence?'

'Tush, man! here is his signet,' answered Varney; and, having thus silenced the objections of his associate, they went together to Lord Hunsdon's apartments, and, acquainting the sentinel with their purpose, as a matter sanctioned by the queen and the Earl of Leicester, they entered the chamber of the unfortunate countess.

The horror of Amy may be conceived, when, starting from a broken slumber, she saw at her bedside Varney, the man on earth she most feared and hated. It was even a consolation to see that he was not alone, though she had so much reason to dread his sullen companion.

'Madam,' said Varney, 'there is no time for ceremony. My Lord of Leicester, having fully considered the exigencies of the time, sends you his orders immediately to accompany us on our return to Cumnor Place. See, here is his signet, in token of his instant and pressing commands.'

'It is false!' said the countess; 'thou hast stolen the warrant—thou, who art capable of every villany, from the blackest to the basest!'

'It is TRUE, madam,' replied Varney; 'so true, that if you do not instantly arise, and prepare to attend us, we must compel you to obey our orders.'

'Compel!—thou darest not put it to that issue, base as thou art,' exclaimed the unhappy countess.

'That remains to be proved, madam,' said Varney, who had determined on intimidation as the only means of subduing her high spirit; 'if you put me to it, you will find me a rough groom of the chambers.'

It was at this threat that Amy screamed so fearfully, that, had it not been for the received opinion of her insanity, she would quickly have had Lord Hunsdon and others to her aid. Perceiving, however, that her cries were vain, she appealed to Foster in the most affecting terms, conjuring him, as his daughter Janet's honour and purity were dear to him, not to permit her to be treated with unwomanly violence.

'Why, madam, wives must obey their husbands—there's Scripture warrant for it,' said Foster; 'and if you will dress yourself, and come with us patiently, there's no one shall lay finger on you while I can draw a pistol-trigger.'

Seeing no help arrive, and comforted even by the dogged language of Foster, the countess promised to rise and dress herself, if they would agree to retire from the room. Varney at the same time assured her of all safety and honour

while in their hands, and promised that he himself would not approach her, since his presence was so displeasing. Her husband, he added, would be at Cumnor Place within twenty-four hours after they had reached it.

Somewhat comforted by this assurance, upon which, however, she saw little reason to rely, the unhappy Amy made her toilette by the assistance of the lantern which they left with her when they quitted the apartment.

Weeping, trembling, and praying, the unfortunate lady dressed herself—with sensations how different from the days in which she was wont to decorate herself in all the pride of conscious beauty! She endeavoured to delay the completing her dress as long as she could, until, terrified by the impatience of Varney, she was obliged to declare herself ready to attend them.

When they were about to move, the countess clung to Foster with such an appearance of terror at Varney's approach, that the latter protested to her, with a deep oath, that he had no intention whatever of even coming near her. 'If you do but consent to execute your husband's will in quietness, you shall,' he said, 'see but little of me. I will leave you undisturbed to the care of the usher whom your good taste prefers.'

'My husband's will!' she exclaimed. 'But it is the will of God, and let that be sufficient to me.—I will go with Master Foster as unresistingly as ever did a literal sacrifice. He is a father at least; and will have decency, if not humanity. For thee, Varney, were it my latest word, thou art an equal stranger to both.'

Varney replied only she was at liberty to choose, and walked some paces before them to show the way; while, half leaning on Foster, and half carried by him, the countess was transported from Saintlowe's Tower to the postern-gate, where Tider waited with the litter and horses.

The countess was placed in the former without resistance. She saw with some satisfaction that, while Foster and Tider rode close by the litter, which the latter conducted, the dreaded Varney lingered behind, and was soon lost in darkness. A little while she strove, as the road winded round the verge of the lake, to keep sight of those stately towers which called her husband lord, and which still in some places sparkled with lights, where wassailers were yet revelling. But when the direction of the road rendered this no longer possible, she drew back her head, and, sinking down in the litter, recommended herself to the care of Providence.

Besides the desire of inducing the countess to proceed quietly on her journey, Varney had it also in view to have an interview with Lambourne, by whom he every moment expected to be joined, without the presence of any witnesses. He knew the character of this man—prompt, bloody, resolute, and greedy, and judged him the most fit agent he could employ in his further designs. But ten miles of their journey had been measured ere he heard the hasty clatter of horse's hoofs behind him, and was overtaken by Michael Lambourne.

Fretted as he was with his absence, Varney received his profligate servant with a rebuke of unusual bitterness. 'Drunken villain,' he said, 'thy idleness and debauched folly will stretch a halter ere it be long; and for me, I care not how soon!'

This style of objurgation, Lambourne, who was elated to an unusual degree, not only by an extraordinary cup of wine, but by the sort of confidential interview he had just had with the earl, and the secret of which he had made himself master, did not receive with his wonted humility. 'He would take no insolence of language,' he said, 'from the best knight that ever wore spurs. Lord Leicester had detained him on some business of import, and that was enough for Varney, who was but a servant like himself.'

Varney was not a little surprised at his unusual tone of insolence; but, ascribing it to liquor, suffered it to pass as if unnoticed, and then began to tamper with Lambourne, touching his willingness to aid in removing out of the Earl of Leicester's way an obstacle to a rise, which would put it in his power to reward his trusty followers to their utmost wish. And upon Michael Lambourne's seeming ignorant what was meant, he plainly indicated 'the litter-load, yonder,' as the impediment which he desired should be removed.

'Look you, Sir Richard, and so forth,' said Michael, 'some are wiser than some, that is one thing, and some are worse than some, that's another. I know my lord's mind on this matter better than thou, for he hath trusted me fully in the matter. Here are his mandates, and his last words were, Michael Lambourne—for his lordship speaks to me as a gentleman of the sword, and useth not the words drunken villain, or such like phrases, of those who know not how to bear new dignities,—Varney, says he, must pay the utmost respect to my countess,—I trust to you for looking to it, Lambourne, says his lordship, and you must bring back my signet from him peremptorily.'

'Ay,' replied Varney, 'said he so, indeed? You know all, then?'

'All—all—and you were as wise to make a friend of me while the weather is fair betwixt us.'

'And was there no one present,' said Varney, 'when my lord so spoke?'

'Not a breathing creature,' replied Lambourne. 'Think you my lord would trust any one with such matters, save an approved man of action like myself?'

'Most true,' said Varney; and, making a pause, he looked forward on the moonlight road. They were traversing a wide and open heath. The litter, being at least a mile before them, was both out of sight and hearing. He looked behind, and there was an expanse, lighted by the moonbeams, without one human being in sight. He resumed his speech to Lambourne; 'And will you turn upon your master, who has introduced you to this career of court-like favour—whose apprentice you have been, Michael—who has taught you the depths and shallows of court intrigue?'

'Michael not me!' said Lambourne; 'I have a name will brook a *master* before it as well as another; and as to the rest, if I have been an

apprentice, my indenture is out, and I am resolute to set up for myself.'

'Take thy quittance first, thou fool!' said Varney; and with a pistol, which he had for some time held in his hand, shot Lambourne through the body.

The wretch fell from his horse, without a single groan; and Varney, dismounting, rifled his pockets, turning out the lining, that it might appear he had fallen by robbers. He secured the earl's packet, which was his chief object, but he also took Lambourne's purse, containing some gold pieces, the relics of what his debauchery had left him, and, from a singular combination of feelings, carried it in his hands only the length of a small river, which crossed the road, into which he threw it as far as he could fling. Such are the strange remnants of conscience which remain after she seems totally subdued, that this cruel and remorseless man would have felt himself degraded had he pocketed the few pieces belonging to the wretch whom he had thus ruthlessly slain.

The murderer reloaded his pistol, after cleansing the lock and barrel from the appearances of late explosion, and rode calmly after the litter, satisfying himself that he had so adroitly removed a troublesome witness to many of his intrigues, and the bearer of mandates which he had no intentions to obey, and which, therefore, he was desirous it should be thought had never reached his hand.

The remainder of the journey was made with a degree of speed, which showed the little care they had for the health of the unhappy countess. They paused only at places where all was under their command, and where the tale they were prepared to tell of the insane Lady Varney would have obtained ready credit, had she made an attempt to appeal to the compassion of the few persons admitted to see her. But Amy saw no chance of obtaining a hearing from any to whom she had an opportunity of addressing herself, and, besides, was too terrified for the presence of Varney, to violate the implied condition, under which she was to travel free from his company. The authority of Varney, often so used, during the earl's private journeys to Cumnor, readily procured relays of horses where wanted, so that they approached Cumnor Place upon the night after they left Kenilworth.

At this period of the journey, Varney came up to the rear of the litter, as he had done before repeatedly during their progress, and asked 'How does she?'

'She sleeps,' said Foster; 'I would we were home—her strength is exhausted.'

'Rest will restore her,' answered Varney. 'She shall soon sleep sound and long—we must consider how to lodge her in safety.'

'In her own apartments, to be sure,' said Foster. 'I have sent Janet to her aunt's, with a proper rebuke, and the old women are truth itself—for they hate this lady cordially.'

'We will not trust them, however, friend Anthony,' said Varney; 'we must secure her in that stronghold where you keep your gold.'

'My gold!' said Anthony, much alarmed; 'why, what gold have I?—God help me, I have no gold—I would I had.'

'Now, marry hang thee, thou stupid brute—who thinks of or cares for thy gold?—If I did, could I not find an hundred better ways to come at it?—In one word, thy bed-chamber, which thou hast fenced so curiously, must be her place of seclusion; and thou, thou hind, shalt press her pillows of down.—I dare to say the Earl will never ask after the rich furniture of these four rooms.'

This last consideration rendered Foster tractable; he only asked permission to ride before, to make matters ready, and, spurring his horse, he posted before the litter, while Varney falling about threescore paces behind it, it remained only attended by Tider.

When they had arrived at Cumnor Place, the countess asked eagerly for Janet, and showed much alarm when informed that she was no longer to have the attendance of that amiable girl.

'My daughter is dear to me, madam,' said Foster gruffly; 'and I desire not that she should get the court-tricks of lying and 'scaping—somewhat too much of that has she learned already, an it please your ladyship.'

The countess, much fatigued and greatly terrified by the circumstances of her journey, made no answer to this insolence, but mildly expressed a wish to retire to her chamber.

'Ay, ay,' muttered Foster, ''tis but reasonable; but, under favour, you go not to your gew-gaw toy-house yonder—you will sleep to-night in better security.'

'I would it were in my grave,' said the countess; 'but that mortal feelings shiver at the idea of soul and body parting.'

'You, I guess, have no chance to shiver at that,' replied Foster. 'My lord comes hither to-morrow, and doubtless you will make your own ways good with him.'

'But does he come hither?—does he indeed, good Foster?'

'O ay, good Foster!' replied the other. 'But what Foster shall I be to-morrow, when you speak of me to my lord—though all I have done was to obey his own orders?'

'You shall be my protector—a rough one, indeed—but still a protector,' answered the countess. 'O that Janet were but here!'

'She is better where she is,' answered Foster—'one of you is enough to perplex a plain head.—But will you taste any refreshment?'

'O no, no—my chamber—my chamber. I trust,' she said apprehensively, 'I may secure it on the inside?'

'With all my heart,' answered Foster, 'so I may secure it on the outside;' and, taking a light, he led the way to a part of the building where Amy had never been, and conducted her up a stair of great height, preceded by one of the old women with a lamp. At the head of the stair, which seemed of almost immeasurable height, they crossed a short wooden gallery, formed of black oak, and very narrow, at the farther end of which was a strong oaken door, which opened and admitted them into the miser's apartment, homely in its accommodations in the very last degree, and, except in name, little different from a prison-room.

Foster stopped at the door, and gave the

lamp to the countess, without either offering or permitting the attendance of the old woman who had carried it. The lady stood not on ceremony, but, taking it hastily, barred the door, and secured it with the ample means provided on the inside for that purpose.

Varney, meanwhile, had lurked behind on the stairs, but, hearing the door barred, he now came up on tiptoe, and Foster, winking to him, pointed with self-complacence to a piece of concealed machinery in the wall, which, playing with much ease and little noise, dropped a part of the wooden gallery, after the manner of a drawbridge, so as to cut off all communication between the door of the bedroom, which he usually inhabited, and the landing-place of the high winding stair which ascended to it. The rope by which this machinery was wrought was generally carried within the bed-chamber, it being Foster's object to provide against invasion from without; but now that it was intended to secure the prisoner within, the cord had been brought over to the landing-place, and was there made fast, when Foster, with much complacency, had dropped the unsuspected trap-door.

Varney looked with great attention at the machinery, and peeped more than once down the abyss which was opened by the fall of the trap-door. It was dark as pitch, and seemed profoundly deep, going, as Foster informed his confederate in a whisper, nigh to the lowest vault of the castle. Varney cast once more a fixed and long look down into this sable gulf, and then followed Foster to the part of the manor-house most usually inhabited.

When they arrived in the parlour which we have mentioned, Varney requested Foster to get them supper, and some of the choicest wine. 'I will seek Alasco,' he added; 'we have work for him to do, and we must put him in good heart.'

Foster groaned at this intimation, but made no remonstrance. The old woman assured Varney that Alasco had scarce eaten or drunken since her master's departure, living perpetually shut up in the laboratory, and talking as if the world's continuance depended on what he was doing there.

'I will teach him that the world hath other claims on him,' said Varney, seizing a light, and going in quest of the alchemist. He returned, after a considerable absence, very pale, but yet with his habitual sneer on his cheek and nostril—'Our friend,' he said, 'has exhaled.'

'How! what mean you?' said Foster—'Run away—fled with my forty pounds, that should have been multiplied a thousand-fold? I will have hue and cry!'

'I will tell thee a surer way,' said Varney.

'How! which way?' exclaimed Foster; 'I will have back my forty pounds,—I deemed them as surely a thousand times multiplied—I will have back my in-put, at the least'

'Go hang thyself, then, and sue Alasco in the devil's court of chancery, for thither he has carried the cause.'

'How!—what dost thou mean?—is he dead?'

'Ay, truly is he,' said Varney, 'and properly swollen already in the face and body—He had been mixing some of his devil's medicines, and the glass mask which he used constantly had fallen from his face, so that the subtle poison entered the brain, and did its work.'

'*Sancta Maria!*' said Foster; 'I mean God in his mercy preserve us from covetousness and deadly sin!—Had he not had projection, think you? Saw you no ingots in the crucibles?'

'Nay, I looked not but at the dead carrion,' answered Varney; 'an ugly spectacle—he was swollen like a corpse three days exposed on the wheel—Pah! give me a cup of wine.'

'I will go,' said Foster, 'I will examine myself'—— He took the lamp, and hastened to the door, but there hesitated and paused. 'Will you not go with me?' said he to Varney.

'To what purpose?' said Varney, 'I have seen and smelled enough to spoil my appetite. I broke the window, however, and let in the air—it reeked of sulphur, and such-like suffocating steams, as if the very devil had been there.'

'And might it not be the act of the demon himself?' said Foster, still hesitating; 'I have heard he is powerful at such times, and with such people.'

'Still, if it *were* that Satan of thine,' answered Varney, 'who thus jades thy imagination, thou art in perfect safety, unless he is a most unconscionable devil indeed. He hath had two good sops of late.'

'How, *two* sops—what mean you?' said Foster—'what mean you?'

'You will know in time,' said Varney;—'and then this other banquet—but thou wilt esteem Her too choice a morsel for the fiend's tooth—she must have her psalms, and harps, and seraphs.'

Anthony Foster heard, and came slowly back to the table: 'God! Sir Richard, and must that then be done?'

'Ay, in very truth, Anthony, or there comes no copyhold in thy way,' replied his inflexible associate.

'I always foresaw it would land there!' said Foster; 'but how, Sir Richard, how?—for not to win the world would I put hands on her.'

'I cannot blame thee,' said Varney; 'I should be reluctant to do that myself—we miss Alasco and his manna sorely; ay, and the dog Lambourne.'

'Why, where tarries Lambourne?' said Anthony.

'Ask no questions,' said Varney, 'thou wilt see him one day, if thy creed be true.—But to our graver matter.—I will teach thee a springe, Tony, to catch a pewit—yonder trap-door—yonder gimcrack of thine, will remain secure in appearance, will it not, though the supports are withdrawn beneath?'

'Ay, marry, will it,' said Foster; 'so long as it is not trodden on.'

'But were the lady to attempt an escape over it,' replied Varney, 'her weight would carry it down?'

'A mouse's weight would do it,' said Foster.

'Why, then, she dies in attempting her escape, and what could you or I help it, honest Tony? Let us to bed, we will adjust our project to-morrow.'

On the next day, when evening approached, Varney summoned Foster to the execution of

their plan. Tider and Foster's old man-servant were sent on a feigned errand down to the village, and Anthony himself, as if anxious to see that the countess suffered no want of accommodation, visited her place of confinement. He was so much staggered at the mildness and patience with which she seemed to endure her confinement, that he could not help earnestly recommending to her not to cross the threshold of her room on any account whatever until Lord Leicester should come, 'Which,' he added, 'I trust in God, will be very soon.' Amy patiently promised that she would resign herself to her fate, and Foster returned to his hardened companion with his conscience half-cased of the perilous load that weighed on it. 'I have warned her,' he said; 'surely in vain is the snare set in sight of any bird!'

He left, therefore, the countess's door unsecured on the outside, and, under the eye of Varney, withdrew the supports which sustained the falling trap, which, therefore, kept its level position merely by a slight adhesion. They withdrew to wait the issue on the ground-floor adjoining, but they waited long in vain. At length Varney, after walking long to and fro, with his face muffled in his cloak, threw it suddenly back, and exclaimed, 'Surely never was a woman fool enough to neglect so fair an opportunity of escape!'

'Perhaps she is resolved,' said Foster, 'to await her husband's return.'

'True!—most true,' said Varney, rushing out, 'I had not thought of that before.'

In less than two minutes, Foster, who remained behind, heard the tread of a horse in the court-yard, and then a whistle similar to that which was the earl's usual signal;—the instant after, the door of the countess's chamber opened, and, in the same moment the trap-door gave way. There was a rushing sound—a heavy fall—a faint groan—and all was over.

At the same instant, Varney called in at the window, in an accent and tone which was an indescribable mixture betwixt horror and raillery, 'Is the bird caught?—is the deed done?'

'O God, forgive us!' replied Anthony Foster.

'Why, thou fool,' said Varney, 'thy toil is ended, and thy reward secure. Look down into the vault—what seest thou?'

'I see only a heap of white clothes, like a snowdrift,' said Foster. 'O God, she moves her arm!'

'Hurl something down on her—Thy gold chest, Tony—it is an heavy one.'

'Varney, thou art an incarnate fiend!' replied Foster;—'There needs nothing more—she is gone!'

'So pass our troubles,' said Varney, entering the room; 'I dreamed not I could have mimicked the Earl's call so well.'

'O, if there be judgment in heaven, thou hast deserved it,' said Foster, 'and wilt meet it!—Thou hast destroyed her by means of her best affections—It is a seething of the kid in the mother's milk!'

'Thou art a fanatical ass,' replied Varney. 'Let us now think how the alarm should be given,—the body is to remain where it is.'

But their wickedness was to be permitted no longer;—for even while they were at this consultation, Tressilian and Raleigh broke in upon them, having obtained admittance by means of Tider and Foster's servant, whom they had secured at the village.

Anthony Foster fled on their entrance; and, knowing each corner and pass of the intricate old house, escaped all search. But Varney was taken on the spot; and, instead of expressing compunction for what he had done, seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in pointing out to them the remains of the murdered countess, while at the same time he defied them to show that he had any share in her death. The despairing grief of Tressilian, on viewing the mangled and yet warm remains of what had lately been so lovely and so beloved, was such, that Raleigh was compelled to have him removed from the place by force, while he himself assumed the direction of what was to be done.

Varney, upon a second examination, made very little mystery either of the crime or of its motives; alleging, as a reason for his frankness, that, though much of what he confessed could only have attached to him by suspicion, yet such suspicion would have been sufficient to deprive him of Leicester's confidence, and to destroy all his towering plans of ambition. 'I was not born,' he said, 'to drag on the remainder of life a degraded outcast,—nor will I so die, that my fate shall make a holiday to the vulgar herd.'

From these words it was apprehended he had some design upon himself, and he was carefully deprived of all means by which such could be carried into execution. But, like some of the heroes of antiquity, he carried about his person a small quantity of strong poison, prepared probably by the celebrated Demetrius Alasco. Having swallowed this potion over-night, he was found next morning dead in his cell; nor did he appear to have suffered much agony, his countenance presenting, even in death, the habitual expression of sneering sarcasm which was predominant while he lived. 'The wicked man,' saith Scripture, 'hath no bonds in his death.'

The fate of his colleague in wickedness was long unknown. Cumnor Place was deserted immediately after the murder; for, in the vicinity of what was called the Lady Dudley's Chamber, the domestics pretended to hear groans, and screams, and other supernatural noises. After a certain length of time, Janet, hearing no tidings of her father, became the uncontrolled mistress of his property, and conferred it, with her hand, upon Wayland, now a man of settled character, and holding a place in Elizabeth's household. But it was after they had been both dead for some years, that their eldest son and heir, in making some researches about Cumnor Hall, discovered a secret passage, closed by an iron door, which, opening from behind the bed in the Lady Dudley's Chamber, descended to a sort of cell, in which they found an iron chest containing a quantity of gold, and a human skeleton stretched above it. The fate of Anthony Foster was now manifest. He had fled to this place of concealment, forgetting the key of the spring-lock; and, being barred from

escape, by the means he had used for preservation of that gold for which he had sold his salvation, he had there perished miserably. Unquestionably the groans and screams heard by the domestics were not entirely imaginary, but were those of this wretch, who, in his agony, was crying for relief and succour.

The news of the countess's dreadful fate put a sudden period to the pleasures of Kenilworth. Leicester retired from court, and for a considerable time abandoned himself to his remorse. But as Varney in his last declaration had been studious to spare the character of his patron, the earl was the object rather of compassion than resentment. The queen at length recalled him to court; he was once more distinguished as a statesman and favourite, and the rest of his career is well known to history. But there was something retributive in his death, if, according to an account very generally received, it took place from his swallowing a draught of poison which was designed by him for another person.*

Sir Hugh Robsart died very soon after his daughter, having settled his estate on Tressilian. But neither the prospect of rural independence, nor the promises of favour which Elizabeth held out to induce him to follow the court, could remove his profound melancholy. Wherever he went, he seemed to see before him the disfigured corpse of the early and only object of his affection. At length, having made provision for the maintenance of the old friends and old servants who formed Sir Hugh's family at Lidcote Hall, he himself embarked with his friend Raleigh for the Virginia expedition, and, young in years but old in grief, died before his day in that foreign land. Of inferior persons it is only necessary to say, that Blount's wit grew brighter as his yellow roses faded; that, doing his part as a brave commander in the wars, he was much more in his element than during the short period of his following the court; and that Flibbertigibbet's acute genius raised him to favour and distinction, in the employment both of Burleigh and Walsingham.

* Note L. Death of the Earl of Leicester.

NOTES TO KENILWORTH.

Note A, p. 178.—Title of Kenilworth.

[Lockhart informs us that 'Sir Walter wished to call his novel, like the ballad, *Cumnor Hall*, but, in deference to his publisher's (Constable's) wishes, substituted the present title.' The fascination he had for this ballad is referred to by his old schoolfellow Mr. Irving, who says, 'After the labours of the day were over, we often walked in the *Meadows* (a public park in Edinburgh, intersected by formal rows of old trees), especially in the moonlight nights, and Scott seemed never weary of repeating the first stanza, "The dews of summer night did fall."

When speaking of the Waverley Novels, Mr Lockhart declares that 'Kenilworth was one of the most successful of them all at the time of publication; and it continues, and, I doubt not, will ever continue, to be placed in the very highest rank of prose fiction. The rich variety of character, and scenery, and incident, in this novel, has never indeed been surpassed; nor, with the one exception of the Bride of Lammermoor, has Scott bequeathed us a deeper and more affecting tragedy than that of Amy Robsart.']

Note B, p. 192.—Foster, Lambourne, and the Black Bear.

If faith is to be put in epitaphs, Anthony Foster was something the very reverse of the character represented in the novel. Ashmole gives this description of his tomb. I copy from the *Antiquities of Berkshire*, vol. i. p. 143.

'In the north wall of the chancel at Cumnor Church is a monument of grey marble, whereon, in brass plates, are engraved a man in armour, and his wife in the habit of her times, both kneeling before a fald-stoole, together with the figures of three sons kneeling behind their mother. Under the figure of the man is this inscription:

Antonius Forster, generis generosa propago,
  Cumneræ Dominus, Berchericnsis erat
Armiger, Armigero prognatus patre Ricardo,
  Qui quondam Iphlethæ Salopiensis erat.
Quatuor ex isto fluxerunt stemmate nati,
  Ex isto Antonius stemmate quartus erat
Mente sagax, animo precellens, corpore promptus,
  Eloquii dulcis ore disertus erat
In factis probitas fuit in sermone venustas,
  In vultu gravitas, relligione fides,
In patriam pietas, in egenos grata voluntas,
  Accedunt reliquis annumeranda bonis
Si quod cuncta rapit, rapuit non omnia Lethum,
Si quod Mors rapuit, vivida fama dedit.

*   *   *   *   *

'These verses following are writ at length, two by two, in praise of him:—

Argute resonas Cithare pretendere chordas
  Novit, et Aonia concrepuisse Lyra
Gaudebat terre teneras defigere plantas,
  Et mira pulchras construere arte domos
Composita varias lingua formare loquelas
  Doctus, et edocta scribere multa manu.

The arms over it thus:

Quart. { I. 3 *Hunter's Horns* stringed.
        { II. 3 *Pinions* with their points upwards.

'The crest is a *Stag* couchant, vulnerated through the neck by a broad arrow; on his side is a *Martlett* for a difference.'

From this monumental inscription it appears that Anthony Foster, instead of being a vulgar, low-bred, puritanical churl, was in fact a gentleman of birth and consideration, distinguished for his skill in the arts of music and horticulture, as also in languages. In so far, therefore, the Anthony Foster of the romance has nothing but the name in common with the real individual. But notwithstanding the charity, benevolence, and religious faith imputed by the monument of grey marble to its tenant, tradition, as

well as secret history, name him as the active agent in the death of the countess, and it is added, that from being a jovial and convivial gallant, as we may infer from some expressions in the epitaph, he sunk, after the fatal deed, into a man of gloomy and retired habits, whose looks and manners indicated that he suffered under the pressure of some atrocious secret

The name of Lambourne is still known in the vicinity and it is said some of the clan partake the habits as well as name of the Michael Lambourne of the romance A man of this name lately murdered his wife outdoing Michael in this respect, who only was concerned in the murder of the wife of another man

I have only to add, that the jolly Black Bear has been restored to his predominance over bowl and bottle, in the village of Cumnor

NOTE C, p 235 — LEGEND OF WAYLAND SMITH

The great defeat given by Alfred to the Danish invaders, is said, by Mr Gough to have taken place near Ashdown, in Berkshire 'The burial place of Bæreg the Danish chief who was slain in this fight, is distinguished by a parcel of stones less than a mile from the hill, set on edge, enclosing a piece of ground somewhat raised On the east side of the southern extremity stand three squarish flat stones of about four or five feet over either way supporting a fourth and now called by the vulgar WAYLAND SMITH, from an idle tradition about an invisible smith replacing lost horse shoes there — GOUGH'S *Edition of Camden's Britannia*, vol i p 221

The popular belief still retains memory of this wild legend, which, connected as it is with the site of a Danish sepulchre, may have arisen from some legend concerning the northern Duergar who resided in the rocks and were cunning workers in steel and iron It was believed that Wayland Smith's fee was sixpence and that unlike other workmen, he was offended if more was offered Of late his offices have been again called to memory but fiction has in this, as in other cases taken the liberty to pillage the stores of oral tradition This monument must be very ancient for it has been kindly pointed out to me that it is referred to in an ancient Saxon charter as a landmark The monument has been of late cleared out, and made considerably more conspicuous

[The vale of the Whitehorse derives its name from the figure of a horse which has been described on the hill side at this place, the turf having been removed from the chalky soil in such a way as to show at a distance the form of a white horse This figure is supposed to have been cut out during the Saxon period to celebrate some victory On certain occasions the white horse is scoured or repaired by the peasantry of the neighbourhood who turn out in large numbers and remove any turf that may have settled itself on the figure of the horse]

NOTE D, p 239 — SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Among the attendants and adherents of Sussex, we have ventured to introduce the celebrated Raleigh, in the dawn of his court favour

In Aubrey's Correspondence there are some curious particulars of Sir Walter Raleigh 'He was a tall handsome bold man, but his næve was that he was damnably proud Old Sir Robert Harley of Brampton Brian Castle, who knew him, would say it was a great question who was the proudest Sir Walter, or Sir Thomas Overbury, but the difference that was, was judged in Sir Thomas's side In the great parlour at Downton, at Mr Raleigh's is a good piece an original of Sir Walter, in a white satin doublet, all embroidered with rich pearls, and a mighty rich chain of great pearls about his neck The old servants have told me that the pearls were near as big as the painted ones. He had a most remarkable aspect, an exceeding high forehead, long faced, and sour eyelidded ' A rebus is added to this purpose

> The enemy to the stomach and the word of disgrace
> Is the name of the gentleman with the bold face

Sir Walter Raleigh's beard turned up naturally, which gave him an advantage over the gallants of the time, whose moustaches received a touch of the barber's art to give them the air then most admired — See Aubrey's *Correspondence*, vol. ii. part ii. p 500.

NOTE E, p. 244. — COURT FAVOUR OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH

The gallant incident of the cloak is the traditional account of this celebrated statesman's rise at court. None of Elizabeth's courtiers knew better than he how to make his court to her personal vanity, or could more justly estimate the quantity of flattery which she could condescend to swallow Being confined in the Tower for some offence, and understanding the queen was about to pass to Greenwich in her barge he insisted on approaching the window, that he might see at whatever distance, the Queen of his Affections the most beautiful object which the earth bore on its surface The lieutenant of the Tower (his own particular friend) threw himself between his prisoner and the window while Sir Walter apparently influenced by a fit of unrestrainable passion swore he would not be debarred from seeing his light his life his goddess! A scuffle ensued *got up* for effect's sake in which the lieutenant and his captive grappled and struggled with fury — tore each other's hair and at length drew daggers, and were only separated by force The queen being informed of this scene exhibited by her frantic adorer it wrought as was to be expected, much in favour of the captive Paladin There is little doubt that his quarrel with the lieutenant was entirely contrived for the purpose which it produced

NOTE F, p 254 — ROBERT LANEHAM

Little is known of Robert Laneham save in his curious letter to a friend in London, giving an account of Queen Elizabeth's entertainments at Kenilworth, written in a style of the most intolerable affectation both in point of composition and orthography He describes himself as a *bon vivant*, who was wont to be jolly and dry in the morning, and by his good will would be chiefly in the company of the ladies He was, by the interest of Lord Leicester clerk of the council chamber door, and also keeper of the same 'When Council sits, says he, 'I am at hand If any makes a babbling *Peace* say I If I see a listener or a pryer in at the chinks or lockhole, I am presently on the bones of him If a friend comes, I make him sit down by me on a form or chest The rest may walk a God's name! There has been seldom a better portrait of the pragmatic conceit and self importance of a small man in office

NOTE G, p 264 — DR JULIO

The Earl of Leicester's Italian physician, Julio, was affirmed by his contemporaries to be a skilful compounder of poisons which he applied with such frequency that the Jesuit Parsons extols ironically the marvellous good luck of this great favourite, in the opportune deaths of those who stood in the way of his wishes There is a curious passage on the subject —

Long after this he fell in love with the Lady Sheffield, whom I signified before and then also had he the same fortune to have her husband dye quickly with an extreame rheume in his head (as it was given out) but as others say, of an artificiall catarre that stopped his breath

'The like good chance had he in the death of my Lord of Essex (as I have said before), and that at a time most fortunate for his purpose, for when he was coming home from Ireland with intent to revenge himselfe upon my Lord of Leicester for begetting his wife with childe in his absence (the childe was a daughter and brought up by the Lady Shandoes W Knooles, his wife), my Lord of Leicester hearing thereof, wanted not a friend or two to accompany the deputy, as among other a couple of the Earles own servants, Crompton (if I misse not his name), yeoman of his bottles, and Lloid his secretary, entertained afterward by my Lord of Leicester, and so he dyed in the way, of an extreame flux, caused by an Italian receipe, as all his friends are well assured, the maker whereof was a chyrurgeon (as it is beleeved) that then was newly come to my Lord from Italy — a cunning man and sure in operation, with whom, if the good Lady had been sooner acquainted, and used his help, she should not have needed to sitten so pensive at home, and fearfull of her husband's former returne out of the same country . . . Neither must you marvaile though all these died in divers manners of outward diseases, for this is the excellency of the Italian art for which this chyrurgeon and Dr. Julio were entertained so carefully, who can make a man dye in what manner or show of sickness you will — by whose instructions, no doubt but his lordship is now cunning, especially adding also to these the counsell of his Doctor Bayly, a man also not a little studied (as he seemeth) in his art; for I heard him once myselfe, in a publique act in Oxford, and that in presence of my Lord of Leicester (if I be not deceived), maintain that poyson might be so tempered and given as it should not appear presently, and yet should kill the party afterward, at what time should be appointed; which argument belike pleased well his lordship, and

therefore was chosen to be discussed in his audience, if I be not deceived of his being that day present. So, though one dye of a flux, and another of a catarre, yet this importeth little to the matter, but showeth rather the great cunning and skill of the artificer.'—PARSONS' *Leicester's Commonwealth*, p. 23.

It is unnecessary to state the numerous reasons why the earl is stated in the tale to be rather the dupe of villains than the unprincipled author of their atrocities. In the latter capacity, which a part at least of his contemporaries imputed to him, he would have made a character too disgustingly wicked to be useful for the purposes of fiction.

I have only to add, that the union of the poisoner, the quacksalver, the alchemist, and the astrologer, in the same person, was familiar to the pretenders to the mystic sciences.

NOTE H, p. 292.—AMY ROBSART AT KENILWORTH.

[The historical critic will recognise an obvious anachronism in the Author's account of Amy's visit to Kenilworth Castle. The festivities there took place in July 1575, several years after the death of the real Amye Dudley. It may be mentioned, however, that during these festivities the Earl of Leicester was living in secret wedlock with Lady Sheffield.

With reference to these historical liberties, see the conclusion to the Monastery, vol. x. p. 423, of this edition.]

NOTE I, p. 307.—ENTERTAINMENTS AT KENILWORTH.

See Laneham's Account of the Queen's Entertainment at Kenilworth Castle, in 1575, a very diverting tract, written by as great a coxcomb as ever blotted paper. (See Note F.) The original is extremely rare, but it has been twice reprinted; once in Mr. Nichols's very curious and interesting collection of the Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i.; and more lately in a beautiful antiquarian publication termed *Kenilworth Illustrated*, printed at Chiswick, for Henry Merridew of Coventry, and Radcliffe of Birmingham. It contains reprints of Laneham's Letter, Gascoigne's Princely Progress, and other scarce pieces, annotated with accuracy and ability. The Author takes the liberty to refer to this work as his authority for the account of the festivities.

I am indebted for a curious ground-plan of the Castle of Kenilworth, as it existed in Queen Elizabeth's time, to the voluntary kindness of Richard Badnall, Esq. of Olivebank, near Liverpool. From his obliging communication, I learn that the original sketch was found among the manuscripts of the celebrated J. J. Rousseau, when he left England. These were entrusted by the philosopher to the care of his friend Mr. Davenport, and passed from his legatee into the possession of Mr. Badnall.

NOTE J, p. 310.—ITALIAN RHYMES.

The incident alluded to occurs in the poem of Orlando Innamorato of Boiardo, libro ii. canto 4, stanza 25.

'Non era per ventura,' etc.

It may be rendered thus:—

As then, perchance, unguarded was the tower,
So enter'd free Anglante's dauntless knight
No monster and no giant guard the bower
In whose recess reclined the fairy light,
Robed in a loose cymar of lily white,
And on her lap a sword of breadth and might,
In whose broad blade, as in a mirror bright,
Like maid that trims her for a festal night,
The fairy deck'd her hair, and placed her coronet aright.

Elizabeth's attachment to the Italian school of poetry was singularly manifested on a well-known occasion. Her godson, Sir John Harington, having offended her delicacy by translating some of the licentious passages of the Orlando Furioso, she imposed on him, as a penance, the task of rendering the *whole* poem into English.

NOTE K, p. 314.—FURNITURE OF KENILWORTH.

In revising this work, I have had the means of making some accurate additions to my attempt to describe the [illegible] Kenilworth, by the kindness of my [illegible], Esq., who had the goodness to communicate to me an [illegible] of the furniture of Kenilworth in the days of the [illegible] Earl of Leicester. I have adorned the text with some of the splendid articles mentioned in the inventory, but antiquaries, especially, will be desirous to see a more full specimen than the story leaves room for.

EXTRACTS FROM KENILWORTH INVENTORY, A.D. 1584.

A Salte, ship-fashion, of the mother of perle, garnished with silver and divers workes, warlike ensignes, and ornaments, with xvj peeces of ordinance, whereof ij on wheles, two anckers on the foreparte, and on the stearne the image of Dame Fortune standing on a globe with a flag in her hand. Pois xxxij oz.

A gilte salte like a swann, mother of perle. Pois xxx oz. iij quarters.

A George on horseback, of wood, painted and gilt, with a case for knives in the tayle of the horse, and a case for oyster knives in the brest of the Dragon.

A green barge-cloth, embroider'd with white lions and beares.

A perfuming pann, of silver. Pois xix oz.

In the halle. Tabells, long and short, vj. Formes, long and short, xiiij.

HANGINGS.

(These are minutely specified, and consisted of the following subjects, in tapestry, and gilt, and red leather.)

Flowers, beasts, and pillars arched. Forest worke. Historie. Storie of Susanna, the Prodigall Childe, Saule, Tobie, Hercules, Lady Fame, Hawking and Hunting, Jezabell, Judith and Holofernes, David, Abraham, Sampson, Hippolitus, Alexander the Great, Naaman the Assyrian, Jacob, etc.

BEDSTEDS, WITH THEIR FURNITURE.

(These are magnificent and numerous. I shall copy, *verbatim*, the description of what appears to have been one of the best.)

A bedsted of wallnut-tree, toppe fashion, the pillers redd and varnished, the ceelor, tester, and single vallance of crimson sattin, paned with a broad border of bone lace of golde and silver. The tester richlie embrothered with my Lo. armes in a garland of hoppes, roses, and pomegranetts, and lyned with buckerom. Fyve curteins of crimson sattin to the same bedsted, striped downe with a bone lace of gold and silver, garnished with buttons and loops of crimson silk and golde, containing xiiij bredths of sattin, and one yarde iij quarters deepe. The ceelor, vallance, and curteins lyned with crymson taffata sarsenet.

A crymson sattin counterpointe, quilted and embr. with a golde twiste, and lyned with redd sarsenet, being in length iij yards good, and in breadth iij scant.

A chaise of crymson sattin, suteable.

A fayre quilte of crymson sattin, vj breadths, iij yardes 3 quarters naile deepe, all lozenged over with silver twiste, in the midst a cinquefoile within a garland of ragged staves, fringed rounde aboute with a small fringe of crymson silke, lyned throughe with white fustian.

Fyve plumes of coolered feathers, garnished with bone lace and spangells of goulde and silver, standing in cups* knitt all over with goulde, silver, and crymson silk.

A carpett for a cupboarde of crymson sattin, embrothered with a border of goulde twiste, about iij parts of it fringed with silk and goulde, lyned with bridges† sattin, in length ij yards, and ij bredths of sattin.

(There were eleven down beds and ninety feather beds, besides thirty-seven mattresses.)

CHAYRES, STOOLES, AND CUSHENS.

(These were equally splendid with the beds, etc. I shall here copy that which stands at the head of the list.)

A chaier of crimson velvet, the seate and backe partlie embrothered, with R. L. in cloth of goulde, the beare and ragged staffe in clothe of silver, garnished with lace and fringe of goulde, silver, and crimson silck. The frame covered with velvet, bounde about the edge with goulde lace, and studded with gilte nailes.

A square stoole and a foote stoole, of crimson velvet, fringed and garnished suteable.

A long cushen of crimson velvet, embr. with the ragged staffe in a wreathe of goulde, with my Lo. posie '*Droyte et Loyall*' written in the same, and the letters R. L. in

* Probably on the centre and four corners of the bedstead. Four bears and ragged staves occupied a similar position on another of these sumptuous pieces of furniture.

† *i.e.* Bruges.

clothe of goulde, being garnished with lace, fringe, buttons, and tassels, of gold, silver, and crimson silck, lyned with crimson taff., being in length 1 yard quarter.

A square cushen, of the like velvet, embr. suteable to the long cushen.

Carpets.

(There were 10 velvet carpets for tables and windows, 49 Turkey carpets for floors, and 32 cloth carpets. One of each I will now specify.)

A carpett of crimson velvet, richly embr. with my Lo. posie, beares and ragged staves, etc, of clothe of goulde and silver, garnished upon the seames and aboute with golde lace, fringed accordinglie, lyned with crimson taffata sarsenett, being 3 breadths of velvet, one yard 3 quarters long.

A great Turquoy carpett, the grounde blew, with a list of yelloe at each end, being in length x yards, in bredthe iiij yards and quarter.

A long carpett of blew clothe, lyned with bridges sattin, fringed with blew silck and goulde, in length vj yards lack a quarter, the whole bredth of the clothe

Pictures

(Chiefly described as having curtains.)

The Queene's Majestie (2 great tables). 3 of my Lord. St. Jerome. Lo. of Arundell. Lord Mathevers. Lord of Pembroke. Counte Egmondt. The Queene of Scotts. King Philip. The Baker's Daughters. The Duke of Feria. Alexander Magnus. Two Yonge Ladies. Pompaea Sabina. Fred. D. of Saxony. Emp Charles. K. Philip's Wife. Prince of Orange and his Wife. Marq. of Berges and his Wife. Counte de Horne. Count Holstrate. Monsr. Brederode. Duke Alva. Cardinal Grandville. Duches of Parma. Henrie E. of Pembroke and his young Countess. Countis of Essex. Occacion and Repentance. Lord Mowntacute. S. Jas Crofts. Sir Wr. Mildmay. Sr. Wm. Pickering. Edwin Abp. of York.

A tabell of an historie of men, women, and children, molden in wax.

A little foulding table of ebanie, garnished with white bone, wherein are written verses with lres. of goulde.

A table of my Lord's armes.

Fyve of the plannetts, painted in frames.

Twentie-three cardes,* or maps of countries.

Instruments.

(I shall give two specimens)

An instrument of organs, regalls, and virginalls, covered with crimson velvet, and garnished with goulde lac

A fair pair of double virginalls.

Cabonetts.

A cabonett of crimson sattin, richlie embr. with a device of hunting the stagg, in goulde, silver, and silck, with iiij glasses in the topp thereof, xvj cupps of flowers made of goulde, silver, and silck, in a case of leather, lyned with greene sattin of bridges.

(Another of purple velvet. A desk of red leather.)

A Chess Boarde of ebanie, with checkars of christall and other stones, layed with silver, garnished with beares and ragged staves, and cinquefoiles of silver. The xxxij men likewyse of christall and other stones sett, the one sort in silver white, the other gilte, in a case gilded and lyned with green cotton.

(Another of bone and ebanie. A pair of tabells of bone.)

A great Brason Candlestick to hang in the roofe of the howse, verie fayer and curiously wrought, with xxiiij branches, xij greate and xij of lesser size, 6 rowlers and ij wings for the spread eagle, xxiiij socketts for can dells, xij greater and xij of a lesser sorte, xxiiij sawcers or candle-cupps, of like proporcion to put under the socketts, iij images of men and iij of weomen, of brass, verie finely and artificiallie done.

These specimens of Leicester's magnificence may serve to assure the reader that it scarce lay in the power of a modern author to exaggerate the lavish style of expense displayed in the princely pleasures of Kenilworth.

Note L, p. 351.—Death of the Earl of Leicester

In a curious manuscript copy of the information given by Ben Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden, as transcribed by Sir Robert Sibbald, Leicester's death is ascribed to poison administered as a cordial by his countess, to whom he had given it, representing it to be a restorative in any faintness, in the hope that she herself might be cut off by using it. We have already quoted Jonson's account of this merited stroke of retribution in a note to the Introduction, p. 178. It may be here added, that the following satirical epitaph on Leicester occurs in Drummond's Collection, but is evidently not of his composition :—

Epitaph on the Erle of Leister

Here lies a valiant warriour,
Who never drew a sword;
Here lies a noble courtier,
Who never kept his word;
Here lies the Erle of Leister,
Who governed the Estates,
Whom the earth could never living love,
And the just heaven now hates

[See *Archæologia Scotica*, vol. iv ; and the volume published by the Shakespeare Society, *Notes of Ben Jonson's Conversations*, 1842, p 24]

GLOSSARY TO KENILWORTH.

A, in.
A', he.
Abject, a degraded person.
Abye, suffer for
Accolade, slap with the flat blade of a sword
Acolyte of chivalry attendant or junior assistant in a ceremony; a novice
Afrite, evil genie in Mahommedan mythology.
Aiguillette, golden tag
Albumazar, a famous Arabian astronomer, b. 805 A.D.
Alchahest Elixir, the universal solvent of the alchemists.
Al fresco, in the open air.
Alicant, Spanish wine.
Almains, Germans
Alter ego, second self.
Amadis, the hero of a XIV. century romance.
Amoret, a XVII. century love name.
An, if.
Anan, Eh? I beg your pardon?
Angel, gold coin=10s
Antic, ludicrous, clownish.
Arcanum, the great secret, the elixir.
Argent, silver
Arion, ancient poet, who when flung into the sea, was saved on a dolphin's back.
Arrow, e'er a, ever a.
Artist, craftsman, artisan.
Astra regunt, etc. (p 261), the stars rule men, but God rules the stars.
Autolycus, a crafty pedlar, one of the characters in The Winter's Tale.
Ave Maria, ora pro nobis, Hail, Mary, pray for us.

Baby, small image of self reflected in the eye of another
Barbed, caparisoned.
Bartholomew fair, held on 24th August, great resort of clowns.
Base, a plaited skirt sometimes imitated in mailed armour.
Bastard, a sweet Spanish wine.
Bear the bell take the first place
Bears, are you there with your, Are you there again? are you at it again?
Bearward, bear-keeper
Beaver, the hat, or part of helmet, made of beaver's fur.
Belianis. See *Don Belianis*
Bell Savage, inn in Ludgate Hill, London. For meaning of name, see Spectator, I 28.
Beshrew, mischief take!
Besognio, orig. raw Spanish soldier, worthless fellow.
Bevis, Sir, of Hampton, slayer of the giant Ascapart.
Billets, wood cut for fuel
Black letter, form of type used by the old printers
Black Sanctus, a burlesque of the Sanctus of the Roman missal
Blood and nails, thirty-two nails said to have been used at the Crucifixion, have been preserved as relics
Body o' me, current oath in reign of Elizabeth.
Bona-roba, a wench, a showy wanton.
Botcher, a cobbler, a tailor who does repairs.
Bots, a disease caused by parasitical insects.
Bratchet, a little brat.
Breech, flog.
Briareus, fabulous monster.
Brill (The), a Dutch port
Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, mystical secret society able to transmute metals, etc.
Buff, leather of a dull yellow colour.
Bump, to make a hollow sound.
Bush, the sign of a tavern.

Ca, like *'Ban* abbreviated for Caliban.
Caliver, sixteenth century musket
Camaradoes, comrades
Camicia, shirts.
Capotaine, close fitting hat
Cartel, written challenge, letter of defiance
Cast, specimen, sort.
Casting bottle, bottle for sprinkling perfumed waters.
Cater-cousin, on terms of close intimacy.
Caudle, a warm drink of gruel and wine, sweetened and spiced
Caviare, dish prepared from the roe of the sturgeon
C'est l'homme qui, etc (p 231), 'Tis the man who does the fighting and gives counsel.
Chafe, scold, worry
Chantrey, famous sculptor, 1782–1841.
Charlatani, charlatans
Cheney, cotton. See *Philippine*.
Chough, bird of the crow family.
Chuff, miser
Clary, spiced wine.
Clerkship, book-learning
Clout, piece of leather or cloth; a rag.
Cock and pie, oath consisting of an adjuration of the Deity and the Roman Catholic service book.
Codling, an unripe apple.
Codshead fool.
Cælebs, unwed.
Cognizance, emblem, badge.
Cog's wounds, God's wounds.
Coif, head-dress.
Coil, noise, bustle.
Combust, astrological term applied to a planet when it is near to the sun.
Comfortable, enjoying contentment and ease.
Commodity, goods, profit.
Compos voti, having accomplished your wish.
Compter, name formerly given to debtor prisons in London
Coragio, courage
Cordovan, Spanish leather.
Corinthian, a debauched man.
Costard, the head.
Cote pass, overtake.
Coucher, going to bed.
Cranes in the Vintry, the Three. See Vintry.
Cricket four legged stool
Cross, silver coin marked with a cross
Cuerpo, body *In cuerpo*, naked.
Cullis, broth of boiled meat strained
Culminate, to be in the highest point of altitude.
Culverin, ancient small cannon
Curetur jentaculum, let the breakfast be cared for.
Cutter, bully, sharper.
Cyclops, Homeric one-eyed monsters, who inhabited Sicily.
Cymar, light covering, scarf.

Dan, title of honour common with the old poets.

Dandieprat, dwarf, urchin.
Deboshed, debauched.
Decoct, boil down
Devil looking over Lincoln, possible allusion to the malignity with which the devil was supposed to regard the beauty of a finished cathedral, or else to a sour faced statue at Lincoln of his infernal majesty.
Devoir, duty.
Diablotin, little devil, mischievous young imp.
Died without his shoes, i e. in bed
Difficilium, etc (p. 220) endurance of hardships from day to day.
Digit, finger.
Dink, trim, tidy.
Dirl, thrill, vibrate.
Distemperature, disorder, failing.
Divertisement, entertainment.
Do, put.
Don Belianis of Greece hero of an old romance.
Doubt, fear.
Douse, blow, stroke.
Dramatis personæ characters of the drama.
Drap-de-bure, coarse dark stuff.
Drawers, waiters.
Drench and a ball, physic draught, and a pill.

Egmont, Duke of Guelders, beheaded by Alva for treachery.
Eldorado, very rich country which Martinez claims to have discovered.
Electuary, kind of medicine.
Epicurus, Greek philosopher, B C. 342–270.
Erasmus, Dutch scholar, A.D. 1465–1536
Erasmus ab Die Fausto, Latin for Erasmus de Holiday.
Ergo, heus, etc. (p. 221). so ho there, my pupil, come hither, I pray thee.
Esculapius, celebrated physician of antiquity.
Espalier, trellis work for training trees.
Et sic de cæteris, and so on with the rest.
Eumenides, Stygiumque nefas, the Furies and the Stygian monster.
Excalibur, famous sword of King Arthur.
Ex nomine, etc. (p. 220), from whose name is derived the common word.

Faber ferrarius, blacksmith.
Faitour, rogue, hypocrite.
Fall back fall edge, come what may.
Falling band, collar overlying the shoulders
Farcy, a disease of horses.
Fatidicæ, those who predict fate.
Faveti linguis, keep silence.
Felix bis terque, twice yea, three times fortunate.
Felly, in a fell manner, savagely.
Femoral, about the thighs.
Ferrateen, a stuff of mixed wool and silk, a kind of poplin
Festina lente, make haste slowly, don t be impetuous.
Filigree, ornamental open work.
Fleering, scornful, contemptuous.
Flesh and fell, muscle and skin.
Flight-shot, bowshot.
Fœnum habet in cornu, it has hay wrapped about its horns.
Followers of Minerva those who have address and intelligence.
Forked, pointed
Foul, of little value
Founders, a disease of horses.
Fox old slang for the broadsword.
Furens quid femina, what a frenzied woman (can do).
Furmity, hulled wheat boiled in milk, and seasoned
Fusille, an elongated lozenge, term in heraldry.

Galliard, gay, jaunty.
Galloon, worsted.
Gambade, gambol.
Gaudet nomine Sibyllæ she rejoices in the name of Sibyl.
Gaze, see, look upon.
Gaze-hound, greyhound
Gear, affair, thing.
Geber, famous Arabian alchemist of the eighth century.
Genethliacally, by calculating nativities.
Gien, given.
Give the good time of day salute in a friendly way.
Gogsnouns, another form of Cog's 'ounds.
Good jere, gougere morbus Gallicus an expletive, — what the plague ! or what the mischief !
Gossip sponsor, friend.
Gramercy great thanks
Grave, judicial officer, also for Graf.
Grave Maurice, Prince of Nassau and famous captain.
Groat, silver coin worth 4d.
Groyne (The), old name for Corunna.
Guess, sort.
Gules, term in heraldry for red.
Guy of Warwick, hero of mediæval romance.

Happy man be his dole, happy be he who succeeds best
Harington, poet, 1561–1612.
Harrowtry, heraldry
Harry-noble, noble coined in the reign of Henry VIII.
Haruspices, soothsayers, diviners
Head borough, head of a borough, petty constable.
Heart spone, the depression in the breastbone, the breast-bone
Helen of Troy, wife of Menelaus.
Heys, intricate country dance.
Hobby-horse, morris-dancer made up as a horse, and imitating its action.
Hocktide, first or second week following Easter week.
Holland, linen from the Netherlands.
Holped, helped.
Horace, Roman poet of the Augustan age.
Hose, breeches.
Hospitium, place of shelter and refreshment.

Incontinent, immediately.
Infidel, term of strong contempt.
Infortune, misfortune.
In fumo, in smoke.
Ingle, favourite, friend.
In rerum natura, in the nature of things.
Inter magnates, among the great.
In tertio Mariæ, in the third year of Mary's reign
In the manner, in the act.
Isis the main stream of the Thames, above Dorchester (Oxford).

Jack, metal pitcher, black-jack
Jack pudding, a buffoon, merry andrew.
Jape, jest.
Jere See *Good jere.*
Jolterhead, stupid head.
Jowring, scolding, cursing
Judicial, foretelling human affairs.
Juvenal, youth.

Ka me, ka thee, old proverb — Help me, and I'll help you.
Kernes, light-armed foot-soldiers.
King Cambyses' vein, rantingly.

Lachrymæ, red Italian wine.
Lacs d'amour, lovers' knots
Laquei amoris, lovers' knots.
Largesse, etc, (p. 312) your gifts your gifts, brave knights.
Lay you up in lavender, in prison.
Left-handed, morganatic.
Leman, mistress.
Levanter, easterly Mediterranean wind.
Lex Julia, law of Augustus Cæsar, defining who were enemies of the state.
Limber, easily bent, pliant.
Lindabrides, heroine in the Spanish romance of 'The Mirror of Knighthood;' name applied to a mistress.
Latinæ, etc. (p. 219), Though not ... either ignorant of ... most learned sir, ... to speak in ... tongue.

Linsey-wolsey, cloth made of linen and wool.
List, wish, choose.
Littocks, rags and tatters
Lucina fer opem, Lucina, give thine aid. Lucina was the goddess who presided over childbirth
Ludi Magister. *Ludus* means 'game' and 'school.'
Lyme hound, sporting dog, limmer.

Maestricht, town in Holland, sacked by the Duke of Alva 1576
Magisterium, the philosopher s stone
Makebate, causer of quarrels.
Mandragora, mandrake, plant believed to possess magic qualities.
Manna of Saint Nicholas, a colourless and tasteless poison.
Manner, in the, in the act
Man of art, man of knowledge.
Mars, god of war and brute force
Matamoros, empty boasters
Mavis, song thrush
Menelaus of Sparta, husband of Helen of Troy.
Mew, to shut up
Mi anime, corculum meum, my life, my heart
Michael Angelo, famous Italian sculptor and painter, 1474–1564
Mr. Bayes's Tragedy, *The Rehearsal* (1671), by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham
Mocado, mock velvet.
Mon, man.
Monsieur, the Duke of Anjou, a courtier and suitor of Queen Elizabeth.
Mop, to make a wry mouth
Moppet, pretty young girl
Morior, etc (p. 184), I die, I died, to die.
Morpheus, god of the realms of sleep
Mowing, making grimaces.
Mulciber, Vulcan.
Murrey, mulberry-coloured.
Muscadine, a rich sweet wine.
Musquetoon, a short hand-gun.

Neat, ox, cow.
Ne quisquam, etc., (p. 263), that no one but Ajax can conquer Ajax.
Ne semissem quidem, not a single groat.
Netherstock, stocking
Nil ultra, nothing beyond
Noble, gold coin, current for 6s 8d.
Nooning, rest and repast at noon.
Nostra paupera regna, our poor domains
Nugæ, trifles
Numinibus, etc (p 219), prayers heard by unfriendly deities

O, on
Oaf, blockhead, simpleton
O cæca mens mortalium, O darkened mind of man
Odds, God's
On the square, honestly, openly
Oons, zounds.
Or, gold
Orange, Stadtholder of Holland.
Ordinary, eating-house.
Orion, Greek legendary giant and worker in iron

Palabras, talk, palaver.
Pantiles curved tiles used for roofing.
Pantoufle, slipper
Parapa, word used by Taylor, the Water Poet, in his 'Praise of Hempseed.'
Parcel, partly.
Paris, Trojan prince who carried off Helen
Parnassus, home of the Muses
Paroquet, smaller species of parrot.
Parterre, flower-plot
Partlet, neckerchief.
Parvo contentus, content with little
Passant, walking—term in heraldry
Pass devant, a fashionable dress, a dress worn at dances.
Patientia, patience.
Patonce, heraldic cross with the limbs terminating in three points.
Pauca verba, few words
Paynim, pagan.
Per pale, by a vertical line; said of an escutcheon.

Perdue, in concealment, in a bad way.
Pertæsa barbaræ loquelæ, heartily sick of a language not her own.
Phaeton, the ill-fated charioteer of the sun
Philippine chency, perhaps Philip and cheney is meant.
Philosopher's stone, the great elixir for transmuting base metal into gold.
Picaroon, one who lives by his wits, a rogue
Piccadilloe, sort of stiff collar
Pize, term of mild execration
Place of removal, cell, or place of confinement.
Point of fox See *Fox*
Points, fine lace
Poking awl, pin for attaching the ruff, some times used as stilettos
Portmantle, portmanteau
Port Saint Mary, town in the bay of Cadiz
Possess, inform fully.
Posset, drink of hot milk curdled by an infusion of wine.
Post Christum natum, after the birth of Christ
Pot herbs, vegetables.
Pottle pot, vessel holding two quarts.
Practice, artifice, stratagem.
Precisian, puritan
Prefer, recommend, advance.
Presto, all of a sudden
Primo Henrici Septimi, in the first year of Henry VII.'s reign
Princox, coxcomb
Probation, trial.
Projection, transmuting a metal.
Proper, its natural colour,—term in heraldry
Provant rapier, sword supplied from the army stores.
Pinchfist, niggard.
Purlieus, low haunts.
Pusey Horn, horn of an ox or buffalo given by Canute to the ancestor of the owners of Pusey, a Berkshire village.
Put the change on, deceive, mislead.

Quasi lucus a non lucendo, like a grove that is so called from its not giving light.
Quid mihi cum caballo? What have I to do with the nag?
Quintilian, Roman rhetorician and critic.

Rabatine, small ruff
Raddle, banter, thrash.
Raro antecedentem, Michael puns on *ante cedentem* without much understanding the meaning of his quotation.
Rash, species of inferior silk, or possibly crape.
Ratsbane, poison for rats
Recte, quidem, etc. (p 287), assuredly we are, most worthy sir.
Reeve, steward.
Reguardant, turned to look back
Rencontre, *rencounter*, encounter.
Reveillée, morning bugle call.
Ricarde, adsis nebulo, Richard, you scamp, come hither
Rose-noble, gold coin worth 15s
Rosy Cross brotherhood of the. See *Brotherhood*.
Rowan-tree, mountain ash
Ruffle, to riot, create disturbance.
Ruffler, bully, ruffian.

Saint Antholin, martyr, 255 A D. His holy day is 6th February.
Saint Luke's Hospital, asylum in Moorfields, London
Saint Michael's Mount, rock off the Cornish coast
Saint Peter of the Fetters. Saint Peter had the keys of heaven and hell.
Saltim banqui, quacks, mountebanks
Salve, domine, etc. (p. 219), Hail, sir dost understand Latin?
Sancta Maria, Holy Mary.
Santo Diavolo, Good father Satan.
Sarsenet, thin woven silk.
Savin, the poisonous juniper.
Sconce, a fort.

Scroyle, mean fellow, wretch.
Seiant, sitting down—term in heraldry.
Septuagint, Greek version of the Old Testament.
Settle, bench.
Seven sleepers, martyrs of Ephesus, who, according to the legend, slept in a cave from the reign of the Emperor Decius to that of Theodosius II, a period of 196 years.
Sewer, head butler.
Skye, a drinking vessel, a goblet
Shag, sort of rough cloth
Shalm, sort of pipe, resembling a hautboy.
Sheres, Jeres, town in Spain, famous for its wine.
Shog, move on
Shot-window, window projecting from a wall, used for defence
Shovel board, game of pushing pieces of money on a board.
Si fixum solvas, etc. (p 226), If you dissolve a fixed substance and make the solution fly, and then turn it into a fixed substance, you will live safe and sound, if the process causes a wind, it is worth a hundred pieces of gold. The wind blows where it lists Catch who catch can.
Sieve and shears, divination by means of a sieve fixed to the point of a pair of shears.
Sine prole, childless.
Skene, short sword, knife.
Skill, know
Slaver, saliva.
Sleuth-hound, blood-hound.

Slocket, to convey things privately.
Slop, an outer or lower garment
Smock-faced, of girlish face or complexion.
Snails, an oath. See *Blood and nails.*
Snuck up, be hanged.
Solemn, important.
Something, somewhat
Sped, brought to destruction, ruined.
Spigot, peg for stopping a hole in a cask
Spitchcocked, split and broiled.
Springe, noose, gin, snare.
Stance, station.
Stand shot, pay the reckoning.
Staple, a settled market, an emporium.
Start, move, pour out.
Startup, high topped shoe.
Stock, stocking.
Strappado, a military punishment in which the offender was drawn to the top of a beam and let fall
Strike up, to cause to sound.
Sufflamina, be silent.
Swarf, faint.
Swashing, noisy, bullying.

Tabbard inn celebrated by Chaucer.
Tabor, a small drum.
Taffeta, silk stuff
Take order, take suitable steps, or position.
Taking, distress, agitation.
Tarleton, famous comedian at Elizabeth's court
Tent stitch, fancy stitch in worsted work.

Termagant, a fierce-tempered, brawling woman.
Thieves' Latin, thieves' cant or slang
Three Cranes in the Vintry. See *Vintry.*
Thrift, gain, prosperity.
Tincture, one of the metals, colours, or furs used in armoury.
Tippet, a length of twisted hair, also a short cloak.
Titt, a horse
Tod, a bush thick shrub.
Tokay, Hungarian wine.
Topping, first rate.
Touched, speak of.
Trencher, a wooden platter.
Trismegistus, the thrice great one, an ancient philosopher, who first divided the day into hours.
Troth, truth.
Trunk-hose, large breeches reaching to the knee.
Truss, to tie the tagged laces which fastened the breeches to the doublet
Tuguria, huts.
Tyke, a dog.

Uds, God's.
Un, he, him.
Uno avulso, etc. (p. 220), when one has been torn off, another grows in its place.
Un's, his.
Untimeously, untimely.

Vanbrugh, Sir John poet and architect, 1666-1726
Varium et mutabile, changeful and capricious.

Vengeably, terribly.
Venlo, fortress in Holland.
Via! away!
Vintry, Three Cranes in the, celebrated London tavern, so called from its sign and three machines on the neighbouring wharf used for lifting the vessels of wine out of the ships.

Virginal, old fashioned piano.
Vivat acclamation.
Vogue la galère, come what may.
Voto a Dios, Spanish oath, By God!

Waistcoat, once a part of female attire.
Wassail, spiced ale or wine.
Watchet, pale blue.
Wench, young woman, handmaid.
White boy, a term of endearment.
White witch, wizard or witch of beneficent disposition.
Wise woman, midwife.
Witch's mark, a wart or mark, insensible to pain, inflicted by the devil on his vassals.
Wittol, cuckold.
Won'd, dwelt.
Word name.
Worship, honour.
Wus, know.
Wyvern, dragon-headed heraldic monster.

Zany, a silly John, a simple fellow, fool, mimic

THE PIRATE

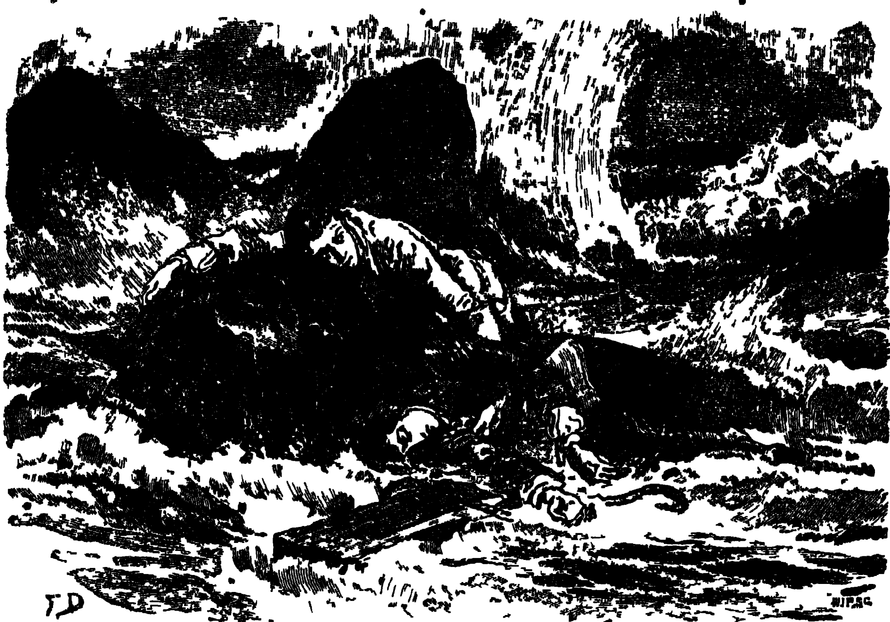
By Sir WALTER SCOTT. Bart.

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MORDAUNT SAVING CLEVELAND.—PAGE 392

INTRODUCTION

'Quoth he, there was a ship.'

This brief preface may begin like the tale of the Ancient Mariner, since it was on shipboard that the Author acquired the very moderate degree of local knowledge and information, both of people and scenery, which he has endeavoured to embody in the romance of the Pirate.

In the summer and autumn of 1814, the Author was invited to join a party of Commissioners for the Northern Lighthouse Service, who proposed making a voyage round the coast of Scotland, and through its various groups of islands, chiefly for the purpose of seeing the condition of the many lighthouses under their direction,—edifices so important, whether regarding them as benevolent or political institutions. Among the commissioners who manage this important public concern, the sheriff of each county of Scotland which borders on the sea holds ex officio a place at the Board. These gentlemen act in every respect gratuitously, but have the use of an armed yacht, well found and fitted up, when they choose to visit the lighthouses. An excellent engineer, Mr. Robert Stevenson,* is attached to the Board, to afford the benefit of his professional advice. The Author accompanied this expedition as a guest; for Selkirkshire, though it calls him Sheriff, has not, like the kingdom of Bohemia in Corporal Trim's story, a seaport in its circuit, nor its magistrate, of course, any place at the Board of Commissioners,—a circumstance of little consequence where all were old and intimate friends, bred to the same profession, and disposed to accommodate each other in every possible manner.

The nature of the important business which was the principal purpose of the voyage, was connected with the amusement of visiting the leading objects of a traveller's curiosity; for the wild cape, or formidable shelf, which requires to be marked out by a lighthouse, is generally at no great distance from the most magnificent scenery of rocks, caves, and billows. Our time, too, was at our own disposal, and, as most of us were fresh-water sailors, we could at any time make a fair wind out of a foul one, and run before the gale in quest of some object of curiosity which lay under our lee.†

With these purposes of public utility and some personal amusement in view, we left the port of Leith on the 26th July 1814, ran along the east coast of Scotland, viewing its different curiosities, stood over to Zetland and Orkney, where we were some time detained by the wonders of a country which displayed so much that was new to us; and, having seen what was curious in the Ultima Thule of the ancients, where the sun hardly thought it worth while to go to bed, since his rising was at this season so early, we doubled the extreme northern termination of Scotland, and took a rapid survey of the Hebrides, where we found many kind friends. There, that our little expedition might not want the dignity of danger, we were favoured with a distant glimpse of what was said to be an American cruiser, and had opportunity to consider what a pretty figure we should have made had the voyage ended in our being carried captive to the United

† [See the Lighthouse Diary in *Scott's Memoirs* by Lockhart.]

States. After visiting the romantic shores of Morven, and the vicinity of Oban, we made a run to the coast of Ireland, and visited the Giant's Causeway, that we might compare it with Staffa, which we had surveyed in our course. At length, about the middle of September, we ended our voyage in the Clyde, at the port of Greenock.

And thus terminated our pleasant tour, to which our equipment gave unusual facilities, as the ship's company could form a good boat's crew, independent of those who might be left on board the vessel, which permitted us the freedom to land wherever our curiosity carried us. Let me add, while reviewing for a moment a sunny portion of my life, that among the six or seven friends who performed this voyage together, some of them doubtless of different tastes and pursuits, and remaining for several weeks in a small vessel, there never occurred the slightest dispute or disagreement, each seeming anxious to submit his own particular wishes to those of his friends. By this mutual accommodation all the purposes of our little expedition were obtained, while for a time we might have adopted the lines of Allan Cunningham's fine sea song,

> *The world of waters was our home,*
> *And merry men were we.*

But sorrow mixes her memorials with the purest remembrances of pleasure. On returning from the voyage which had proved so satisfactory, I found that fate had deprived her country most unexpectedly of a lady, qualified to adorn the high rank which she held, and who had long admitted me to a share of her friendship. The subsequent loss of one of those comrades who made up the party, and he the most intimate friend I had in the world,† casts also its shade on recollections which, but for these embitterments, would be otherwise so satisfactory.*

I may here briefly observe, that my business in this voyage, so far as I could be said to have any, was to endeavour to discover some localities which might be useful in the 'Lord of the Isles,' a poem with which I was then threatening the public, and which was afterwards printed without attaining remarkable success. But as at the same time the anonymous novel of 'Waverley' was making its way to popularity, I already augured the possibility of a second effort in this department of literature, and I saw much in the wild islands of the Orkneys and Zetland, which I judged might be made in the highest degree interesting, should these isles ever become the scene of a narrative of fictitious events. I learned the history of Gow the pirate from an old sibyl (the subject of Note I' end of this volume), whose principal subsistence was by a trade in favourable winds, which she sold to mariners at Stromness. Nothing could be more interesting than the kindness and hospitality of the gentlemen of Zetland, which was to me the more affecting, as several of them had been friends and correspondents of my father.‡

I was induced to go a generation or two farther back, to find materials from which I might trace the features of the old Norwegian Udaller, the Scottish gentry having in general occupied the place of that primitive race, and their language and peculiarities of manner having entirely disappeared. The only difference now to be observed betwixt the gentry of these islands and those of Scotland in general is, that the wealth and property is more equally divided among our more northern countrymen, and that there exist among the resident proprietors no men of very great wealth, whose display of its luxuries might render the others discontented with their own lot. From the same cause of general equality of fortunes, and the cheapness of living, which is its natural consequence, I found the officers of a veteran regiment who had maintained the garrison at Fort Charlotte, in Lerwick, discomposed at the idea of being recalled from a country where their pay, however inadequate to the expenses of a capital, was fully adequate to their wants, and it was singular to hear natives of merry England herself regretting their approaching departure from the melancholy isles of the Ultima Thule.

Such are the trivial particulars attending the origin of that publication which took place several years later than the agreeable journey in which it took its rise.

The state of manners which I have introduced in the romance was necessarily in a great degree imaginary, though founded in some measure on slight hints, which, showing what was, seemed to give reasonable indication of what must once have been, the tone of the society in these sequestered but interesting islands.

In one respect I was judged somewhat hastily, perhaps, when the character of Norna was pronounced by the critics a mere copy of Meg Merrilies. That I had fallen short of what I wished and desired to express is unquestionable, otherwise my object could not have been so widely mistaken; nor can I yet think that any person who will take the trouble of reading the Pirate with some attention, can fail to trace in Norna,—the victim of remorse and insanity, and the dupe of her own imposture, her mind, too, flooded with all the wild literature and extravagant superstitions of the north,—something distinct from the Dumfriesshire gipsy, whose pretensions to supernatural powers are not beyond those of a Norwood prophetess. The foundations of such a character may be perhaps traced, though it be too true that the necessary superstructure cannot have been raised upon them, otherwise the remark would have been unnecessary. There is also great improbability in the statement of Norna possessing power and opportunity to impress on others that belief in her supernatural powers which distracted her own mind. Yet, amid a very credulous and ignorant population, it is astonishing what success may be attained by an impostor, who is, at the same time, an enthusiast. It is such as

* [Harriet Katherine, Duchess of Buccleuch, died 24th August 1814.]

† [Note A. William Erskine of Kinedder.]

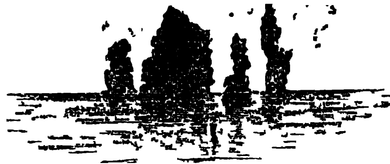
‡ ['I have been told,' says Mr. Lockhart, 'by one of the companions of this voyage, that, heartily as Sir Walter [illegible] ghout into their social enjoyments, they all [illegible], when inspecting for the first time scenes of remarkable grandeur, to be in such an abstracted excited mood, that they felt it would be the kindest discreetest plan to leave him to himself. "I often," [illegible] Lord Kinedder, "on coming up from the cabin at [illegible] found him pacing the deck rapidly, muttering to hi[illegible] and went to the forecastle, lest my presence should [illegible] him. I remember that at Loch Corriskin [illegible] seemed quite overwhelmed with

to remind us of the couplet which assures us that

> *The pleasure is as great*
> *Of being cheated as to cheat.*

Indeed, as I have observed elsewhere, the professed explanation of a tale, where appearances or incidents of a supernatural character are explained on natural causes, has often, in the winding up of the story, a degree of improbability almost equal to an absolute goblin tale. Even the genius of Mrs Radcliffe could not always surmount this difficulty.

ABBOTSFORD, *1st May* 1831



ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

DECEMBER 1821

The purpose of the following narrative is to give a detailed and accurate account of certain remarkable incidents which took place in the Orkney Islands, concerning which the more imperfect traditions and mutilated records of the country only tell us the following erroneous particulars:—

*In the month of January 1724-5, a vessel, called the Revenge, bearing twenty large guns, and six smaller, commanded by John Gow, or Goffe, or Smith, came to the Orkney Islands, and was discovered to be a pirate, by various acts of insolence and villany committed by the crew. These were for some time submitted to, the inhabitants of these remote islands not possessing arms nor means of resistance; and so bold was the captain of these banditti, that he not only came ashore, and gave dancing parties in the village of Stromness, but, before his real character was discovered, engaged the affections, and received the troth-plight, of a young lady possessed of some property. A patriotic individual, James Fea, younger of Clestron, formed the plan of securing the buccanier, which he effected by a mixture of courage and address, in consequence chiefly of Gow's vessel having gone on shore near the harbour of Calfsound, on the Island of Eda, not far distant from a house then inhabited by Mr. Fea. In the various stratagems by which Mr. Fea contrived finally, at the peril of his life (they being well armed and desperate) to make the whole pirates his prisoners, he was much aided by Mr. James Laing, the grandfather of the late Malcolm Laing, Esq., the acute and ingenious historian of Scotland during the 17th century.**

Gow, and others of his crew, suffered, by sentence of the High Court of Admiralty, the punishment their crimes had long deserved. He conducted himself with great audacity when before the court; and, from an account of the matter, by an eye-witness, seems to have been subjected to some unusual severities, in order to compel him to plead. The words are these: 'John Gow would not plead, for which he was brought to the bar, and the Judge ordered that his thumbs should be squeezed by two men with a whip-cord, till it did break; and then it should be doubled, till it did again break, and then laid threefold, and that the executioners should pull with their whole strength; which sentence Gow endured with a great deal of boldness.' The next morning (27th May 1725), when he had seen the terrible preparations for pressing him to death, his courage gave way, and he told the marshal of court, that he would not have given so much trouble,

* [This gentleman was called to the Scotch Bar in the ... but the infirm state of his health induced him ...
property near Kirkwall, devoting himself to ... pursuits. He died in November 1818, aged ... interred in the nave of Saint Magnus's Cathe-

had he been assured of not being hanged in chains. He was then tried, condemned, and executed, with others of his crew.*

It is said that the lady whose affections Gow had engaged, went up to London to see him before his death, and that, arriving too late, she had the courage to request a sight of his dead body; and then, touching the hand of the corpse, she formally resumed the troth plight which she had bestowed. Without going through this ceremony, she could not, according to the superstition of the country, have escaped a visit from the ghost of her departed lover, in the event of her bestowing upon any living suitor the faith which she had plighted to the dead. This part of the legend may serve as a curious commentary on the fine Scottish ballad, which begins,

'There came a ghost to Margaret's door,' etc.†

* [See 'An Account of the Conduct and Proceedings of the late John Gow alias Smith, captain of the late Pirates.' By Daniel Defoe. London, [illegible] 8vo. This tract was reprinted by Sotheran, London, 18[illegible].]

† [This ballad of 'Willie's Ghost' is printed in Herd's *Collection*, vol. i. p. 7. It is not so well known as Mallet's version, 'Willie and Margaret,' which begins, '*'Twas at the fearful midnight hour*.']

The common account of this incident further bears, that Mr. Fea, the spirited individual by whose exertions Gow's career of iniquity was cut short, was so far from receiving any reward from government, that he could not obtain even countenance enough to protect him against a variety of sham suits, raised against him by Newgate solicitors, who acted in the name of Gow, and others of the pirate crew, and the various expenses, vexatious prosecutions, and other legal consequences, in which his gallant exploit involved him, utterly ruined his fortune and his family, making his memory a notable example to all who shall in future take pirates on their own authority.

It is to be supposed, for the honour of George the First's government, that the last circumstance, as well as the dates, and other particulars of the commonly received story, are inaccurate, since they will be found totally irreconcilable with the following veracious narrative, compiled from materials to which he himself alone has had access, by

THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY.



ZETLAND PONY.



THE CAPTURE OF CLEVELAND—PAGE 54.

CHAPTER I.

> The storm had ceased its wintry roar,
> Hoarse dash the billows of the sea;
> But who on Thule's desert shore
> Cries, Have I burnt my harp for thee?
>
> MACNIEL.

THAT long, narrow, and irregular island, usually called the Mainland of Zetland, because it is by far the largest of that archipelago, terminates, as is well known to the mariners who navigate the stormy seas which surround the Thule of the ancients, in a cliff of immense height, entitled Sumburgh-Head, which presents its bare scalp and naked sides to the weight of a tremendous surge, forming the extreme point of the isle to the south-east. This lofty promontory is constantly exposed to the current of a strong and furious tide, which, setting in betwixt the Orkney and Zetland Islands, and running with force only inferior to that of the Pentland Frith, takes its name from the headland we have mentioned, and is called the Roost of Sumburgh; 'roost' being the phrase assigned in these isles to currents of this description.

On the land side the promontory is covered with short grass, and slopes steeply down to a little isthmus, upon which the sea has encroached in creeks, which, advancing from either side of the island, gradually work their way forward, and seem as if in a short time they would form a junction, and altogether insulate Sumburgh Head, when what is now a cape will become a lonely mountain islet, severed from the mainland, of which it is at present the terminating extremity.

Man, however, had in former days considered this as a remote or unlikely event; for a Norwegian chief of other times, or, as other accounts said, and as the name of Yarlshof seemed to imply, an ancient Earl of the Orkneys had selected this neck of land as the place for establishing a mansion-house. It has been long entirely deserted, and the vestiges only can be discerned with difficulty; for the loose sand, borne on the tempestuous gales of those stormy regions, has overblown, and almost buried, the ruins of the buildings; but in the end of the seventeenth century, a part of the earl's mansion was still entire and habitable. It was a rude building of rough stone, with nothing about it to gratify the eye, or to excite the imagination; a large old-fashioned narrow house, with a very steep roof, covered with flags composed of grey sandstone, would perhaps convey the best idea of the place to a modern reader. The windows were few, very small in size, and distributed up and down the building with utter contempt of regularity. Against the main structure had rested, in former times, certain smaller compartments of the mansion-house, containing offices or subordinate apartments, necessary for the earl's retainers and menials. But these had become ruinous; and the rafters had been taken down for firewood, or for other purposes; the walls had given way in many places; and, to complete the devastation, the sand had already drifted amongst the ruins, and filled up what had been once the chambers they contained, to the depth of two or three feet.

Amid this desolation, the inhabitants of Yarlshof had contrived, by constant labour and

attention, to keep in order a few roods of land, which had been enclosed as a garden, and which, sheltered by the walls of the house itself from the relentless sea-blast, produced such vegetables as the climate could bring forth, or rather as the sea-gale would permit to grow; for these islands experience even less of the rigour of cold than is encountered on the mainland of Scotland, but, unsheltered by a wall of some sort or other, it is scarce possible to raise even the most ordinary culinary vegetables; and as for shrubs or trees, they are entirely out of the question, such is the force of the sweeping sea-blast.

At a short distance from the mansion, and near to the sea-beach, just where the creek forms a sort of imperfect harbour, in which lay three or four fishing-boats, there were a few most wretched cottages for the inhabitants and tenants of the township of Yarlshof, who held the whole district of the landlord upon such terms as were in those days usually granted to persons of this description, and which, of course, were hard enough. The landlord himself resided upon an estate which he possessed in a more eligible situation, in a different part of the island, and seldom visited his possessions at Sumburgh Head. He was an honest plain Zetland gentleman, somewhat passionate, the necessary result of being surrounded by dependents, and somewhat over-convivial in his habits, the consequence, perhaps, of having too much time at his disposal, but frank-tempered and generous to his people, and kind and hospitable to strangers. He was descended also of an old and noble Norwegian family; a circumstance which rendered him dearer to the lower orders, most of whom are of the same race, while the lairds, or proprietors, are generally of Scottish extraction, who, at that early period, were still considered as strangers and intruders. Magnus Troil, who deduced his descent from the very earl who was supposed to have founded Yarlshof, was peculiarly of this opinion.

The present inhabitants of Yarlshof had experienced, on several occasions, the kindness and good will of the proprietor of the territory. When Mr. Mertoun—such was the name of the present inhabitant of the old mansion—first arrived in Zetland, some years before the story commences, he had been received at the house of Mr. Troil with that warm and cordial hospitality for which the islands are distinguished. No one asked him whence he came, where he was going, what was his purpose in visiting so remote a corner of the empire, or what was likely to be the term of his stay. He arrived a perfect stranger; yet was instantly overpowered by a succession of invitations, and in each house which he visited, he found a home as long as he chose to accept it, and lived as one of the family, unnoticed and unnoticing, until he thought proper to remove to some other dwelling. This apparent indifference to the rank, character, and qualities of their guest, did not arise from apathy on the part of his kind hosts, for the islanders had their full share of natural curiosity; but their delicacy deemed it would be an infringement upon the laws of hospitality, to ask questions which their guest might have found it difficult or unpleasing to answer; and instead of endeavouring, as is usual in other countries, to wring out of Mr. Mertoun such communications as he might find it agreeable to withhold, the considerate Zetlanders contented themselves with eagerly gathering up such scraps of information as could be collected in the course of conversation.

But the rock in an Arabian desert is not more reluctant to afford water, than Mr. Basil Mertoun was niggard in imparting his confidence, even incidentally, and certainly the politeness of the gentry of Thule was never put to a more severe test than when they felt that good-breeding enjoined them to abstain from inquiring into the situation of so mysterious a personage.

All that was actually known of him was easily summed up. Mr. Mertoun had come to Lerwick, then rising into some importance, but not yet acknowledged as the principal town of the island, in a Dutch vessel, accompanied only by his son, a handsome boy of about fourteen years old. His own age might exceed forty. The Dutch skipper introduced him to some of the very good friends with whom he used to barter gin and gingerbread for little Zetland bullocks, smoked geese, and stockings of lambs-wool; and although Meinheer could only say, that 'Meinheer Mertoun hab pay his bassage like one gentlemans, and hab given a kreitzdollar beside to the crew,' this introduction served to establish the Dutchman's passenger in a respectable circle of acquaintances, which gradually enlarged, as it appeared that the stranger was a man of considerable accomplishments.

This discovery was made almost *per force;* for Mertoun was as unwilling to speak upon general subjects, as upon his own affairs. But he was sometimes led into discussions, which showed, as it were in spite of himself, the scholar and the man of the world; and, at other times, as if in requital of the hospitality which he experienced, he seemed to compel himself, against his fixed nature, to enter into the society of those around him, especially when it assumed the grave, melancholy, or satirical cast, which best suited the temper of his own mind. Upon such occasions, the Zetlanders were universally of opinion that he must have had an excellent education, neglected only in one striking particular, namely, that Mr. Mertoun scarce knew the stem of a ship from the stern, and in the management of a boat, a cow could not be more ignorant. It seemed astonishing such gross ignorance of the most necessary art of life (in the Zetland Isles at least) should subsist along with his accomplishments in other respects; but so it was.

Unless called forth in the manner we have mentioned, the habits of Basil Mertoun were retired and gloomy. From loud mirth he instantly fled, and even the moderate cheerfulness of a friendly party had the invariable effect of throwing him into deeper dejection than even his usual demeanour indicated.

Women are always particularly desirous of investigating mystery, and of alleviating melancholy, especially when these circumstances are united in a handsome man about the prime of life. It is possible, therefore, that amongst the

fair-haired and blue eyed daughters of Thule this mysterious and pensive stranger might have found some one to take upon herself the task of consolation, had he shown any willingness to accept such kindly offices, but, far from doing so, he seemed even to shun the presence of the sex, to which, in our distresses, whether of mind or body, we generally apply for pity and comfort

To these peculiarities Mr Mertoun added another, which was particularly disagreeable to his host and principal patron, Magnus Troil This magnate of Zetland, descended by the father's side, as we have already said, from an ancient Norwegian family by the marriage of its representative with a Danish lady, held the devout opinion that a cup of Geneva or Nantz was specific against all cares and afflictions whatever These were remedies to which Mr Mertoun never applied, his drink was water, and water alone, and no persuasion or entreaties could induce him to taste any stronger beverage than was afforded by the pure stream Now this Magnus Troil could not tolerate, it was a defiance to the ancient northern laws of conviviality, which, for his own part, he had so rigidly observed that although he was wont to assert that he had never in his life gone to bed drunk (that is in his own sense of the word), it would have been impossible to prove that he had ever resigned himself to slumber in a state of actual and absolute sobriety It may be therefore asked, What did this stranger bring into society to compensate the displeasure given by his austere and abstemious habits? He had in the first place, that manner and self importance which mark a person of some consequence, and although it was conjectured that he could not be rich, yet it was certainly known by his expenditure that neither was he absolutely poor He had, besides, some powers of conversation, when, as we have already hinted, he chose to exert them, and his misanthropy or aversion to the business and intercourse of ordinary life was often expressed in an antithetical manner, which often passed for wit, when better was not to be had Above all, Mr. Mertoun's secret seemed impenetrable, and his presence had all the interest of a riddle, which men love to read over and over, because they cannot find out the meaning of it

Notwithstanding these recommendations, Mertoun differed in so many material points from his host, that, after he had been for some time a guest at his principal residence, Magnus Troil was agreeably surprised when, one evening after they had sat two hours in absolute silence, drinking brandy and water,—that is, Magnus drinking the alcohol, and Mertoun the element,—the guest asked his host's permission to occupy, as his tenant, this deserted mansion of Yarlshof, at the extremity of the territory called Dunrossness, and situated just beneath Sumburgh Head 'I shall be handsomely rid of him,' quoth Magnus to himself, 'and his kill joy visage will never again stop the bottle in its round His departure will ruin me in lemons, however, for his mere look was quite sufficient to sour a whole ocean of punch.'

Yet the kind-hearted Zetlander generously and disinterestedly remonstrated with Mr. Mertoun on the solitude and inconvenience to which he was about to subject himself. 'There were scarcely,' he said, 'even the most necessary articles of furniture in the old house—there was no society within many miles—for provisions, the principal article of food would be sour sillocks, and his only company gulls and gannets.'

'My good friend,' replied Mertoun, 'if you could have named a circumstance which would render the residence more eligible to me than any other, it is that there would be neither human luxury nor human society near the place of my retreat, a shelter from the weather for my own head, and for the boy's, is all I seek for. So name your rent, Mr Troil, and let me be your tenant at Yarlshof

'Rent?' answered the Zetlander, 'why, no great rent for an old house which no one has lived in since my mother's time—God rest her!—and as for shelter, the old walls are thick enough, and will bear many a bang yet But, Heaven love you, Mr Mertoun think what you are proposing For one of us to live at Yarlshof, were a wild scheme enough but you, who are from another country, whether English, Scotch, or Irish no one can tell ——'

'Nor does it greatly matter,' said Mertoun, somewhat abruptly

'Not a herring's scale,' answered the Laird; 'only that I like you the better for being no Scot as I trust you are not one Hither they have come like the clack geese—every chamberlain has brought over a flock of his own name, and his own hatching, for what I know, and here they roost for ever—catch them returning to their own barren Highlands or Lowlands, when once they have tasted our Zetland beef, and seen our bonny *voes* and lochs No, sir' (here Magnus proceeded with great animation, sipping from time to time the half diluted spirit, which at the same time animated his resentment against the intruders, and enabled him to endure the mortifying reflection which it suggested),—'No, sir, the ancient days and the genuine manners of these islands are no more, for our ancient possessors—our Patersons, our Feas, our Schlagbrenners, our Thorbiorns, have given place to Giffords, Scotts Mouats, men whose names bespeak them or their ancestors strangers to the soil which we the Troils have inhabited long before the days of Turf Einar,* who first taught these isles the mystery of burning peat for fuel, and who has been handed down to a grateful posterity by a name which records the discovery'

This was a subject upon which the potentate of Yarlshof was usually very diffuse, and Mertoun saw him enter upon it with pleasure, because he knew he should not be called upon to contribute any aid to the conversation, and might therefore indulge his own saturnine humour while the Norwegian Zetlander declaimed on the change of times and inhabitants But just as Magnus had arrived at the melancholy conclusion, 'how probable it was, that in another century scarce a *merk* †—scarce even an *ure* ‡ of land, would be in

* [Torf or Turf Einar, son of Rognvald, Yarl of Moen, was Yarl of Orkney and Shetland, did good service in clearing the northern seas of the piratical vikings, and died *circ* 910 He was a tall ugly man, with only one eye.]

† [A merk of land was originally equal to 1600 square fathoms, but latterly became of uncertain extent.]

‡ [*Ure*, the eighth part of a merk, or 200 fathoms.]

the possession of the Norse inhabitants, the true udallers* of Zetland,' he recollected the circumstances of his guest, and stopped suddenly short. 'I do not say all this,' he added, interrupting himself, 'as if I were unwilling that you should settle on my estate, Mr. Mertoun—But for Yarlshof—the place is a wild one—Come from where you will, I warrant you will say, like other travellers, you came from a better climate than ours, for so say you all. And yet you think of a retreat which the very natives run away from. Will you not take your glass?' (This was to be considered as interjectional),—'then here's to you.'

'My good sir,' answered Mertoun, 'I am indifferent to climate; if there is but air enough to fill my lungs, I care not if it be the breath of Arabia or of Lapland.'

'Air enough you may have,' answered Magnus, 'no lack of that—somewhat damp, strangers allege it to be, but we know a corrective for that—Here's to you, Mr. Mertoun—You must learn to *do so*, and to smoke a pipe; and then, as you say, you will find the air of Zetland equal to that of Arabia. But have you seen Yarlshof?'

The stranger intimated that he had not.

'Then,' replied Magnus, 'you have no idea of your undertaking. If you think it a comfortable roadstead like this, with the house situated on the side of an inland voe† that brings the herrings up to your door, you are mistaken, my heart. At Yarlshof you will see nought but the wild waves tumbling on the bare rocks, and the Roost of Sumburgh running at the rate of fifteen knots an hour.'

'I shall see nothing at least of the current of human passions,' replied Mertoun.

'You will hear nothing but the clanging and screaming of scarts, sheer-waters, and sea-gulls, from daybreak till sunset.'

'I will compound, my friend,' replied the stranger, 'so that I do not hear the chattering of women's tongues.'

'Ah,' said the Norman, 'that is because you hear just now my little Minna and Brenda singing in the garden with your Mordaunt. Now, I would rather listen to their little voices, than the skylark which I once heard in Caithness, or the nightingale that I have read of.—What will the girls do for want of their playmate Mordaunt?'

'They will shift for themselves,' answered Mertoun; 'younger or elder, they will find playmates or dupes.—But the question is, Mr. Troil, will you let to me, as your tenant, this old mansion of Yarlshof?'

'Gladly, since you make it your option to live in a spot so desolate.'

'And as for the rent?' continued Mertoun.

'The rent?' replied Magnus; 'hum—why, you must have the bit of *plantie cruive*,‡ which they once called a garden, and a right in the *scathold*,§ and a sixpenny merk of land, that the tenants may fish for you;—eight *lispunds*|| of butter, and eight shillings sterling yearly, is not too much?'

Mr. Mertoun agreed to terms so moderate, and from thenceforward resided chiefly at the solitary mansion which we have described in the beginning of this chapter, conforming not only without complaint, but, as it seemed, with a sullen pleasure, to all the privations which so wild and desolate a situation necessarily imposed on its inhabitant.

CHAPTER II.

'Tis not alone the scene—the man, Anselmo,
The man finds sympathies in these wild wastes,
And roughly tumbling seas, which fairer views
And smoother waves deny him.
ANCIENT DRAMA.

THE few inhabitants of the township of Yarlshof had at first heard with alarm, that a person of rank superior to their own was come to reside in the ruinous tenement, which they still called the Castle. In those days (for the present times are greatly altered for the better) the presence of a superior, in such a situation, was almost certain to be attended with additional burdens and exactions, for which, under one pretext or another, feudal customs furnished a thousand apologies. By each of these, a part of the tenants' hard-won and precarious profits was diverted for the use of their powerful neighbour and superior, the tacksman, as he was called. But the sub-tenants speedily found that no oppression of this kind was to be apprehended at the hands of Basil Mertoun. His own means, whether large or small, were at least fully adequate to his expenses, which, so far as regarded his habits of life, were of the most frugal description. The luxuries of a few books, and some philosophical instruments, with which he was supplied from London as occasion offered, seemed to indicate a degree of wealth unusual in these islands; but, on the other hand, the table and the accommodations at Yarlshof did not exceed what was maintained by a Zetland proprietor of the most inferior description.

The tenants of the hamlet troubled themselves very little about the quality of their superior, as soon as they found that their situation was rather to be mended than rendered worse by his presence; and, once relieved from the apprehension of his tyrannizing over them, they laid their heads together to make the most of him by various petty tricks of overcharge and extortion, which for a while the stranger submitted to with the most philosophic indifference. An incident, however, occurred, which put his character in a new light, and effectually checked all future efforts at extravagant imposition.

A dispute arose in the kitchen of the Castle betwixt an old governante, who acted as housekeeper to Mr. Mertoun, and Sweyn Erickson, as good a Zetlander as ever rowed a boat to the

* The udallers are the *allodial* possessors of Zetland, who hold their possessions under the old Norwegian law, instead of the feudal tenures introduced among them from Scotland.

† Salt-water lake.

‡ Note B. Plantie cruive.

§ [Hill pasture held in common.]

|| A lispund is about thirty pounds English, and the value is averaged by Dr. Edmonston at ten shillings sterling.

haaf fishing;* which dispute, as is usual in such cases, was maintained with such increasing heat and vociferation as to reach the ears of the master (as he was called), who, secluded in a solitary turret, was deeply employed in examining the contents of a new package of books from London, which, after long expectation, had found its way to Hull, from thence by a whaling vessel to Lerwick, and so to Yarlshof. With more than the usual thrill of indignation which indolent people always feel when roused into action on some unpleasant occasion, Mertoun descended to the scene of contest, and so suddenly, peremptorily, and strictly inquired the cause of dispute, that the parties, notwithstanding every evasion which they attempted, became unable to disguise from him that their difference respected the several interests to which the honest governante, and no less honest fisherman, were respectively entitled, in an overcharge of about one hundred per cent. on a bargain of rock-cod, purchased by the former from the latter, for the use of the family at Yarlshof.

When this was fairly ascertained and confessed, Mr. Mertoun stood looking upon the culprits with eyes in which the utmost scorn seemed to contend with awakening passion. 'Hark you, ye old hag,' said he at length to the housekeeper, 'avoid my house this instant! and know that I dismiss you, not for being a liar, a thief, and an ungrateful quean,--for these are qualities as proper to you as your name of woman, but for daring, in my house, to scold above your breath. --And for you, you rascal, who suppose you may cheat a stranger as you would *flinch*† a whale, know that I am well acquainted with the rights which, by delegation from your master, Magnus Troil, I can exercise over you if I will. Provoke me to a certain pitch, and you shall learn, to your cost, I can break your rest as easily as you can interrupt my leisure. I know the meaning of *scat*, and *wattle*, and *hawkhen*, and *hagalef*,‡ and every other exaction by which your lords, in ancient and modern days, have wrung your withers; nor is there one of you that shall not rue the day that you could not be content with robbing me of my money, but must also break in on my leisure with your atrocious northern clamour, that rivals in discord the screaming of a flight of Arctic gulls.'

Nothing better occurred to Sweyn, in answer to this objurgation, than the preferring a humble request that his honour would be pleased to keep the cod-fish without payment, and say no more about the matter; but by this time Mr. Mertoun had worked up his passions into an ungovernable rage, and with one hand he threw the money at the fisherman's head, while with the other he pelted him out of the apartment with his own fish, which he finally flung out of doors after him.

There was so much of appalling and tyrannic fury in the stranger's manner on this occasion, that Sweyn neither stopped to collect the money nor take back his commodity, but fled at a precipitate rate to the small hamlet, to tell his comrades that if they provoked Mr. Mertoun any further, he would turn an absolute Pate Stewart § on their hand, and head and hang without either judgment or mercy.

Hither also came the discarded housekeeper, to consult with her neighbours and kindred (for she too was a native of the village) what she should do to regain the desirable situation from which she had been so suddenly expelled. The old Ranzellaar of the village, who had the voice most potential in the deliberations of the township, after hearing what had happened, pronounced that Sweyn Erickson had gone too far in raising the market upon Mr. Mertoun; and that whatever pretext the tacksman might assume for thus giving way to his anger, the real grievance must have been the charging the rock-cod fish at a penny instead of a halfpenny a pound; he therefore exhorted all the community never to raise their exactions in future beyond the proportion of threepence upon the shilling, at which rate their master at the Castle could not reasonably be expected to grumble, since, as he was disposed to do them no harm, it was reasonable to think that, in a moderate way, he had no objection to do them good. 'And three upon twelve,' said the experienced Ranzellaar, 'is a decent and moderate profit, and will bring with it God's blessing and Saint Ronald's.'

Proceeding upon the tariff thus judiciously recommended to them, the inhabitants of Yarlshof cheated Mertoun in future only to the moderate extent of twenty-five per cent.; a rate to which all nabobs, army contractors, speculators in the funds, and others, whom recent and rapid success has enabled to settle in the country upon a great scale, ought to submit, as very reasonable treatment at the hand of their rustic neighbours. Mertoun at least seemed of that opinion, for he gave himself no further trouble upon the subject of his household expenses.

The conscript fathers of Yarlshof, having settled their own matters, took next under their consideration the case of Swertha, the banished matron who had been expelled from the Castle, whom, as an experienced and useful ally, they were highly desirous to restore to her office of housekeeper, should that be found possible. But as their wisdom here failed them, Swertha, in despair, had recourse to the good offices of Mordaunt Mertoun, with whom she had acquired some favour by her knowledge in old Norwegian ballads, and dismal tales concerning the trows or drows (the dwarfs of the Scalds), with whom superstitious eld had peopled many a lonely cavern and brown dale in Dunrossness, as in every other district of Zetland. 'Swertha,' said the youth, 'I can do but little for you, but you may do something for yourself. My father's

* *i.e.* The deep-sea fishing, in distinction to that which is practised along shore.

† The operation of slicing the blubber from the bones of the whale, is called, technically, *flinching*.

‡ [*Scat* was the land-tax paid by the udallers for the support of the crown. It is still paid to the Earl of Zetland as crown donatory. *Wattle* was an assessment to pay the salary of the under Foud. *Hawkhen* was fowls exacted by the royal falconer on his visits to the island; they were paid down to 1833 or 1839. *Hagalef*, or *hagalif*, was a payment for liberty to cast peats.]

§ Meaning, probably, Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, executed for tyranny and oppression practised on the inhabitants of these remote islands in the beginning of the seventeenth century. [His father, Lord Robert Stewart, was a natural son of James V.]

passion resembles the fury of those ancient champions, those Berserkars, you sing songs about.'

'Ay, ay, fish of my heart,' replied the old woman, with a pathetic whine; 'the Berserkars were champions who lived before the blessed days of Saint Olave, and who used to run like madmen on swords, and spears, and harpoons, and muskets, and snap them all into pieces, as a finner * would go through a herring-net, and then, when the fury went off, they were as weak and unstable as water.' †

'That's the very thing, Swertha,' said Mordaunt. 'Now, my father never likes to think of his passion after it is over, and is so much of a Berserkar, that, let him be desperate as he will to-day, he will not care about it to-morrow. Therefore, he has not filled up your place in the household at the Castle, and not a mouthful of warm food has been dressed there since you went away, and not a morsel of bread baked, but we have lived just upon whatever cold thing came to hand. Now, Swertha, I will be your warrant, that, if you go boldly up to the Castle, and enter upon the discharge of your duties as usual, you will never hear a single word from him.'

Swertha hesitated at first to obey this bold counsel. She said, 'to her thinking, Mr. Mertoun, when he was angry, looked more like a fiend than any Berserkar of them all; that the fire flashed from his eyes, and the foam flew from his lips; and that it would be a plain tempting of Providence to put herself again in such a venture.'

But, on the encouragement which she received from the son, she determined at length once more to face the parent; and, dressing herself in her ordinary household attire, for so Mordaunt particularly recommended, she slipped into the Castle, and, presently resuming the various and numerous occupations which devolved on her, seemed as deeply engaged in household cares as if she had never been out of office.

The first day of her return to her duty, Swertha made no appearance in presence of her master, but trusted that, after his three days' diet on cold meat, a hot dish, dressed with the best of her simple skill, might introduce her favourably to his recollection. When Mordaunt had reported that his father had taken no notice of this change of diet, and when she herself observed that, in passing and repassing him occasionally, her appearance produced no effect upon her singular master, she began to imagine that the whole affair had escaped Mr. Mertoun's memory, and was active in her duty as usual. Neither was she convinced of the contrary until one day, when, happening somewhat to elevate her tone in a dispute with the other maid-servant, her master, who at that time passed the place of contest, eyed her with a strong glance, and pronounced the single word *Remember* in a tone which taught Swertha the government of her tongue for many weeks after.

If Mertoun was whimsical in his mode of governing his household, he seemed no less so in his plan of educating his son. He showed the youth but few symptoms of parental affection; yet, in his ordinary state of mind, the improvement of Mordaunt's education seemed to be the utmost object of his life. He had both books and information sufficient to discharge the task of tutor in the ordinary branches of knowledge; and in this capacity was regular, calm, and strict, not to say severe, in exacting from his pupil the attention necessary for his profiting. But in the perusal of history, to which their attention was frequently turned, as well as in the study of classic authors, there often occurred facts or sentiments which produced an instant effect upon Mertoun's mind, and brought on him suddenly what Swertha, Sweyn, and even Mordaunt came to distinguish by the name of his dark hour. He was aware, in the usual case, of its approach, and retreated to an inner apartment, into which he never permitted even Mordaunt to enter. Here he would abide in seclusion for days, and even weeks, only coming out at uncertain times, to take such food as they had taken care to leave within his reach, which he used in wonderfully small quantities. At other times, and especially during the winter solstice, when almost every person spends the gloomy time within doors in feasting and merriment, this unhappy man would wrap himself in a dark-coloured sea-cloak, and wander out along the stormy beach, or upon the desolate heath, indulging his own gloomy and wayward reveries under the inclement sky, the rather that he was then most sure to wander unencountered and unobserved.

As Mordaunt grew older, he learned to note the particular signs which preceded these fits of gloomy despondency, and to direct such precautions as might insure his unfortunate parent from ill timed interruption (which had always the effect of driving him to fury), while, at the same time, full provision was made for his subsistence. Mordaunt perceived that at such periods the melancholy fit of his father was greatly prolonged, if he chanced to present himself to his eyes while the dark hour was upon him. Out of respect, therefore, to his parent, as well as to indulge the love of active exercise and of amusement natural to his period of life, Mordaunt used often to absent himself altogether from the mansion of Yarlshof, and even from the district, secure that his father, if the dark hour passed away in his absence, would be little inclined to inquire how his son had disposed of his leisure, so that he was sure he had not watched his own weak moments; that being the subject on which he entertained the utmost jealousy.

At such times, therefore, all the sources of amusement which the country afforded, were open to the younger Mertoun, who, in these intervals of his education, had an opportunity to give full scope to the energies of a bold, active, and daring character. He was often engaged with the youth of the hamlet in those desperate sports, to which the 'dreadful trade of the sam-

* Finner, small whale.

† The sagas of the Scalds are full of descriptions of these champions, and do not permit us to doubt that the Berserkars, so called from fighting without armour, used some physical means of working themselves into a frenzy, during which they possessed the strength and energy of madness. The Indian warriors are well known to do the same by dint of opium and bang.

phire-gatherer' is like a walk upon level ground —often joined those midnight excursions upon the face of the giddy cliffs, to secure the eggs or the young of the sea-fowl; and in these daring adventures displayed an address, presence of mind, and activity, which, in one so young, and not a native of the country, astonished the oldest fowlers.*

At other times, Mordaunt accompanied Sweyn and other fishermen in their long and perilous expeditions to the distant and deep sea, learning under their direction the management of the boat, in which they equal, or excel, perhaps, any natives of the British empire. This exercise had charms for Mordaunt, independently of the fishing alone.

At this time, the old Norwegian sagas were much remembered, and often rehearsed, by the fishermen, who still preserved among themselves the ancient Norse tongue, which was the speech of their forefathers. In the dark romance of those Scandinavian tales, lay much that was captivating to a youthful ear; and the classic fables of antiquity were rivalled at least, if not excelled, in Mordaunt's opinion, by the strange legends of Berserkars, of sea-kings, of dwarfs, giants, and sorcerers, which he heard from the native Zetlanders. Often the scenes around him were assigned as the localities of wild poems, which, half recited, half chanted, by voices as hoarse, if not so loud, as the waves over which they floated, pointed out the very bay on which they sailed as the scene of a bloody sea-fight; the scarce-seen heap of stones that bristled over the projecting cape, as the dun, or castle, of some potent earl or noted pirate; the distant and solitary grey stone on the lonely moor, as marking the grave of a hero; the wild cavern, up which the sea rolled in heavy, broad, and unbroken billows, as the dwelling of some noted sorceress.†

The ocean also had its mysteries, the effect of which was aided by the dim twilight, through which it was imperfectly seen for more than half the year. Its bottomless depths and secret caves contained, according to the account of Sweyn and others, skilled in legendary lore, such wonders as modern navigators reject with disdain. In the quiet moonlight bay, where the waves came rippling to the shore, upon a bed of smooth sand intermingled with shells, the mermaid was still seen to glide along the waters by moonlight, and, mingling her voice with the sighing breeze, was often heard to sing of subterranean wonders, or to chant prophecies of future events. The kraken, the hugest of living things, was still supposed to cumber the recesses of the Northern Ocean; and often, when some fog-bank covered the sea at a distance, the eye of the experienced boatman saw the horns of the monstrous leviathan welking and waving amidst the wreaths of mist, and bore away with all press of oar and sail, lest the sudden suction, occasioned by the sinking of the monstrous mass to the bottom, should drag within the grasp of its multifarious feelers his own frail skiff. The sea-snake was also known, which, arising out of the depths of ocean, stretches to the skies his enormous neck, covered with a mane like that of a war-horse, and, with his broad glittering eyes raised mast-head high, looks out, as it seems, for plunder or for victims.

Many prodigious stories of these marine monsters, and of many others less known, were then universally received among the Zetlanders, whose descendants have not as yet by any means abandoned faith in them.‡

Such legends are, indeed, everywhere current amongst the vulgar; but the imagination is far more powerfully affected by them on the deep and dangerous seas of the north, amidst precipices and headlands, many hundred feet in height, —amid perilous straits, and currents, and eddies,—long sunken reefs of rock, over which the vivid ocean foams and boils,—dark caverns, to whose extremities neither man nor skiff has ever ventured,—lonely, and often uninhabited isles, and occasionally the ruins of ancient northern fastnesses dimly seen by the feeble light of the Arctic winter. To Mordaunt, who had much of romance in his disposition, these superstitions formed a pleasing and interesting exercise of the imagination, while, half doubting, half inclined to believe, he listened to the tales chanted concerning these wonders of nature, and creatures of credulous belief, told in the rude but energetic language of the ancient Scalds.

But there wanted not softer and lighter amusement, that might seem better suited to Mordaunt's age, than the wild tales and rude exercises which we have already mentioned. The season of winter, when, from the shortness of the daylight, labour becomes impossible, is in Zetland the time of revel, feasting, and merriment. Whatever the fisherman has been able to acquire during summer, was expended, and often wasted, in maintaining the mirth and hospitality of his hearth during this period: while the landholders and gentlemen of the island gave double loose to their convivial and hospitable dispositions, thronged their houses with guests, and drove away the rigour of the season with jest, glee, and song, the dance, and the wine-cup.

Amid the revels of this merry, though rigorous season, no youth added more spirit to the dance, or glee to the revel, than the young stranger, Mordaunt Mertoun. When his father's state of mind permitted, or indeed required, his absence, he wandered from house to house a welcome guest wherever he came, and lent his willing voice to the song, and his foot to the revel. A boat, or, if the weather, as was often the case, permitted not that convenience, one of the numerous ponies, which, straying in hordes about the extensive moors, may be said to be at any man's command who can catch them, conveyed him from the mansion of one hospitable Zetlander to that of another. None excelled him in performing the warlike sword-dance, a species of amusement

* Fatal accidents, however, sometimes happen. When I visited the Fair Isle in 1814, a poor lad of fourteen had been killed by a fall from the rocks about a fortnight before our arrival. The accident happened almost within sight of his mother, who was casting peats at no great distance. The body fell into the sea, and was seen no more. But the islanders account this an honourable mode of death; and, as the children begin the practice of climbing very early, fewer accidents occur than might be expected.

† Note C. Norse Fragments.

‡ Note D. Monsters of the Northern Seas.

which had been derived from the habits of the ancient Norsemen. He could play upon the *gue*, and upon the common violin, the melancholy and pathetic tunes peculiar to the country; and with great spirit and execution could relieve their monotony with the livelier airs of the north of Scotland. When a party set forth as maskers, or, as they are called in Scotland, *guizards*, to visit some neighbouring laird, or rich udaller, it augured well of the expedition if Mordaunt Mertoun could be prevailed upon to undertake the office of *skudler*, or leader of the band. Upon these occasions, full of fun and frolic, he led his retinue from house to house, bringing mirth where he went, and leaving regret when he departed. Mordaunt became thus generally known, and beloved as generally, through most of the houses composing the patriarchal community of the main isle; but his visits were most frequently and most willingly paid at the mansion of his father's landlord and protector, Magnus Troil.

It was not entirely the hearty and sincere welcome of the worthy old magnate, nor the sense that he was in effect his father's patron, which occasioned these frequent visits. The hand of welcome was indeed received as eagerly as it was sincerely given, while the ancient Udaller, raising himself in his huge chair, whereof the inside was lined with well dressed sealskins, and the outside composed of massive oak, carved by the rude graving-tool of some Hamburg carpenter, shouted forth his welcome in a tone which might, in ancient times, have hailed the return of *Ioul*,* the highest festival of the Goths. There was metal yet more attractive, and younger hearts, whose welcome, if less loud, was as sincere as that of the jolly Udaller. But it is matter which ought not to be discussed at the conclusion of a chapter.

CHAPTER III.

O, Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,
They were twa bonnie lasses,
They bigged a house on yon burn-brae,
And theekit it ower wi' rashes.

Fair Bessy Bell I loo'd yestreen,
And thought I ne'er could alter;
But Mary Gray's twa pawky een
Have gar'd my fancy falter.

Scots Song.

WE have already mentioned Minna and Brenda, the daughters of Magnus Troil. Their mother had been dead for many years, and they were now two beautiful girls, the eldest only eighteen, which might be a year or two younger than Mordaunt Mertoun, the second about seventeen. They were the joy of their father's heart, and the light of his old eyes; and although indulged to a degree which might have endangered his comfort and their own, they repaid his affection with a love into which even blind indulgence had not introduced slight regard, or feminine caprice. The difference of their tempers and of their complexions was singularly striking, although combined, as is usual, with a certain degree of family resemblance.

The mother of these maidens had been a Scottish lady from the Highlands of Sutherland, the orphan of a noble chief, who, driven from his own country during the feuds of the seventeenth century, had found shelter in those peaceful islands, which, amidst poverty and seclusion, were thus far happy, that they remained unvexed by discord and unstained by civil broil. The father (his name was Saint Clair) pined for his native glen, his feudal tower, his clansmen and his fallen authority, and died not long after his arrival in Zetland. The beauty of his orphan daughter, despite her Scottish lineage, melted the stout heart of Magnus Troil. He sued and was listened to, and she became his bride; but, dying in the fifth year of their union, left him to mourn his brief period of domestic happiness.

From her mother, Minna inherited the stately form and dark eyes, the raven locks and finely-pencilled brows, which showed she was, on one side at least, a stranger to the blood of Thule. Her cheek—

O, call it fair, not pale!—

was so slightly and delicately tinged with the rose, that many thought the lily had an undue proportion in her complexion. But in that predominance of the paler flower, there was nothing sickly or languid; it was the true natural colour of health, and corresponded in a peculiar degree with features, which seemed calculated to express a contemplative and high-minded character. When Minna Troil heard a tale of woe or of injustice, it was then her blood rushed to her cheeks, and showed plainly how warm it beat, notwithstanding the generally serious, composed, and retiring disposition which her countenance and demeanour seemed to exhibit. If strangers sometimes conceived that these fine features were clouded by melancholy, for which her age and situation could scarce have given occasion, they were soon satisfied, upon further acquaintance, that the placid, mild quietude of her disposition, and the mental energy of a character which was but little interested in ordinary and trivial occurrences, was the real cause of her gravity; and most men, when they knew that her melancholy had no ground in real sorrow, and was only the aspiration of a soul bent on more important objects than those by which she was surrounded, might have wished her whatever could add to her happiness, but could scarce have desired that, graceful as she was in her natural and unaffected seriousness, she should change that deportment for one more gay. In short, notwithstanding our wish to have avoided that hackneyed simile of an angel, we cannot avoid saying there was something in the serious beauty of her aspect, in the measured yet graceful ease of her motions, in the music of her voice, and the serene purity of her eye, that seemed as if Minna Troil belonged naturally to some higher and better sphere, and was only the chance visitant of a world that was not worthy of her.

The scarcely less beautiful, equally lovely, and equally innocent Brenda, was of a complexion as differing from her sister, as they differed in cha-

* [Yule, Christmas. The Old Style is still retained in Shetland,—at any rate, in the country districts.]

racter, taste, and expression. Her profuse locks were of that paley brown which receives from the passing sunbeam a tinge of gold, but darkens again when the ray has passed from it. Her eye, her mouth, the beautiful row of teeth, which in her innocent vivacity were frequently disclosed; the fresh yet not too bright glow of a healthy complexion, tinging a skin like the drifted snow, spoke her genuine Scandinavian descent. A fairy form, less tall than that of Minna, but still more finely moulded into symmetry—a careless, and almost childish lightness of step—an eye that seemed to look on every object with pleasure, from a natural and serene cheerfulness of disposition, attracted even more general admiration than the charms of her sister, though perhaps that which Minna did excite, might be of a more intense as well as a more reverential character.

The dispositions of these lovely sisters were not less different than their complexions. In the kindly affections neither could be said to excel the other, so much were they attached to their father and to each other. But the cheerfulness of Brenda mixed itself with the everyday business of life, and seemed inexhaustible in its profusion. The less buoyant spirit of her sister appeared to bring to society a contented wish to be interested and pleased with what was going forward, but was rather placidly carried along with the stream of mirth and pleasure, than disposed to aid its progress by any efforts of her own. She endured mirth, rather than enjoyed it; and the pleasures in which she most delighted were those of a graver and more solitary cast. The knowledge which is derived from books was beyond her reach. Zetland afforded few opportunities, in those days, of studying the lessons bequeathed

By dead men to their kind:

and Magnus Troil, such as we have described him, was not a person within whose mansion the means of such knowledge were to be acquired. But the book of nature was before Minna, that noblest of volumes, where we are ever called to wonder and to admire, even when we cannot understand. The plants of those wild regions, the shells on the shores, and the long list of feathered clans which haunt their cliffs and eyries, were as well known to Minna Troil as to the most experienced fowlers. Her powers of observation were wonderful, and little interrupted by other tones of feeling. The information which she acquired by habits of patient attention, was indelibly riveted in a naturally powerful memory. She had also a high feeling for the solitary and melancholy grandeur of the scenes in which she was placed. The ocean in all its varied forms of sublimity and terror—the tremendous cliffs that resound to the ceaseless roar of the billows, and the clang of the seafowl, had for Minna a charm in almost every state in which the changing seasons exhibited them. With the enthusiastic feelings proper to the romantic race from which her mother descended, the love of natural objects was to her a passion capable not only of occupying, but at times of agitating, her mind. Scenes upon which her sister looked with a sense of transient awe or emotion, which vanished on her return from witnessing them, continued long to fill Minna's imagination, not only in solitude, and in the silence of the night, but in the hours of society. So that sometimes when she sat like a beautiful statue, a present member of the domestic circle, her thoughts were far absent, wandering on the wild sea-shore, and among the yet wilder mountains of her native isles. And yet when recalled to conversation, and mingling in it with interest, there were few to whom her friends were more indebted for enhancing its enjoyments; and although something in her manners claimed deference (notwithstanding her early youth) as well as affection, even her gay, lovely, and amiable sister was not more generally beloved than the more retired and pensive Minna.

Indeed, the two lovely sisters were not only the delight of their friends, but the pride of those islands, where the inhabitants of a certain rank were blended, by the remoteness of their situation and the general hospitality of their habits, into one friendly community. A wandering poet and parcel-musician, who, after going through various fortunes, had returned to end his days as he could in his native islands, had celebrated the daughters of Magnus in a poem, which he entitled Night and Day; and in his description of Minna, might almost be thought to have anticipated, though only in a rude outline, the exquisite lines of Lord Byron:—

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

Their father loved the maidens both so well, that it might be difficult to say which he loved best; saving that, perchance, he liked his graver damsel better in the walk without doors, and his merry maiden better by the fireside; that he more desired the society of Minna when he was sad, and that of Brenda when he was mirthful; and, what was nearly the same thing, preferred Minna before noon, and Brenda after the glass had circulated in the evening.

But it was still more extraordinary, that the affections of Mordaunt Mertoun seemed to hover with the same impartiality as those of their father betwixt the two lovely sisters. From his boyhood, as we have noticed, he had been a frequent inmate of the residence of Magnus at Burgh-Westra, although it lay nearly twenty miles distant from Yarlshof. The impassable character of the country betwixt these places, extending over hills covered with loose and quaking bog, and frequently intersected by the creeks or arms of the sea, which indent the island on either side, as well as by fresh-water streams and lakes, rendered the journey difficult, and even dangerous, in the dark season; yet, as soon as the state of his father's mind warned him to absent himself, Mordaunt, at every risk, and under every difficulty, was pretty sure to be found the next day at Burgh-Westra, having achieved his journey in less time than would have been employed perhaps by the most active native.

He was of course set down as a wooer of one

of the daughters of Magnus, by the public of Zetland; and when the old Udaller's great partiality to the youth was considered, nobody doubted that he might aspire to the hand of either of those distinguished beauties, with as large a share of islets, rocky moorland, and shore-fishings, as might be the fitting portion of a favoured child, and with the presumptive prospect of possessing half the domains of the ancient house of Troil, when their present owner should be no more. This seemed all a reasonable speculation, and, in theory at least, better constructed than many that are current through the world as unquestionable facts. But, alas! all that sharpness of observation which could be applied to the conduct of the parties, failed to determine the main point, to which of the young persons, namely, the attentions of Mordaunt were peculiarly devoted. He seemed, in general, to treat them as an affectionate and attached brother might have treated two sisters, so equally dear to him that a breath would have turned the scale of affection. Or if at any time, which often happened, the one maiden appeared the more especial object of his attention, it seemed only to be because circumstances called her peculiar talents and disposition into more particular and immediate exercise.

Both the sisters were accomplished in the simple music of the north, and Mordaunt, who was their assistant, and sometimes their preceptor, when they were practising this delightful art, might be now seen assisting Minna in the acquisition of those wild, solemn, and simple airs, to which Scalds and harpers sung of old the deeds of heroes, and presently found equally active in teaching Brenda the more lively and complicated music, which their father's affection caused to be brought from the English or Scottish capital for the use of his daughters. And while conversing with them, Mordaunt, who mingled a strain of deep and ardent enthusiasm with the gay and ungovernable spirits of youth, was equally ready to enter into the wild and poetical visions of Minna, or into the lively and often humorous chat of her gayer sister. In short, so little did he seem to attach himself to either damsel exclusively, that he was sometimes heard to say that Minna never looked so lovely as when her light-hearted sister had induced her, for the time, to forget her habitual gravity; or Brenda so interesting, as when she sat listening, a subdued and affected partaker of the deep pathos of her sister Minna.

The public of the Mainland were, therefore, to use the hunter's phrase, at fault in their further conclusions, and could but determine, after long vacillating betwixt the maidens, that the young man was positively to marry one of them, but which of the two could only be determined when his approaching manhood, or the interference of stout old Magnus, the father, should teach Master Mordaunt Mertoun to know his own mind. 'It was a pretty thing, indeed,' they usually concluded, 'that he, no native born, and possessed of no visible means of subsistence that is known to any one, should presume to hesitate, or affect to have the power of selection and choice, betwixt the two most distinguished beauties of Zetland. If they were Magnus Troil, they would soon be at the bottom of the matter,' —and so forth. All which remarks were only whispered, for the hasty disposition of the Udaller had too much of the old Norse fire about it to render it safe for any one to become an unauthorized intermeddler with his family affairs; and thus stood the relation of Mordaunt Mertoun to the family of Mr. Troil of Burgh-Westra, when the following incidents took place.

CHAPTER IV.

> This is no pilgrim's morning—yon grey mist
> Lies upon hill, and dale, and field, and forest,
> Like the dun wimple of a new-made widow;
> And, by my faith, although my heart be soft,
> I'd rather hear that widow weep and sigh,
> And tell the virtues of the dear departed,
> Than, when the tempest sends his voice abroad,
> Be subject to its fury.
>
> THE DOUBLE NUPTIALS.

THE spring was far advanced, when, after a week spent in sport and festivity at Burgh-Westra, Mordaunt Mertoun bade adieu to the family, pleading the necessity of his return to Yarlshof. The proposal was combated by the maidens, and more decidedly by Magnus himself. He saw no occasion whatever for Mordaunt returning to Yarlshof. If his father desired to see him, which, by the way, Magnus did not believe, Mr. Mertoun had only to throw himself into the stern of Sweyn's boat, or betake himself to a pony, if he liked a land journey better, and he would see not only his son, but twenty folk besides, who would be most happy to find that he had not lost the use of his tongue entirely during his long solitude; 'although I must own,' added the worthy Udaller, 'that when he lived among us, nobody ever made less use of it.'

Mordaunt acquiesced both in what respected his father's taciturnity and his dislike to general society; but suggested, at the same time, that the first circumstance rendered his own immediate return more necessary, as he was the usual channel of communication betwixt his father and others; and that the second corroborated the same necessity, since Mr. Mertoun's having no other society whatever, seemed a weighty reason why his son's should be restored to him without loss of time. As to his father's coming to Burgh-Westra, 'they might as well,' he said, 'expect to see Sumburgh Cape come thither.'

'And that would be a cumbrous guest,' said Magnus. 'But you will stop for our dinner today? There are the families of Muness, Quendale, Thorslivoe, and I know not who else, are expected; and, besides the thirty that were in house this blessed night, we shall have as many more as chamber and bower, and barn and boat-house, can furnish with beds or with barley-straw,—and you will leave all this behind you!'

'And the blithe dance at night,' added Brenda, in a tone betwixt reproach and vexation; 'and the young men from the Isle of Paba that are to dance the sword-dance, whom shall we find to match them, for the honour of the Main?'

'There is many a merry dancer on the Mainland, Brenda,' replied Mordaunt, 'even if I should never rise on tiptoe again. And where

good dancers are found, Brenda Troil will always find the best partner. I must trip it to-night through the Wastes of Dunrossness.'

'Do not say so, Mordaunt,' said Minna, who, during this conversation, had been looking from the window something anxiously; 'go not, to-day at least, through the Wastes of Dunrossness.'

'And why not to-day, Minna,' said Mordaunt, laughing, 'any more than to-morrow?'

'O, the morning mist lies heavy upon yonder chain of isles, nor has it permitted us since day-break even a single glimpse of Fitful Head, the lofty cape that concludes yon splendid range of mountains. The fowl are winging their way to the shore, and the shelldrake seems, through the mist, as large as the scart.* See, the very sheerwaters and bonxies are making to the cliffs for shelter.'

'And they will ride out a gale against a king's frigate,' said her father; 'there is foul weather when they cut and run.'

'Stay, then, with us,' said Minna to her friend; 'the storm will be dreadful, yet it will be grand to see it from Burgh-Westra, if we have no friend exposed to its fury. See, the air is close and sultry, though the season is yet so early, and the day so calm that not a windlestraw moves on the heath. Stay with us, Mordaunt; the storm which these signs announce will be a dreadful one.'

'I must be gone the sooner,' was the conclusion of Mordaunt, who could not deny the signs, which had not escaped his own quick observation. 'If the storm be too fierce, I will abide for the night at Stourburgh.'

'What!' said Magnus, 'will you leave us for the new chamberlain's new Scotch tacksman, who is to teach all us Zetland savages new ways? Take your own gait, my lad, if that is the song you sing.'

'Nay,' said Mordaunt; 'I had only some curiosity to see the new implements he has brought.'

'Ay, ay, ferlies make fools fain. I would like to know if his new plough will bear against a Zetland rock?' answered Magnus.

'I must not pass Stourburgh on the journey,' said the youth, deferring to his patron's prejudice against innovation, 'if this boding weather bring on tempest; but if it only break in rain, as is most probable, I am not likely to be melted in the wetting.'

'It will not soften into rain alone,' said Minna; 'see how much heavier the clouds fall every moment, and see these weather-gaws that streak the lead-coloured mass with partial gleams of faded red and purple.'

'I see them all,' said Mordaunt; 'but they only tell me I have no time to tarry here. Adieu, Minna; I will send you the eagle's feathers, if an eagle can be found on Fair Isle or Foulah. And fare thee well, my pretty Brenda, and keep a thought for me, should the Papa men dance ever so well.'

'Take care of yourself, since go you will,' said both sisters together.

Old Magnus scolded them formally for supposing there was any danger to an active young fellow from a spring gale, whether by sea or land; yet ended by giving his own caution also to Mordaunt, advising him seriously to delay his journey, or at least to stop at Stourburgh. 'For,' said he, 'second thoughts are best; and as the Scottishman's howf lies right under your lee, why, take any port in a storm. But do not be assured to find the door on latch, let the storm blow ever so hard; there are such matters as bolts and bars in Scotland, though, thanks to Saint Ronald, they are unknown here, save the great lock on the old Castle of Scalloway, that all men run to see—maybe they make part of this man's improvements. But go, Mordaunt, since go you will. You should drink a stirrup-cup now, were you three years older, but boys should never drink, excepting after dinner; I will drink it for you, that good customs may not be broken, or bad luck come of it. Here is your bonally, my lad.' And so saying, he quaffed a rummer glass of brandy with as much impunity as if it had been spring water. Thus regretted and cautioned on all hands, Mordaunt took leave of the hospitable household, and, looking back at the comforts with which it was surrounded, and the dense smoke that rolled upwards from its chimneys, he first recollected the guestless and solitary desolation of Yarlshof, then compared with the sullen and moody melancholy of his father's temper the warm kindness of those whom he was leaving, and could not refrain from a sigh at the thoughts which forced themselves on his imagination.

The signs of the tempest did not dishonour the predictions of Minna. Mordaunt had not advanced three hours on his journey, before the wind, which had been so deadly still in the morning, began at first to wail and sigh, as if bemoaning beforehand the evils which it might perpetrate in its fury, like a madman in the gloomy state of dejection which precedes his fit of violence; then gradually increasing, the gale howled, raged, and roared, with the full fury of a northern storm. It was accompanied by showers of rain mixed with hail, that dashed with the most unrelenting rage against the hills and rocks with which the traveller was surrounded, distracting his attention, in spite of his utmost exertions, and rendering it very difficult for him to keep the direction of his journey, in a country where there is neither road, nor even the slightest track, to direct the steps of the wanderer, and where he is often interrupted by brooks as well as large pools of water, lakes, and lagoons. All these inland waters were now lashed into sheets of tumbling foam, much of which, carried off by the fury of the whirlwind, was mingled with the gale, and transported far from the waves of which it had lately made a part; while the salt relish of the drift which was pelted against his face, showed Mordaunt that the spray of the more distant ocean, disturbed to frenzy by the storm, was mingled with that of the inland lakes and streams.

Amidst this hideous combustion of the elements, Mordaunt Mertoun struggled forward as one to whom such elemental war was familiar, and who regarded the exertions which it required

* Or *scarf*, the cormorant: which may be seen frequently dashing in wild flight along the roosts and tides of Zetland, and yet more often drawn up in ranks on some ledge of rock, like a body of the Black Brunswickers in 1815.

to withstand its fury but as a mark of resolution and manhood. He felt even, as happens usually to those who endure great hardships, that the exertion necessary to subdue them is in itself a kind of elevating triumph. To see and distinguish his path when the cattle were driven from the hill, and the very fowls from the firmament, was but the stronger proof of his own superiority. 'They shall not hear of me at Burgh-Westra,' said he to himself, 'as they heard of old doited Ringan Ewenson's boat, that foundered betwixt roadstead and key. I am more of a cragsman than to mind fire or water, wave by sea, or quagmire by land.' Thus he struggled on, buffeting with the storm, supplying the want of the usual signs by which travellers directed their progress (for rock, mountain, and headland, were shrouded in mist and darkness), by the instinctive sagacity with which long acquaintance with these wilds had taught him to mark every minute object, which could serve in such circumstances to regulate his course. Thus, we repeat, he struggled onward, occasionally standing still, or even lying down, when the gust was most impetuous; making way against it when it was somewhat lulled, by a rapid and bold advance even in its very current; or, when this was impossible, by a movement resembling that of a vessel working to windward by short tacks, but never yielding one inch of the way which he had fought so hard to gain.

Yet, notwithstanding Mordaunt's experience and resolution, his situation was sufficiently uncomfortable, and even precarious; not because his sailor's jacket and trousers, the common dress of young men through these isles when on a journey, were thoroughly wet, for that might have taken place within the same brief time, in any ordinary day, in this watery climate; but the real danger was, that, notwithstanding his utmost exertions, he made very slow way through brooks that were sending their waters all abroad, through morasses drowned in double deluges of moisture, which rendered all the ordinary passes more than usually dangerous, and repeatedly obliged the traveller to perform a considerable circuit, which in the usual case was unnecessary. Thus repeatedly baffled, notwithstanding his youth and strength, Mordaunt, after maintaining a dogged conflict with wind, rain, and the fatigue of a prolonged journey, was truly happy, when, not without having been more than once mistaken in his road, he at length found himself within sight of the house of Stourburgh, or Harfra; for the names were indifferently given to the residence of Mr. Triptolemus Yellowley, who was the chosen missionary of the Chamberlain of Orkney and Zetland, a speculative person, who designed, through the medium of Triptolemus, to introduce into the *Ultima Thule* of the Romans a spirit of improvement, which at that early period was scarce known to exist in Scotland itself.

At length, and with much difficulty, Mordaunt reached the house of this worthy agriculturist, the only refuge from the relentless storm which he could hope to meet with for several miles; and, going straight to the door with the most undoubting confidence of instant admission, he was not a little surprised to find it not merely latched, which the weather might excuse, but even bolted, a thing which, as Magnus Troil has already intimated, was almost unknown in the archipelago. To knock, to call, and finally to batter the door with staff and stones, were the natural resources of the youth, who was rendered alike impatient by the pelting of the storm, and by encountering such most unexpected and unusual obstacles to instant admission. As he was suffered, however, for many minutes to exhaust his impatience in noise and clamour, without receiving any reply, we will employ them in informing the reader who Triptolemus Yellowley was, and how he came by a name so singular.

Old Jasper Yellowley, the father of Triptolemus (though born at the foot of Roseberry Topping), had been *come over* by a certain noble Scottish earl, who, proving too far north for canny Yorkshire, had persuaded him to accept of a farm in the Mearns, where, it is unnecessary to add, he found matters very different from what he had expected. It was in vain that the stout farmer set manfully to work, to counterbalance, by superior skill, the inconveniences arising from a cold soil and a weeping climate. These might have been probably overcome; but his neighbourhood to the Grampians exposed him eternally to that species of visitation from the plaided gentry who dwelt within their skirts, which made young Norval a warrior and a hero, but only converted Jasper Yellowley into a poor man. This was, indeed, balanced in some sort by the impression which his ruddy cheek and robust form had the fortune to make upon Miss Barbara Clinkscale, daughter of the umquhile, and sister to the then existing Clinkscale of that Ilk.

This was thought a horrid and unnatural union in the neighbourhood, considering that the house of Clinkscale had at least as great a share of Scottish pride as of Scottish parsimony, and was amply endowed with both. But Miss Baby had her handsome fortune of two thousand marks at her own disposal, was a woman of spirit, who had been *major* and *sui juris* (as the writer who drew the contract assured her) for full twenty years; so she set consequences and commentaries alike at defiance, and wedded the hearty Yorkshire yeoman. Her brother and her more wealthy kinsmen drew off in disgust, and almost disowned their degraded relative. But the house of Clinkscale was allied (like every other family in Scotland at the time) to a set of relations who were not so nice—tenth and sixteenth cousins, who not only acknowledged their kinswoman Baby after her marriage with Yellowley, but even condescended to eat beans and bacon (though the latter was then the abomination of the Scotch as much as of the Jews) with her husband, and would willingly have cemented the friendship by borrowing a little cash from him, had not my good lady (who understood trap as well boat-woman in the Mearns) put a negative barley-advance to intimacy. Indeed, she knew you!' make young Deilbelicket, old Dugald Bal Brenda, the Laird of Bandybrawl, and others, pa ; 'and hospitality which she did not tho that are to deny them, by rendering them we findlce negotiations with the light-handed lain?' the Cairn, who, finding their late obje the Main-was now allied to 'ken'd folks, and ow 'even if I at kirk and market,' became sat And where

moderate yearly composition, to desist from their depredations.

This eminent success reconciled Jasper to the dominion which his wife began to assume over him; and which was much confirmed by her proving to be—let me see—what is the prettiest mode of expressing it?—in the family way. On this occasion, Mrs. Yellowley had a remarkable dream, as is the usual practice of teeming mothers previous to the birth of an illustrious offspring. She 'was a-dreamed,' as her husband expressed it, that she was safely delivered of a plough, drawn by three yoke of Angus-shire oxen; and, being a mighty investigator into such portents, she sat herself down with her gossips to consider what the thing might mean. Honest Jasper ventured, with much hesitation, to intimate his own opinion, that the vision had reference rather to things past than things future, and might have been occasioned by his wife's nerves having been a little startled by meeting in the loan above the house his own great plough with the six oxen, which were the pride of his heart. But the good *cummers** raised such a hue and cry against this exposition, that Jasper was fain to put his fingers in his ears and to run out of the apartment.

'Hear to him,' said an old whigamore carline—'hear to him, wi' his owsen, that are as an idol to him, even as the calf of Bethel! Na, na—it's nae pleugh of the flesh that the bonnie lad-bairn (for a lad it sall be) sall e'er striddle between the stilts o'—it's the pleugh of the spirit—and I trust mysel' to see him wag the head o' him in a pu'pit; or, what's better, on a hill-side.'

'Now, the deil's in your whiggery,' said the old lady Glenprosing; 'wad ye hae our cummer's bonnie lad-bairn wag the head aff his shouthers like your godly Maiss James Guthrie,† that ye hald such a clavering about?—Na, na, he sall walk a mair siccar path, and be a dainty curate—and say he should live to be a bishop, what the waur wad he be?'

The gauntlet, thus fairly flung down by one sibyl, was caught up by another, and the controversy between Presbytery and Episcopacy raged, roared, or rather screamed, a round of cinnamon-water serving only like oil to the flame, till Jasper entered with the plough-staff; and by the awe of his presence, and the shame of misbehaving 'before the stranger man,' imposed some conditions of silence upon the disputants.

I do not know whether it was impatience to give to the light a being destined to such high and doubtful fates, or whether poor Dame Yellowley was rather frightened at the hurly-burly which had taken place in her presence, but teir"as taken suddenly ill; and, contrary to Minna ;ula in such cases used and provided, an eagl reported to be 'a good deal worse than And fai expected.' She took the opportunity a thougtill all her wits about her) to extract ever so v. sympathetic husband two promises: 'Take care could christen the child, whose roi sisters t th

* Or scarf, th uthrie, minister of Stirling, and author of dashing in wild d's *Wrath*, 1653, was executed at Edin- and yet more d his head affixed on the Netherbow Port rock, like a boo

birth was like to cost her so dear, by a name indicative of the vision with which she had been favoured; and next, that he would educate him for the ministry. The canny Yorkshireman, thinking she had a good title at present to dictate in such matters, subscribed to all she required. A man-child was accordingly born under these conditions, but the state of the mother did not permit her for many days to inquire how far they had been complied with. When she was in some degree convalescent, she was informed that, as it was thought fit the child should be immediately christened, it had received the name of Triptolemus; the curate, who was a man of some classical skill, conceiving that this epithet contained a handsome and classical allusion to the visionary plough, with its triple yoke of oxen. Mrs. Yellowley was not much delighted with the manner in which her request had been complied with; but grumbling being to as little purpose as in the celebrated case of Tristram Shandy, she e'en sat down contented with the heathenish name, and endeavoured to counteract the effects it might produce upon the taste and feelings of the nominee, by such an education as might put him above the slightest thought of socks, coulters, stilts, mould-boards, or anything connected with the servile drudgery of the plough.

Jasper, sage Yorkshireman, smiled slyly in his sleeve, conceiving that young Trippie was likely to prove a chip of the old block, and would rather take after the jolly Yorkshire yeoman, than the gentle but somewhat *aigre* blood of the house of Clinkscale. He remarked with suppressed glee that the tune which best answered the purpose of a lullaby was the 'Ploughman's Whistle,' and the first words the infant learned to stammer were the names of the oxen; moreover, that the 'bern' preferred home-brewed ale to Scotch twopenny, and never quitted hold of the tankard with so much reluctance as when there had been, by some manœuvre of Jasper's own device, a double straik of malt allowed to the brewing, above that which was sanctioned by the most liberal recipe of which his dame's household thrift admitted. Besides this, when no other means could be fallen upon to divert an occasional fit of squalling, his father observed that Trip could be always silenced by jingling a bridle at his ear. From all which symptoms he used to swear in private that the boy would prove true Yorkshire, and mother and mother's kin would have small share of him.

Meanwhile, and within a year after the birth of Triptolemus, Mrs. Yellowley bore a daughter, named after herself Barbara, who, even in earliest infancy, exhibited the pinched nose and thin lips by which the Clinkscale family were distinguished among the inhabitants of the Mearns; and as her childhood advanced, the readiness with which she seized, and the tenacity wherewith she detained, the playthings of Triptolemus, besides a desire to bite, pinch, and scratch, on slight, or no provocation, were all considered by attentive observers as proofs that Miss Baby would prove 'her mother over again.' Malicious people did not stick to say that the acrimony of the Clinkscale blood had not, on this occasion, been cooled and sweetened by that of Old England;

that young Deilbelicket was much about the house, and they could not but think it odd that Mrs. Yellowley, who, as the whole world knew, gave nothing for nothing, should be so uncommonly attentive to heap the trencher, and to fill the caup of an idle blackguard ne'er-do-weel. But when folk had once looked upon the austere and awfully virtuous countenance of Mrs. Yellowley, they did full justice to her propriety of conduct, and Deilbelicket's delicacy of taste.

Meanwhile, young Triptolemus, having received such instructions as the curate could give him (for though Dame Yellowley adhered to the persecuted remnant, her jolly husband, edified by the black gown and prayer-book, still conformed to the church as by law established), was, in due process of time, sent to Saint Andrews to prosecute his studies. He went, it is true, but with an eye turned back with sad remembrances on his father's plough, his father's pancakes, and his father's ale, for which the small beer of the college, commonly there termed 'thorough go-nimble,' furnished a poor substitute, Yet he advanced in his learning, being found, however, to show a particular favour to such authors of antiquity as had made the improvement of the soil the object of their researches. He endured the Bucolics of Virgil the Georgics he had by heart but the Æneid he could not away with; and he was particularly severe upon the celebrated line expressing a charge of cavalry, because, as he understood the word *putrem*,* he opined that the combatants, in their inconsiderate ardour, galloped over a new-manured ploughed field. Cato, the Roman censor, was his favourite among classical heroes and philosophers, not on account of the strictness of his morals, but because of his treatise *de Re Rustica.* He had ever in his mouth the phrase of Cicero, *Jam neminem antepono Catoni.* He thought well of Palladius, and of Terentius Varro, but Columella was his pocket-companion. To these ancient worthies he added the more modern Tusser, Hartlib, and other writers on rural economics, not forgetting the lucubrations of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, and such of the better informed Philomaths, who, instead of loading their almanacs with vain predictions of political events, pretended to see what seeds would grow, and what would not, and direct the attention of their readers to that course of cultivation from which the production of good crops may be safely predicted; modest sages, in fine, who, careless of the rise and downfall of empires, content themselves with pointing out the fit seasons to reap and sow, with a fair guess at the weather which each month will be likely to present; as, for example, that, if Heaven pleases, we shall have snow in January, and the author will stake his reputation that July proves, on the whole, a month of sunshine. Now, although the rector of Saint Leonard's was greatly pleased, in general, with the quiet, laborious, and studious bent of Triptolemus Yellowley, and deemed him, in so far, worthy of a name of four syllables having a Latin termination, yet he relished not, by any means, his exclusive attention to his favourite authors. It savoured of the earth, he said, if not of something worse, to have a man's mind always grovelling in mould, stercorated or unstercorated; and he pointed out, but in vain, history, and poetry, and divinity, as more elevating subjects of occupation. Triptolemus Yellowley was obstinate in his own course. Of the battle of Pharsalia, he thought not as it affected the freedom of the world, but dwelt on the rich crop which the Emathian fields were likely to produce the next season. In vernacular poetry, Triptolemus could scarce be prevailed upon to read a single couplet, excepting old Tusser, as aforesaid, whose Hundred Points of Good Husbandry he had got by heart; and excepting also Piers Ploughman's Vision, which, charmed with the title, he bought with avidity from a packman, but, after reading the two first pages, flung it into the fire as an impudent and misnamed political libel. As to divinity, he summed that matter up by reminding his instructors that to labour the earth, and win his bread with the toil of his body and sweat of his brow, was the lot imposed upon fallen man; and, for his part, he was resolved to discharge, to the best of his abilities, a task so obviously necessary to existence, leaving others to speculate as much as they would upon the more recondite mysteries of theology.

With a spirit so much narrowed and limited to the concerns of rural life, it may be doubted whether the proficiency of Triptolemus in learning, or the use he was like to make of his acquisitions, would have much gratified the ambitious hope of his affectionate mother. It is true, he expressed no reluctance to embrace the profession of a clergyman, which suited well enough with the habitual personal indolence which sometimes attaches to speculative dispositions. He had views, to speak plainly (I wish they were peculiar to himself), of cultivating the *glebe* six days in the week, preaching on the seventh with due regularity, and dining with some fat franklin or country laird, with whom he could smoke a pipe and drink a tankard after dinner, and mix in secret conference on the exhaustless subject,

Quæ faciunt lætas segetes.

Now, this plan, besides that it indicated nothing of what was then called the root of the matter, implied necessarily the possession of a manse; and the possession of a manse inferred compliance with the doctrines of Prelacy, and other enormities of the time. There was some question how far manse and glebe, stipend, both victual and money, might have outbalanced the good lady's predisposition towards Presbytery; but her zeal was not put to so severe a test. She died before her son had completed his st[illegible]
leaving her afflicted spouse just as disc[illegible] ually
was to be expected. The first act of [illegible] all boat-
undivided administration was t[illegible] ive barley.
from Saint Andrews, in or[illegible] knew you!'
assistance in his domestic [illegible] Dugald Ba[illegible] Brenda,
might have been supposed [illegible] and others, pa[illegible]; 'and
summoned to carry into prac[illegible] not the that are to
fondly studied in theory, must[illegible] we findlce
a simile which *he* would have thou[illegible] led lain?'
a cow entering upon a clover park, the Main-
taken thoughts, and deceitful hopes, even if I
A laughing philosopher, the Dem[illegible] And where

* Quadrupedumque putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.

day, once, in a moral lecture, compared human life to a table pierced with a number of holes, each of which has a pin made exactly to fit it, but which pins being stuck in hastily, and without selection, chance leads inevitably to the most awkward mistakes. 'For how often do we see,' the orator pathetically concluded,—'how often, I say, do we see the round man stuck into the three-cornered hole!' This new illustration of the vagaries of fortune set every one present into convulsions of laughter, excepting one fat alderman, who seemed to make the case his own, and insisted that it was no jesting matter. To take up the simile, however, which is an excellent one, it is plain that Triptolemus Yellowley had been shaken out of the bag at least a hundred years too soon. If he had come on the stage in our own time, that is, if he had flourished at any time within these thirty or forty years, he could not have missed to have held the office of vice-president of some eminent agricultural society, and to have transacted all the business thereof under the auspices of some noble duke or lord, who, as the matter might happen, either knew, or did not know, the difference between a horse and a cart, and a cart-horse. He could not have missed such preferment, for he was exceedingly learned in all those particulars, which, being of no consequence in actual practice, go, of course, a great way to constitute the character of a connoisseur in any art, but especially in agriculture. But, alas! Triptolemus Yellowley had, as we already have hinted, come into the world at least a century too soon; for, instead of sitting in an arm-chair, with a hammer in his hand, and a bumper of port before him, giving forth the toast, —'To breeding, in all its branches,' his father planted him betwixt the stilts of a plough, and invited him to guide the oxen on whose beauties he would, in our day, have descanted, and whose rumps he would not have goaded, but have carved. Old Jasper complained that, although no one talked so well of common and several, wheat and rape, fallow and lea, as his learned son (whom he always called Tolimus), yet, 'dang it,' added the Seneca, 'nought thrives wi' un—nought thrives wi' un!' It was still worse, when Jasper, becoming frail and ancient, was obliged, as happened in the course of a few years, gradually to yield up the reins of government to the academical neophyte.

As if Nature had meant him a spite, he had got one of the *dourest* and most intractable farms in the Mearns to try conclusions withal, a place which seemed to yield everything but what the agriculturist wanted; for there were plenty of thistles, which indicates dry land; and store of [illegible] which is said to intimate deep land; and [illegible] which show where lime hath been [illegible] deep furrows in the most unlikely [illegible]timated that it had been cul[illegible] by the Peghts, as popular [illegible] was also enough of stones [illegible], according to the creed [illegible] great abundance of springs [illegible] sappy, according to the [illegible] It was in vain that, acting [illegible] these opinions, poor Triptolemus [illegible] avail himself of the supposed [illegible] the soil. No kind of butter that might be churned could be made to stick upon his own bread, any more than on that of poor Tusser, whose Hundred Points of Good Husbandry,* so useful to others of his day, were never to himself worth as many pennies.†

In fact, excepting an hundred acres of infield, to which old Jasper had early seen the necessity of limiting his labours, there was not a corner of the farm fit for anything, but to break plough-graith and kill cattle. And then, as for the part which was really tilled with some profit, the expense of the farming establishment of Triptolemus, and his disposition to experiment, soon got rid of any good arising from the cultivation of it. 'The carles and the cart-avers,' he confessed, with a sigh, speaking of his farm-servants and horses, 'make it all, and the carles and cart-avers eat it all;' a conclusion which might sum up the year-book of many a gentleman farmer.

Matters would have soon been brought to a close with Triptolemus in the present day. He would have got a bank-credit, manœuvred with wind bills, dashed out upon a large scale, and soon have seen his crop and stock sequestrated by the sheriff; but in those days a man could not ruin himself so easily. The whole Scottish tenantry stood upon the same level flat of poverty, so that it was extremely difficult to find any vantage-ground, by climbing up to which a man might have an opportunity of actually breaking his neck with some *éclat*. They were pretty much in the situation of people, who, being totally without credit, may indeed suffer from indigence, but cannot possibly become bankrupt. Besides, notwithstanding the failure of Triptolemus's projects, there were to be balanced against the expenditure which they occasioned, all the savings which the extreme economy of his sister Barbara could effect; and in truth her exertions were wonderful. She might have realised, if any one could, the idea of the learned philosopher, who pronounced that sleeping was a fancy, and eating but a habit, and who appeared to the world to have renounced both, until it was unhappily discovered that he had an intrigue with the cook-maid of the family, who indemnified him for his privations by giving him private *entrée* to the pantry, and to a share of her own couch. But no such deceptions were practised by Barbara Yellowley. She was up early and down late, and seemed, to her over-watched and over-tasked maidens, to be as *waukrife* as the cat herself. Then, for eating, it appeared that the air was a banquet to her, and she would have made it so to her retinue. Her brother, who, besides being lazy in his person, was somewhat luxurious in his appetite, would willingly now and then have tasted a mouthful of animal food, were it but to know how his sheep were fed off; but a proposal to eat a child could not have startled Mistress Barbara more; and, being of a compliant and easy disposition,

* [The title of this work, published 1557, was afterwards changed to 'Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry,' and passed through many editions.]

† This is admitted by the English agriculturist:—

My music since has been the plough,
Entangled with some care among;
The gain not great, the pain enough,
Hath made me sing another song.

Triptolemus reconciled himself to the necessity of a perpetual Lent, too happy when he could get a scrap of butter to his oaten cake, or (as they lived on the banks of the Esk) escape the daily necessity of eating salmon, whether in or out of season, six days out of the seven.

But although Mistress Barbara brought faithfully to the joint stock all savings which her awful powers of economy accomplished to scrape together, and although the dower of their mother was by degrees expended, or nearly so, in aiding them upon extreme occasions, the term at length approached when it seemed impossible that they could sustain the conflict any longer against the evil star of Triptolemus, as he called it himself, or the natural result of his absurd speculations, as it was termed by others. Luckily at this sad crisis, a god jumped down to their relief out of a machine. In plain English, the noble lord who owned their farm, arrived at his mansion-house in their neighbourhood, with his coach-and-six and his running footmen, in the full splendour of the seventeenth century.

This person of quality was the son of the nobleman who had brought the ancient Jasper into the country from Yorkshire, and he was, like his father, a fanciful and scheming man.* He had schemed well for himself, however, amid the mutations of the time, having obtained, for a certain period of years, the administration of the remote islands of Orkney and Zetland, for payment of a certain rent, with the right of making the most of whatever was the property or revenue of the crown in these districts, under the title of Lord Chamberlain. Now, his lordship had become possessed with a notion, in itself a very true one, that much might be done to render this grant available, by improving the culture of the crown lands, both in Orkney and Zetland; and then, having some acquaintance with our friend Triptolemus, he thought (rather less happily) that he might prove a person capable of furthering his schemes. He sent for him to the great Hall-house, and was so much edified by the way in which our friend laid down the law upon every given subject relating to rural economy, that he lost no time in securing the co-operation of so valuable an assistant, the first step being to release him from his present unprofitable farm.

The terms were arranged much to the mind of Triptolemus, who had already been taught, by many years' experience, a dark sort of notion, that, without undervaluing or doubting for a moment his own skill, it would be quite as well that almost all the trouble and risk should be at the expense of his employer. Indeed, the hopes of advantage which he held out to his patron were so considerable, that the Lord Chamberlain dropped every idea of admitting his dependent into any share of the expected profits; for, rude as the arts of agriculture were in Scotland, they were far superior to those known and practised in the regions of Thule, and Triptolemus Yellowley conceived himself to be possessed of a degree of insight into these mysteries, far superior to what was possessed or practised even in the Mearns. The improvement, therefore, which was to be expected, would bear a double proportion, and the Lord Chamberlain was to reap all the profit, deducting a handsome salary for his steward Yellowley, together with the accommodation of a house and domestic farm, for the support of his family. Joy seized the heart of Mistress Barbara, at hearing this happy termination of what threatened to be so very bad an affair as their lease of Cauldacres.

'If we cannot,' she said, 'provide for our own house, when all is coming in, and nothing going out, surely we must be worse than infidels!'

Triptolemus was a busy man for some time, huffing and puffing, and eating and drinking in every change house, while he ordered and collected together proper implements of agriculture, to be used by the natives of these devoted islands, whose destinies were menaced with this formidable change. Singular tools these would seem, if presented before a modern agricultural society; but everything is relative, nor could the heavy cartload of timber, called the old Scots plough, seem less strange to a Scottish farmer of this present day, than the corslets and casques of the soldiers of Cortes might seem to a regiment of our own army. Yet the latter conquered Mexico, and undoubtedly the former would have been a splendid improvement on the state of agriculture in Thule.

We have never been able to learn why Triptolemus preferred fixing his residence in Zetland to becoming an inhabitant of the Orkneys. Perhaps he thought the inhabitants of the former archipelago the more simple and docile of the two kindred tribes; or perhaps he preferred the situation of the house and farm he himself was to occupy (which was indeed a tolerable one), as preferable to that which he had it in his power to have obtained upon Pomona (so the main island of the Orkneys is entitled). At Harfra, or, as it was sometimes called, Stourburgh, from the remains of a Pictish fort, which was almost close to the mansion-house, the factor settled himself, in the plenitude of his authority; determined to honour the name he bore by his exertions, in precept and example, to civilise the Zetlanders, and improve their very confined knowledge in the primary arts of human life.

* At the period supposed, the Earl of Morton held the Islands of Orkney and Zetland, originally granted in 1643, confirmed in 1707, and rendered absolute in 1742. This gave the family much property and influence, which they usually exercised by factors, named chamberlains. In 1766 this property was sold by the then Earl of Morton to Sir Lawrence Dundas, by whose son, Lord Dundas, it is now held. [Thomas Lord Dundas, of Aske in Yorkshire, was created Earl of Zetland in 1838.]

CHAPTER V.

The wind blew keen frae north and east;
It blew upon the floor,
Quo' our goodman to our goodwife,
'Get up and bar the door.'

'My hand is in my housewife-skep,
Goodman, as ye may see;
If it shouldna be barr'd this hundred years,
It's no be barr'd for me!'

OLD SONG.

WE can only hope that the gentle reader has not found the latter part of the last chapter ex-

tremely tedious; but, at any rate, his impatience will scarce equal that of young Mordaunt Mertoun, who, while the lightning came flash after flash, while the wind, veering and shifting from point to point, blew with all the fury of a hurricane, and while the rain was dashed against him in deluges, stood hammering, calling, and roaring at the door of the old Place of Harfra, impatient for admittance, and at a loss to conceive any position of existing circumstances which could occasion the exclusion of a stranger, especially during such horrible weather. At length, finding his noise and vociferation were equally in vain, he fell back so far from the front of the house, as was necessary to enable him to reconnoitre the chimneys; and amidst 'storm and shade' could discover, to the increase of his dismay, that though noon, then the dinner hour of these islands, was now nearly arrived, there was no smoke proceeding from the tunnels of the vents to give any note of preparation within.

Mordaunt's wrathful impatience was now changed into sympathy and alarm; for, so long accustomed to the exuberant hospitality of the Zetland islands, he was immediately induced to suppose some strange and unaccountable disaster had befallen the family; and forthwith set himself to discover some place at which he could make forcible entry, in order to ascertain the situation of the inmates, as much as to obtain shelter from the still increasing storm. His present anxiety was, however, as much thrown away as his late clamorous importunities for admittance had been. Triptolemus and his sister had heard the whole alarm without, and had already had a sharp dispute on the propriety of opening the door.

Mistress Baby, as we have described her, was no willing renderer of the rites of hospitality. In their farm of Cauldacres, in the Mearns, she had been the dread and abhorrence of all gaberlunzie men, and travelling packmen, gipsies, long-remembered beggars, and so forth, nor was there one of them so wily, as she used to boast, as could ever say they had heard the clink of her sneck. In Zetland, where the new settlers were yet strangers to the extreme honesty and simplicity of all classes, suspicion and fear joined with frugality in her desire to exclude all wandering guests of uncertain character; and the second of these motives had its effect on Triptolemus himself, who, though neither suspicious nor penurious, knew good people were scarce, good farmers scarcer, and had a reasonable share of that wisdom which looks towards self-preservation as the first law of nature. These hints may serve as a commentary on the following dialogue which took place betwixt the brother and sister.

'Now, good be gracious to us,' said Triptolemus, as he sat thumbing his old school-copy of Virgil, 'here is a pure day for the bear seed! —Well spoke the wise Mantuan—*ventis surgentibus*—and then the groans of the mountains, and the long-resounding shores—but where's the woods, Baby? tell me, I say, where we shall find the *nemorum murmur*, sister Baby, in these new seats of ours?'

'What's your foolish will?' said Baby, popping her head from out of a dark recess in the kitchen, where she was busy about some nameless deed of housewifery.

Her brother, who had addressed himself to her more from habit than intention, no sooner saw her bleak red nose, keen grey eyes, with the sharp features thereunto conforming, shaded by the flaps of the loose *toy* which depended on each side of her eager face, than he bethought himself that his query was likely to find little acceptation from her, and therefore stood another volley before he would resume the topic.

'I say, Mr. Yellowley,' said sister Baby coming into the middle of the room, 'what for are ye crying on me, and me in the midst of my housewifeskep?'

'Nay, for nothing at all, Baby,' answered Triptolemus, 'saving that I was saying to myself, that here we had the sea, and the wind, and the rain, sufficient enough, but where's the wood? where's the wood, Baby? answer me that.'

'The wood?' answered Baby—'Were I no to take better care of the wood than you, brother, there would soon be no more wood about the town than the barber's block that's on your own shoulders, Triptolemus. If ye be thinking of the wreck-wood that the callants brought in yesterday, there was six ounces of it gaed to boil your parritch this morning; though, I trow, a carefu' man wad have ta'en drammock, if breakfast he behoved to have, rather than waste baith meltith and fuel in the same morning.'

'That is to say, Baby,' replied Triptolemus, who was somewhat of a dry joker in his way, 'that when we have fire we are not to have food, and when we have food we are not to have fire, these being too great blessings to enjoy both on the same day. Good luck, you do not propose we should starve with cold and starve with hunger *unico contextu*. But, to tell you the truth, I could never away with raw oatmeal, slockened with water, in all my life. Call it drammock or crowdie, or just what ye list, my vivers must thole fire and water.'

'The mair gowk you,' said Baby; 'can ye not make your brose on the Sunday and sup them cauld on the Monday, since ye're sae dainty? Mony is the fairer face than yours that has licked the lip after such a cogfu'.'

'Mercy on us, sister!' said Triptolemus; 'at this rate, it's a finished field with me—I must unyoke the pleugh, and lie down to wait for the deadthraw. Here is that in this house wad hold all Zetland in meal for a twelvemonth, and ye grudge a cogfu' of warm parritch to me that has sic a charge!'

'Whisht—hold your silly clavering tongue,' said Baby, looking round with apprehension—'ye are a wise man to speak of what is in the house, and a fitting man to have the charge of it.—Hark, as I live by bread, I hear a tapping at the outer yett!'

'Go and open it, then, Baby,' said her brother, glad at anything that promised to interrupt the dispute.

'Go and open it, said he!' echoed Baby, half angry, half frightened, and half triumphant at the superiority of her understanding over that of her brother—'Go and open it, said you,

indeed !—is it to lend robbers a chance to take all that is in the house ?'

'Robbers !' echoed Triptolemus, in his turn ; 'there are no more robbers in this country than there are lambs at Yule. I tell you, as I have told you an hundred times, there are no Highlandmen to harry us here. This is a land of quiet and honesty, *O fortunati nimium !*'

'And what good is Saint Rinian to do ye, Tolemus ?' said his sister, mistaking the quotation for a Catholic invocation. 'Besides, if there be no Highlandmen, there may be as bad. I saw six or seven as ill-looking chields gang past the Place yesterday, as ever came frae beyont Clochnaben ; ill-faured tools they had in their hands, whaaling knives they ca'ed them, but they looked as like dirks and whingers as ae bit airn can look like anither. There is nae honest men carry siccan tools.'

Here the knocking and shouts of Mordaunt were very audible betwixt every swell of the horrible blast which was careering without. The brother and sister looked at each other in real perplexity and fear. 'If they have heard of the siller,' said Baby, her very nose changing with terror from red to blue, 'we are but gane folk !'

'Who speaks now, when they should hold their tongue ?' said Triptolemus. 'Go to the shot-window instantly, and see how many there are of them, while I load the old Spanish-barrelled duck gun—go as if you were stepping on new-laid eggs.'

Baby crept to the window, and reported that she saw only 'one young chield, clattering and roaring as gin he were daft. How many there might be out of sight, she could not say.'

'Out of sight ! nonsense,' said Triptolemus, laying aside the ramrod with which he was loading the piece, with a trembling hand. 'I will warrant them out of sight and hearing both—this is some poor fellow catched in the tempest, wants the shelter of our roof, and a little refreshment. Open the door, Baby, it's a Christian deed.'

'But is it a Christian deed of him to come in at the window, then ?' said Baby, setting up a most doleful shriek, as Mordaunt Mertoun, who had forced open one of the windows, leaped down into the apartment, dripping with water like a river god. Triptolemus, in great tribulation, presented the gun, which he had not yet loaded, while the intruder exclaimed, 'Hold, hold—what the devil mean you by keeping your doors bolted in weather like this, and levelling your gun at folk's heads as you would at a sealgh's ?'

'And who are you, friend, and what want you ?' said Triptolemus, lowering the butt of his gun to the floor as he spoke, and so recovering his arms.

'What do I want !' said Mordaunt ; 'I want everything—I want meat, drink, and fire, a bed for the night, and a sheltie for to-morrow morning, to carry me to Yarlshof.'

'And ye said there were nae caterans or sorners here ?' said Baby to the agriculturist reproachfully. 'Heard ye ever a breekless loon frae Lochaber tell his mind and his errand mair deftly ?—Come, come, friend,' she added, addressing herself to Mordaunt, 'put up your pipes and gang your gate ; this is the house of his lordship's factor, and no place of reset for thiggers or sorners.'

Mordaunt laughed in her face at the simplicity of the request. 'Leave built walls,' he said, 'and in such a tempest as this ? What take you me for ?—a gannet or a scart do you think I am, that your clapping your hands and skirling at me like a madwoman should drive me from the shelter into the storm ?'

'And so you propose, young man,' said Triptolemus gravely, 'to stay in my house, *volens nolens*—that is, whether we will or no ?'

'Will !' said Mordaunt ; 'what right have you to will anything about it ? Do you not hear the thunder ? Do you not hear the rain ? Do you not see the lightning ? And do you not know this is the only house within I wot not how many miles ? Come, my good master and dame, this may be Scottish jesting, but it sounds strange in Zetland ears. You have let out the fire too, and my teeth are dancing a jig in my head with cold ; but I'll soon put that to rights.'

He seized the fire-tongs, raked together the embers upon the hearth, broke up into life the gathering peat, which the hostess had calculated should have preserved the seeds of fire, without giving them forth, for many hours ; then, casting his eye round, saw in a corner the stock of drift-wood, which Mistress Baby had served forth by ounces, and transferred two or three logs of it at once to the hearth, which, conscious of such unwonted supply, began to transmit to the chimney such a smoke as had not issued from the Place of Harfra for many a day.

While their uninvited guest was thus making himself at home, Baby kept edging and jogging the factor to turn out the intruder. But for this undertaking Triptolemus Yellowley felt neither courage nor zeal, nor did circumstances seem at all to warrant the favourable conclusion of any fray into which he might enter with the young stranger. The sinewy limbs and graceful form of Mordaunt Mertoun were seen to great advantage in his simple sea-dress ; and with his dark sparkling eye, finely-formed head, animated features, close-curled dark hair, and bold, free looks, the stranger formed a very strong contrast with the host on whom he had intruded himself. Triptolemus was a short, clumsy, duck-legged disciple of Ceres, whose bottle-nose, turned up and handsomely coppered at the extremity, seemed to intimate something of an occasional treaty with Bacchus. It was like to be no equal mellay betwixt persons of such unequal form and strength ; and the difference betwixt twenty and fifty years was nothing in favour of the weaker party. Besides, the factor was an honest, good-natured fellow at bottom, and being soon satisfied that his guest had no other views than those of obtaining refuge from the storm, it would, despite his sister's instigations, have been his last act to deny a boon so reasonable and necessary to a youth whose exterior was so prepossessing. He stood, therefore, considering how he could most gracefully glide into the character of the hospitable landlord, out of that of the churlish defender of his domestic castle against an unauthorized intrusion, when Baby, who had stood appalled at the extreme

arity of the stranger's address and demeanour, now spoke up for herself.

'My troth, lad,' said she to Mordaunt, 'ye are no blate, to light on at that rate, and th best of wood, too—nane of your sharney peats, but good aik timber, nae less maun serve ye!'

'You come lightly by it, dame,' said Mordaunt carelessly; 'and you should not grudge the fire what the sea gives you for nothing. These good ribs of oak did their last duty upon earth and ocean, when they could hold no longer together under the brave hearts that manned the bark.'

'And that's true too,' said the old woman, softening—'this maun be awsome weather by sea. Sit down and warm ye, since the sticks are a-low.'

'Ay, ay,' said Triptolemus, 'it is a pleasure to see siccan a bonnie bleeze. I havena seen the like o't since I left Cauldacres.'

'And shallna see the like o't again in a hurry, said Baby, 'unless the house take fire, or there suld be a coal-heugh found out.'

'And wherefore should not there be a coal-heugh found out?' said the factor triumphantly —'I say, wherefore should not a coal-heugh be found out in Zetland as well as in Fife, now that the chamberlain has a far-sighted and discreet man upon the spot to make the necessary perquisitions? They are baith fishing stations, I trow?'

'I tell you what it is, Tolemus Yellowley answered his sister, who had practical reasons to fear her brother's opening upon any false scent, 'if you promise my lord sae mony of these bonnie-walkies, we'll no be weel halted here before we are found out and set a-trotting again. If ane was to speak to you about a gold mine, I ken weel wha wad promise he suld have Portugal pieces clinking in his pouch before the year gaed by.'

'And why suld I not?' said Triptolemus—'maybe your head does not know there is a land in Orkney called Ophir,* or something very like it; and wherefore might not Solomon, the wise king of the Jews, have sent thither his ships and his servants for four hundred and fifty talents? I trow he knew best where to go or send, and I hope you believe in your Bible, Baby?'

Baby was silenced by an appeal to Scripture, however *mal-à-propos*, and only answered by an articulate *humph* of incredulity or scorn, while her brother went on addressing Mordaunt.—'Yes, you shall all of you see what a change shall coin introduce, even into such an unpropitious country as yours. Ye have not heard of copper, I warrant, or of iron-stone, in these islands, neither?' Mordaunt said he had heard there was copper near the Cliffs of Konigsburgh. 'Ay, and a copper scum is found on the Loch of Swana, too, young man. But the youngest of you, doubtless, thinks himself a match for such as I am.'

Baby, who during all this while had been closely and accurately reconnoitring the youth's person, now interposed in a manner by her brother totally unexpected. 'Ye had mair need, Mr. Yellowley, to give the young man some dry clothes, and to see about getting something for him to eat, than to sit there bleezing away with your lang tales, as if the weather were not windy eneuch without your help; and maybe the lad would drink some *bland*,† or siclike, if ye had the grace to ask him.'

While Triptolemus looked astonished at such a proposal, considering the quarter it came from, Mordaunt answered, 'he should be very glad to have dry clothes, but begged to be excused from drinking until he had eaten somewhat.'

Triptolemus accordingly conducted him into another apartment, and, accommodating him with a change of dress, left him to his arrangements, while he himself returned to the kitchen, much puzzled to account for his sister's unusual fit of hospitality. 'She must be *fey*,'‡ he said, 'and in that case has not long to live, and though I fall heir to her tocher-good, I am sorry for it; for she has held the house gear well together—drawn the girth over tight, it may be, now and then, but the saddle sits the better.'

When Triptolemus returned to the kitchen, he found his suspicions confirmed; for his sister was in the desperate act of consigning to the pot a smoked goose, which, with others of the same tribe, had long hung in the large chimney, muttering to herself at the same time,—'It maun be eaten sune or syne, and what for no by the puir callant?'

'What is this of it, sister?' said Triptolemus. 'You have on the girdle and the pot at ance. What day is this wi' you?'

'E'en such a day as the Israelites had beside the flesh-pots of Egypt, billie Triptolemus; but ye little ken wha ye have in your house this blessed day.'

'Troth and little do I ken,' said Triptolemus, 'as little as I would ken the naig I never saw before. I would take the lad for a yagger,§ but he has rather ower good havings, and has no pack.'

'Ye ken as little as ane of your ain bits of nowt, man,' retorted sister Baby; 'if ye ken na him, do ye ken Tronda Dronsdaughter?'

'Tronda Dronsdaughter!' echoed Triptolemus —'how should I but ken her, when I pay her twal pennies Scots by the day, for working in the house here? I trow she works as if the things burned her fingers. I had better give a Scots lass a groat of English siller.'

'And that's the maist sensible word ye have said this blessed morning.—Weel, but Tronda kens this lad weel, and she has often spoke to me about him. They call his father the Silent Man of Sumburgh, and they say he's uncanny.'

'Hout, hout—nonsense, nonsense—they are aye at sic trash as that,' said the brother, 'when you want a day's wark out of them—they have stepped ower the tangs, or they have met an uncanny body, or they have turned about the boat against the sun, and then there's nought to be done that day.'

'Weel, weel, brother, ye are so wise,' said Baby, 'because ye knapped Latin at Saint

* [*Orphir*, a parish in the south of the Mainland of Orkney.]

† [*Bland*, or *blaand*, the common drink of the peasantry, made by pouring boiling water into buttermilk.]

‡ When a person changes his condition suddenly, as when a miser becomes liberal, or a churl good-humoured, he is said, in Scotch, to be *fey*; that is, predestined to speedy death, of which such mutations of humour are received as a sure indication.

§ A pedlar.

Andrews; and can your lair tell me, then, what the lad has round his halse?'

'A Barcelona napkin, as wet as a dishclout, and I have just lent him one of my own overlays,' said Triptolemus.

'A Barcelona napkin!' said Baby, elevating her voice, and then suddenly lowering it, as from apprehension of being overheard—'I say a gold chain!'

'A gold chain!' said Triptolemus.

'In troth is it, hinny; and how like you that? The folk say here, as Tronda tells me, that the king of the drows gave it to his father, the Silent Man of Sumburgh.'

'I wish you would speak sense, or be the silent woman,' said Triptolemus. 'The upshot of it all is, then, that this lad is the rich stranger's son, and that you are giving him the goose you were to keep till Michaelmas?'

'Troth, brother, we maun do something for God's sake, and to make friends; and the lad,' added Baby (for even she was not altogether above the prejudices of her sex in favour of outward form), 'the lad has a fair face of his ain.'

'Ye would have let mony a fair face,' said Triptolemus, 'pass the door pining, if it had not been for the gold chain.'

'Nae doubt, nae doubt,' replied Barbara; 'ye wad not have me waste our substance on every thigger or sorner that has the luck to come by the door in a wet day? But this lad has a fair and a wide name in the country, and Tronda says he is to be married to a daughter of the rich Udaller, Magnus Troil, and the marriage-day is to be fixed whenever he makes choice (set him up!) between the twa lasses; and so it wad be as much as our good name is worth, and our quiet forby, to let him sit unserved, although he does come unsent for.'

'The best reason in life,' said Triptolemus, 'for letting a man into a house is, that you dare not bid him go by. However, since there is a man of quality amongst them, I will let him know whom he has to do with, in my person.' Then, advancing to the door, he exclaimed, '*Heus tibi, Dave!*'

'*Adsum,*' answered the youth, entering the apartment.

'Hem!' said the erudite Tripolemus; 'not altogether deficient in his humanities, I see. I will try him further.--Canst thou aught of husbandry, young gentleman?'

'Troth, sir, not I,' answered Mordaunt; 'I have been trained to plough upon the sea, and to reap upon the crag.'

'Plough the sea!' said Triptolemus; 'that's a furrow requires small harrowing; and for your harvest on the crag, I suppose you mean these *scouries*,* or whatever you call them. It is a sort of ingathering which the Ranzelman † should stop by the law; nothing more likely to break an honest man's bones. I profess I cannot see the pleasure men propose by dangling in a rope's-end betwixt earth and heaven. In my case, I had as lief the other end of the rope were fastened to the gibbet; I should be sure of not falling, at least.'

'Now, I would only advise you to try it,' replied Mordaunt. 'Trust me, the world has few grander sensations than when one is perched in mid-air between a high-browed cliff and a roaring ocean, the rope by which you are sustained seeming scarce stronger than a silken thread, and the stone on which you have one foot steadied, affording such a breadth as the kittywake might rest upon - to feel and know all this, with the full confidence that your own agility of limb and strength of head can bring you as safe off as if you had the wing of the gosshawk this is indeed being almost independent of the earth you tread on!'

Triptolemus stared at this enthusiastic description of an amusement which had so few charms for him; and his sister, looking at the glancing eye and elevated bearing of the young adventurer, answered by ejaculating, 'My certie, lad, but ye are a brave chield!'

'A brave chield?' returned Yellowley,—'I say a brave goose, to be flichtering and fleeing in the wind when he might abide upon *terra firma;* but come, here's a goose that is more to the purpose, when once it is well boiled. Get us trenchers and salt, Baby - but in truth it will prove salt enough - a tasty morsel it is; but I think the Zetlanders be the only folk in the world that think of running such risks to catch geese, and then boiling them when they have done.'

'To be sure,' replied his sister (it was the only word they had agreed in that day), 'it would be an unco thing to bid ony gudewife in Angus or a' the Mearns boil a goose, while there was sic things as spits in the world. — But wha's this neist?' she added, looking towards the entrance with great indignation. 'My certie, open doors, and dogs come in— and wha opened the door to him?'

'I did, to be sure,' replied Mordaunt; 'you would not have a poor devil stand beating your deaf door-cheeks in weather like this?--Here goes something, though, to help the fire,' he added, drawing out the sliding bar of oak with which the door had been secured, and throwing it on the hearth, whence it was snatched by Dame Baby in great wrath, she exclaiming at the same time,

'It's sea borne timber, as there's little else here, and he dings it about as if it were a fir-clog!--And who be you, an it please you?' she added, turning to the stranger,—'a very hallanshaker loon, as ever crossed my twa een!'

"I am a yagger, if it like your ladyship,' replied the uninvited guest, a stout, vulgar little man, who had indeed the humble appearance of a pedlar, called *yagger* in these islands—'never travelled in a waur day, or was more willing to get to harbourage.—Heaven be praised for fire and house-room!'

So saying, he drew a stool to the fire, and sat down without further ceremony. Dame Baby stared 'wild as grey gosshawk,' and was meditating how to express her indignation in something warmer than words, for which the boiling pot seemed to offer a convenient hint, when an old half-starved serving-woman—the Tronda already mentioned—the sharer of Barbara's domestic cares, who had been as yet in some remote corner of the mansion, now hobbled into the room, and

* [*Scouries,* young seagulls.] † Note E. The Ranzelman.

broke out into exclamations which indicated some new cause of alarm.

'O, master!' and 'O, mistress!' were the only sounds she could for some time articulate, and then followed them up with, 'The best in the house—the best in the house—set a' on the board, and a' will be little eneuch—There is auld Norna of Fitful Head, the most fearful woman in all the isles!'

'Where can she have been wandering?' said Mordaunt, not without some apparent sympathy with the surprise, if not with the alarm, of the old domestic; 'but it is needless to ask—the worse the weather, the more likely is she to be a traveller.'

'What new tramper is this?' echoed the distracted Baby, whom the quick succession of guests had driven well-nigh crazy with vexation. 'I'll soon settle her wandering, I sall warrant, if my brother has but the soul of a man in him, or if there be a pair of jougs at Scalloway.'

'The iron was never forged on stithy that would hald her,' said the old maid-servant. 'She comes—she comes God's sake speak her fair and canny, or we will have a ravelled hasp on the yarn-windles!'

As she spoke, a woman, tall enough almost to touch the top of the door with her cap, stepped into the room, signing the cross as she entered, and pronouncing, with a solemn voice, 'The blessing of God and Saint Ronald* on the open door, and their broad malison and mine upon close-handed churls!'

'And wha are ye, that are sae bauld wi' your blessing and banning in other folk's houses? What kind of country is this, that folk cannot sit quiet for an hour, and serve Heaven, and keep their bit gear thegither, without gangrel men and women coming thigging and sorning ane after another, like a string of wild-geese?'

This speech the understanding reader will easily saddle on Mistress Baby, and what effects it might have produced on the last stranger can only be matter of conjecture; for the old servant and Mordaunt applied themselves at once to the party addressed, in order to deprecate her resentment; the former speaking to her some words of Norse, in a tone of intercession, and Mordaunt saying in English, 'They are strangers, Norna, and know not your name or qualities; they are unacquainted, too, with the ways of this country, and therefore we must hold them excused for their lack of hospitality.'

'I lack no hospitality, young man,' said Triptolemus, '*miseris succurrere disco*—the goose that was destined to roost in the chimney till Michaelmas is boiling in the pot for you; but if we had twenty geese, I see we are like to find mouths to eat them every feather—this must be amended.'

'What must be amended, sordid slave?' said the stranger Norna, turning at once upon him with an emphasis that made him start—'What must be amended? Bring hither, if thou wilt, thy new-fangled coulters, spades, and harrows, alter the implements of our fathers from the ploughshare to the mouse-trap; but know thou art in the land that was won of old by the flaxen-haired Kempions of the North, and leave us their hospitality at least, to show we come of what was once noble and generous. I say to you, beware—while Norna looks forth at the measureless waters, from the crest of Fitful Head, something is yet left that resembles power of defence. If the men of Thule have ceased to be champions, and to spread the banquet for the raven, the women have not forgotten the arts that lifted them of yore into queens and prophetesses.'

The woman who pronounced this singular tirade was as striking in appearance as extravagantly lofty in her pretensions and in her language. She might well have represented on the stage, so far as features, voice, and stature were concerned, the Bonduca or Boadicea of the Britons, or the sage Velleda, Aurinia, or any other fated Pythoness, who ever led to battle a tribe of the ancient Goths. Her features were high and well formed, and would have been handsome, but for the ravages of time and the effects of exposure to the severe weather of her country. Age, and perhaps sorrow, had quenched, in some degree, the fire of a dark blue eye, whose hue almost approached to black, and had sprinkled snow on such parts of her tresses as had escaped from under her cap, and were dishevelled by the rigour of the storm. Her upper garment, which dropped with water, was of a coarse, dark-coloured stuff, called wadmaal,† then much used in the Zetland islands, as also in Iceland and Norway. But as she threw this cloak back from her shoulders, a short jacket, of dark-blue velvet, stamped with figures, became visible, and the vest, which corresponded to it, was of a crimson colour, and embroidered with tarnished silver. Her girdle was plated with silver ornaments, cut into the shape of planetary signs—her blue apron was embroidered with similar devices, and covered a petticoat of crimson cloth. Strong, thick, enduring shoes, of the undressed leather of the country, were tied with straps like those of the Roman buskins over her scarlet stockings. She wore in her belt an ambiguous-looking weapon, which might pass for a sacrificing knife or dagger, as the imagination of the spectator chose to assign to the wearer the character of a priestess or of a sorceress. In her hand she held a staff, squared on all sides, and engraved with Runic characters and figures, forming one of those portable and perpetual calendars which were used among the ancient natives of Scandinavia, and which, to a superstitious eye, might have passed for a divining rod.

Such were the appearance, features, and attire of Norna of the Fitful Head, upon whom many of the inhabitants of the island looked with observance, many with fear, and almost all with a sort of veneration. Less pregnant circumstances of suspicion would, in any other part of Scotland, have exposed her to the investigation of those cruel inquisitors, who were then often invested with the delegated authority of the Privy Council, for the purpose of persecuting, torturing, and finally consigning to the flames, those who were accused of witchcraft or sorcery. But superstitions of this nature pass through two stages ere they become entirely obsolete. Those

* Note F, Saint Ronald.

† [Homespun woollen cloth, or frieze.]

supposed to be possessed of supernatural powers are venerated in the earlier stages of society. As religion and knowledge increase, they are first held in hatred and horror, and are finally regarded as impostors. Scotland was in the second state—the fear of witchcraft was great, and the hatred against those suspected of it intense. Zetland was as yet a little world by itself, where, among the lower and ruder classes, so much of the ancient northern superstition remained, as cherished the original veneration for those affecting supernatural knowledge, and power over the elements, which made a constituent part of the ancient Scandinavian creed. At least if the natives of Thule admitted that one class of magicians performed their feats by their alliance with Satan, they devoutly believed that others dealt with spirits of a different and less odious class—the ancient dwarfs, called in Zetland Trows, or Drows, the modern fairies, and so forth.

Among those who were supposed to be in league with disembodied spirits, this Norna, descended from, and representative of, a family which had long pretended to such gifts, was so eminent, that the name assigned to her, which signifies one of those fatal sisters who weave the web of human fate, had been conferred in honour of her supernatural powers. The name by which she had been actually christened was carefully concealed by herself and her parents; for to its discovery they superstitiously annexed some fatal consequences. In those times, the doubt only occurred whether her supposed powers were acquired by lawful means. In our days, it would have been questioned whether she was an impostor, or whether her imagination was so deeply impressed with the mysteries of her supposed art, that she might be in some degree a believer in her own pretensions to supernatural knowledge. Certain it is, that she performed her part with such undoubting confidence, and such striking dignity of look and action, and evinced, at the same time, such strength of language and energy of purpose, that it would have been difficult for the greatest sceptic to have doubted the reality of her enthusiasm, though he might smile at the pretensions to which it gave rise.

CHAPTER VI

——If, by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
Tempest.

THE storm had somewhat relaxed its rigour just before the entrance of Norna, otherwise she must have found it impossible to travel during the extremity of its fury. But she had hardly added herself so unexpectedly to the party whom chance had assembled at the dwelling of Triptolemus Yellowley, when the tempest suddenly resumed its former vehemence, and raged around the building with a fury which made the inmates insensible to anything except the risk that the old mansion was about to fall above their heads.

Mistress Baby gave vent to her fears in loud exclamations of 'The Lord guide us—this is surely the last day—what kind of a country of guizards and gyre-carlines is this!—and you, ye fool carle,' she added, turning on her brother (for all her passions had a touch of acidity in them), 'to quit the bonnie Mearns land to come here, where there is nothing but sturdy beggars and gaberlunzies within the house, and Heaven's anger on the outside of it!'

'I tell you, sister Baby,' answered the insulted agriculturist, 'that all shall be reformed and amended—excepting,' he added, betwixt his teeth, 'the scaulding humours of an ill-natured jaud, that can add bitterness to the very storm.'

The old domestic and the pedlar meanwhile exhausted themselves in entreaties to Norna, of which, as they were couched in the Norse language, the master of the house understood nothing.

She listened to them with a haughty and unmoved air, and replied at length aloud, and in English—'I will not. What if this house be shivered into ruins before morning—where would the world want in the crazed projector, and the niggardly pinch-commons, by which it is inhabited? They will needs come to reform Zetland customs, let them try how they like a Zetland storm. You that would not perish, quit this house!'

The pedlar seized on his little knapsack, and began hastily to brace it on his back; the old maid-servant cast her cloak about her shoulders, and both seemed in the act of leaving the house as fast as they could.

Triptolemus Yellowley, somewhat commoved by these appearances, asked Mordaunt, with a voice which faltered with apprehension, whether he thought there was any, that is, so very much danger.

'I cannot tell,' answered the youth; 'I have scarce ever seen such a storm. Norna can tell us better than any one when it will abate; for no one in these islands can judge of the weather like her.'

'And is that all thou thinkest Norna can do?' said the sibyl; 'thou shalt know her powers are not bounded within such narrow space. Hear me, Mordaunt, youth of a foreign land, but of a friendly heart. Dost thou quit this doomed mansion with those who now prepare to leave it?'

'I do not—I will not, Norna,' replied Mordaunt; 'I know not your motive for desiring me to remove, and I will not leave, upon these dark threats, the house in which I have been kindly received in such a tempest as this. If the owners are unaccustomed to our practice of unlimited hospitality, I am the more obliged to them that they have relaxed their usages, and opened their doors in my behalf.'

'He is a brave lad,' said Mistress Baby, whose superstitious feelings had been daunted by the threats of the supposed sorceress, and who, amidst her eager, narrow, and repining disposition, had, like all who possess marked character, some sparks of higher feeling, which made her sympathize with generous sentiments, though she thought it too expensive to entertain them at her own cost—'He is a brave lad,' she again repeated, 'and worthy of ten geese, if I had them to boil for him, or roast either. I'll warrant him a gentleman's son, and no churl's blood.'

'Hear me, young Mordaunt,' said Norna 'and depart from this house. Fate has high views on you—you shall not remain in this hovel to be crushed amid its worthless ruins with the relics of its more worthless inhabitants whose life is as little to the world as the vegetation of the house-leek, which now grows on their thatch, and which shall soon be crushed amongst their maugled limbs.'

'I—I—I will go forth,' said Yellowley, who despite of his bearing himself scholarly and wisely, was beginning to be terrified for the issue of the adventure; for the house was old, and the walls rocked formidably to the blast.

'To what purpose?' said his sister. 'I trust the prince of the power of the air has not yet such like power over those that are made in God's image, that a good house should fall about our heads, because a randy quean' (here she darted a fierce glance at the Pythoness) 'should boast us with her glamour, as if we were sae mony dogs to crouch at her bidding!'

'I was only wanting,' said Triptolemus, ashamed of his motion, 'to look at the bear-braird, which must be sair laid wi' this tempest; but if this honest woman like to bide wi' us, I think it were best to let us a' sit doun canny thegither, till it's working weather again.'

'Honest woman!' echoed Baby 'Foul warlock thief! Aroint ye, ye limmer!' she added, addressing Norna directly; 'out of an honest house, or, shame fa' me, but I'll take the bittle* to you!'

Norna cast on her a look of supreme contempt; then, stepping to the window, seemed engaged in deep contemplation of the heavens, while the old maid-servant Tronda, drawing close to her mistress, implored, for the sake of all that was dear to man or woman, 'Do not provoke Norna of Fitful Head! You have no sic woman on the mainland of Scotland she can ride on one of these clouds as easily as man ever rode on a sheltie.'

'I shall live to see her ride on the reek of a fat tar-barrel,' said Mistress Baby; 'and that will be a fit pacing palfrey for her.'

Again Norna regarded the enraged Mistress Baby Yellowley with a look of that unutterable scorn which her haughty features could so well express, and, moving to the window which looked to the north-west, from which quarter the gale seemed at present to blow, she stood for some time with her arms crossed, looking out upon the leaden-coloured sky, obscured as it was by the thick drift, which, coming on in successive gusts of tempest, left ever and anon sad and dreary intervals of expectation betwixt the dying and the reviving blast.

Norna regarded this war of the elements as one to whom their strife was familiar; yet the stern serenity of her features had in it a cast of awe, and at the same time of authority, as the cabalist may be supposed to look upon the spirit he has evoked, and which, though he knows how to subject him to his spell, bears still an aspect appalling to flesh and blood. The attendants stood by in different attitudes, expressive of their various feelings. Mordaunt, though not indifferent to the risk in which they stood, was more curious than alarmed. He had heard of Norna's alleged power over the elements, and now expected an opportunity of judging for himself of its reality. Triptolemus Yellowley was confounded at what seemed to be far beyond the bounds of his philosophy; and, if the truth must be spoken, the worthy agriculturist was greatly more frightened than inquisitive. His sister was not in the least curious on the subject; but it was difficult to say whether anger or fear predominated in her sharp eyes and thin compressed lips. The pedlar and old Tronda, confident that the house would never fall while the redoubted Norna was beneath its roof, held themselves ready for a start the instant she should take her departure.

Having looked on the sky for some time in a fixed attitude, and with the most profound silence, Norna at once, yet with a slow and elevated gesture, extended her staff of black oak towards that part of the heavens from which the blast came hardest, and in the midst of its fury chanted a Norwegian invocation, still preserved in the island of Unst, under the name of the Song of the Reimkennar, though some call it the Song of the Tempest. The following is a free translation, it being impossible to render literally many of the elliptical and metaphorical terms of expression, peculiar to the ancient Northern poetry:

1.

Stern eagle of the far north-west,
Thou that bearest in thy grasp the thunderbolt,
Thou whose rushing pinions stir ocean to madness,
Thou the destroyer of herds, thou the scatterer of navies,
Thou the breaker down of towers,
Amidst the scream of thy rage,
Amidst the rushing of thy onward wings,
Though thy scream be loud as the cry of a perishing nation,
Though the rushing of thy wings be like the roaring of ten thousand waves,
Yet hear, in thine ire and thy haste,
Hear thou the voice of the Reimkennar.

2.

Thou hast met the pine trees of Drontheim,
Their dark-green heads lie prostrate beside their uprooted stems,
Thou hast met the rider of the ocean,
The tall, the strong bark of the fearless rover,
And she has struck to thee the topsail
That she had not veil'd to a royal armada;
Thou hast met the tower that bears its crest among the clouds,
The battled massive tower of the Jarl of former days,
And the cope stone of the turret
Is lying upon its hospitable hearth;
But thou too shalt stoop, proud compeller of clouds,
When thou hearest the voice of the Reimkennar.

3.

There are verses that can stop the stag in the forest,
Ay, and when the dark-colour'd dog is opening on his track;
There are verses can make the wild hawk pause on the wing,
Like the falcon that wears the hood and the jesses,
And who knows the shrill whistle of the fowler.
Thou who canst mock at the scream of the drowning mariner,
And the crash of the ravaged forest,
And the groan of the overwhelmed crowds,
When the church hath fallen in the moment of prayer,
There are sounds which thou also must list,
When they are chaunted by the voice of the Reimkennar.

* The beetle with which the Scottish housewives used to perform the office of the modern mangle, by beating newly-washed linen on a smooth stone for the purpose called the beetling-stone.

Enough of woe hast thou wrought on the ocean,
The widows wring their hands on the beach;
Enough of woe hast thou wrought on the land,
The husbandman folds his arms in despair;
Cease thou the waving of thy pinions,
Let the ocean repose in her dark strength;
Cease thou the flashing of thine eye,
Let the thunderbolt sleep in the armoury of Odin;
Be thou still at my bidding, viewless racer of the north-western heaven,
Sleep thou at the voice of Norna of Fitful-head!

We have said that Mordaunt was naturally fond of romantic poetry and romantic situation; it is not therefore surprising that he listened with interest to the wild address thus uttered to the wildest wind of the compass, in a tone of such dauntless enthusiasm. But though he had heard so much of the Runic rhyme and of the northern spell, in the country where he had so long dwelt, he was not on this occasion so credulous as to believe that the tempest, which had raged so lately, and which was now beginning to decline, was moved before the charm of Norna. Certain it was, that the blast was passing away, and the apprehended danger was already over; but it was not improbable that this issue had been for some time foreseen by the Pythoness, through signs of the weather imperceptible to those who had not dwelt long in the country, or had not bestowed on the meteorological phenomena the attention of a strict and close observer. Of Norna's experience he had no doubt; and that went a far way to explain what seemed supernatural in her demeanour. Yet still the noble countenance, half shaded by dishevelled tresses, the air of majesty with which, in a tone of menace as well as of command, she addressed the viewless spirit of the tempest, gave him a strong inclination to believe in the ascendancy of the occult arts over the powers of nature; for, if a woman ever moved on earth to whom such authority over the laws of the universe could belong, Norna of Fitful-head, judging from bearing, figure, and face, was born to that high destiny.

The rest of the company were less slow in receiving conviction. To Tronda and the yagger none was necessary; they had long believed in the full extent of Norna's authority over the elements. But Triptolemus and his sister gazed at each other with wondering and alarmed looks, especially when the wind began perceptibly to decline, as was remarkably visible during the pauses which Norna made betwixt the strophes of her incantation. A long silence followed the last verse, until Norna resumed her chant, but with a changed and more soothing modulation of voice and tune.—

Eagle of the far north-western waters,
Thou hast heard the voice of the Reimkennar,
Thou hast closed thy wide sails at her bidding,
And folded them in peace by thy side.
My blessing be on thy retiring path;
When thou stoopest from thy place on high,
Soft be thy slumbers in the caverns of the unknown ocean,
Rest till destiny shall again awaken thee;
Eagle of the north-west, thou hast heard the voice of the Reimkennar!

'A pretty sang that would be to keep the corn from shaking in har'st,' whispered the agriculturist to his sister; 'we must speak her fair, Baby—she will maybe part with the secret for a hundred punds Scots.'

'An hundred fules' heads!' replied Baby—'bid her five merks of ready siller. I never knew a witch in my life but she was as poor as Job.'

Norna turned towards them as if she had guessed their thoughts; it may be that she did so. She passed them with a look of the most sovereign contempt, and, walking to the table on which the preparations for Mistress Barbara's frugal meal were already disposed, she filled a small wooden quaigh from an earthen pitcher which contained bland, a subacid liquor made out of the serous part of the milk. She broke a single morsel from a barley-cake, and, having eaten and drunk, turned towards the churlish hosts. 'I give ye no thanks,' she said, 'for my refreshment, for you bid me not welcome to it; and thanks bestowed on a churl are like the dew of heaven on the cliffs of Foulah, where it finds nought that can be refreshed by its influences. I give ye no thanks,' she said again, but drawing from her pocket a leathern purse that seemed large and heavy, she added, 'I pay you with what you will value more than the gratitude of the whole inhabitants of Hialtland. Say not that Norna of Fitful Head hath eaten of your bread and drunk of your cup, and left you sorrowing for the charge to which she hath put your house.' So saying, she laid on the table a small piece of antique gold coin, bearing the rude and half defaced effigies of some ancient northern king.

Triptolemus and his sister exclaimed against this liberality with vehemence; the first, protesting that he kept no public, and the other exclaiming, 'Is the carline mad? Heard ye ever of ony of the gentle house of Clinkscale that gave meat for siller?'

'Or for love either?' muttered her brother; 'haud to that, titty.'

'What are ye whittie-whattieing about, ye gowk?' said his gentle sister, who suspected the tenor of his murmurs; 'gie the lady back her bonnie die there, and be blithe to be sae rid on't—it will be a sclate-stane the morn, if not something worse.'

The honest factor lifted the money to return it, yet could not help being struck when he saw the impression, and his hand trembled as he handed it to his sister.

'Yes,' said the Pythoness again, as if she read the thoughts of the astonished pair, 'you have seen that coin before—beware how you use it! It thrives not with the sordid or the mean-souled—it was won with honourable danger, and must be expended with honourable liberality. The treasure which lies under a cold hearth will one day, like the hidden talent, bear witness against its avaricious possessors.'

This last obscure intima... ...ious sentiments, ...ing, which the alarm and the won... ...expensive to entertain her brother to the ...—'He is a brave lad,' she stammer... out some... worthy of ten geese, if I Norna to tarry for him, or roast either. I'll to take share ...gentleman's son, and no churl's it; but lookin... ing the limited con...

the phrase, and hoped she would take some part of the 'snack, which would be on the table ere a man could loose a plough '

'I eat not here —I sleep not here,' replied Norna—'nay, I relieve you not only of my own presence, but I will dismiss your unwelcome guests Mordaunt she added addressing young Mertoun, 'the dark hit is past, and your father looks for you this evening

'Do you return in that direction ' said Mordaunt 'I will but eat a morsel and give you my aid, good mother, on the road The brooks must be cut and the journey perilous '

'Our ways lie different answered the sibyl, 'and Norna needs not mortal arm to aid her on the way I am summoned far to the east by those who know well how to smooth my passage — For thee, Bryce Snailsfoot she continued, speaking to the pedlar speed thee on to Sumburgh the Roost will afford thee a gallant harvest, and worthy the gathering in Much goodly ware will ere now be seeking a new owner, and the careful skipper will sleep still enough in the deep haaf, and care not that bale and kist are dashing against the shores '

'Na na, good mother, answered Snailsfoot, 'I desire no man's life for my private advantage and am just grateful for the blessing of Providence on my sma' trade But doubtless one man's loss is another man's gain and as these storms destroy a thing on land it is but fair they suld send us something by sea So, taking the freedom like yourself to borrow a lump of barley bread and a drink of blud I will bid good day and thank you to this good gentleman and lady and e'en be on my way to Yarlshof, as you advise

'Ay,' replied the Pythoness 'where the slaughter is the eagles will be gathered and where the wreck is on the shore the pagger is as busy to pinch spoil as the shark to gnaw upon the dead

This rebuke if it was intended for such seemed above the comprehension of the travelling merchant, who, bent upon gain, assumed the knapsack and ellwand, and asked Mordaunt, with the familiarity permitted in a wild country, whether he would not take company along with him?

'I wait to eat some dinner with Mistress Baby,' and Mistress Baby, answered the will set forward in half an hour ' my hand,'

'Then I'll just take my permitted a said the pedlar Accordingly, money, helped benediction, and, without, aby's covetous eyes, himself to what, in Mistress of the bread, took a appeared to be two thirds, cized on a hand long pull at the jug of led sillocks, which the ful of the small fish ... loud, and left domestic was ... the room ... placing on the ... tress Baby ... without further ceremony his hunger. ... certie,' said the despoiled Mis vagrants cabalist may be man's drouth * and had shut he has evoked, and † the laws against looking how to subject him to his so that ... — aspect appalling to flesh and b' she sears thirst, ... itrian trader

* The beetle with which the Scottish poor a drink to perform the office of the modern mangle ... newly-washed linen on a smooth stone ... called the beetling-stone. ... of

to Mordaunt, 'more especially in such judgment-weather But I see the goose is dished, poor thing '

This she spoke in a tone of affection for the smoked goose, which, though it had long been an inanimate inhabitant of her chimney, was far more interesting to Mistress Baby in that state, than when it screamed amongst the clouds Mordaunt laughed and took his seat, then turned to look for Norna but she had glided from the apartment during the discussion with the pedlar

'I am glad she is gone, the dour carline,' said Mistress Baby, 'though she has left that piece of gowd to be an everlasting shame to us '

'Whisht mistress, for the love of Heaven!' said Tronda Dronsdaughter, 'wha kens where she may be this moment? we are no sure but she may hear us though we canna see her '

Mistress Baby cast a startled eye around, and, instantly recovering herself, for she was naturally courageous as well as violent, said, 'I bade her avoid before, and I bid her avoid again, whether she sees me or hears me or whether she's ower the cairn and awa — And you, ye silly sumph,' she said to poor Yellowley what do ye stand glowering there for? You a Saunt Andrews student! you studied Latin and Humanities, ye ca' them and daunted wi' the clavers of an auld randie wife! Say your best college grace, man and witch or nae witch we'll eat our dinner and defy her And for the value of the wicked piece, it shall ne'er be said I pouched her siller I will gie it to some poor body—that is, I will set it upon it at my death, and keep it for a purse penny till that day comes, and that's no using it in the way of spending-siller Say your best college grace, man, and let us eat and drink in the meantime '

Ye had muckle better say an *oramus* to Saint Ronald, and fling a sixpence ower your left shouther, mistress,' said Tronda ‡

'That ye may pick it up yourself,' said the implacable Mistress Baby, 'it will be lang or ye win the worth of it ony other gate down, Tiptolemus, and mind na I could wish daft wife '

'Daft ... wise ' ... a wind fa' at ... voice of flesh and blood like ourselves —and hear you about the hearth stane—I cannot but think — —

'If ye cannot but think ' said Mistress Baby, ... hand your ... cry shortly, 'at least ye ... tongue!'

The agriculturist made no reply, but sat down to their scanty meal, and did the honours of it with unusual heartiness to his new guest, the first of the intruders who had arrived, and the last who left them The sillocks speedily disappeared, and the smoked goose, with its ap-

† Lest upon it to leave it in my will a mode of bestowing charity to which many are partial as well as the good dame in the text

‡ Although the Zetlanders were early reconciled to the Reformed faith, some ancient practices of Catholic superstition survived long among them In very stormy weather a fisher would vow an *oramus* to Saint Ronald, and acquitted himself of the obligation by throwing a small piece of money in at the window of a ruinous chapel.

pendages, took wing so effectually, that Tronda, to whom the polishing of the bones had been destined, found the task accomplished, or nearly so, to her hand. After dinner, the host produced his bottle of brandy; but Mordaunt, whose general habits were as sober almost as those of his father, laid a very light tax upon this unusual exertion of hospitality.

During the meal, they learned so much of young Mordaunt, and of his father, that even Baby resisted his wish to reassume his wet garments, and pressed him (at the risk of an expensive supper being added to the charges of the day) to tarry with them till the next morning. But what Norna had said excited the youth's wish to reach home; nor, however far the hospitality of Stourburgh was extended in his behalf, did the house present any particular temptations to induce him to remain there longer. He therefore accepted the loan of the factor's clothes, promising to return them and send for his own; and took a civil leave of his host and Mistress Baby, the latter of whom, however affected by the loss of her goose, could not but think the cost well bestowed (since it was to be expended at all) upon so handsome and cheerful a youth.

CHAPTER XII

She does no work by halves, yon raving ocean;
Engulfing those she strangles, her wild womb
Affords the mariners whom she hath dealt on
Their death at once, and sepulchre.

OLD PLAY.

THERE were ten 'lang Scots miles' betwixt Stourburgh and Yarlshof; and though the pedestrian did not number all the impediments which crossed Tam o' Shanter's path—for in a country where there are neither hedges nor stone enclosures, there can be neither slaps nor stiles,—yet the number and nature of the 'mosses and waters' which he had to cross in his peregrination, were fully sufficient to balance the account, and to render his journey as toilsome and dangerous as Tam o' Shanter's celebrated [illegible] from Ayr. Neither witch nor warlock crossed Mordaunt's path, however. The length of the day [illegible] considerable, and arrived safe at Yarlshof by eleven o'clock at night. All was still and dark round the mansion, and it was not till he had whistled twice or thrice beneath Swertha's window, that she replied to the signal.

At the first sound, Swertha fell into an agreeable dream of a young whale-fisher, who some forty years since used to make such a signal beneath the window of her hut; at the second, she waked to remember that Johnnie Fea had slept sound among the frozen waves of Greenland for this many a year, and that she was Mr. Mertoun's governante at Yarlshof; at the third, she arose and opened the window.

'Whae is that,' she demanded, 'at sic an hour of the night?'

'It is I,' said the youth.

'And what for comena ye in? The door's on the latch, and there is a gathering peat on the kitchen fire, and a spunk beside it—ye can light your ain candle.'

'All well,' replied Mordaunt; 'but I want to know how my father is.'

'Just in his ordinary, gude gentleman—asking for you, Maister Mordaunt; ye are ower far and ower late in your walks, young gentleman.'

'Then the dark hour has passed, Swertha?'

'In troth has it, Maister Mordaunt,' answered the governante; 'and your father is very reasonably good-natured for him, poor gentleman. I spoke to him twice yesterday without his speaking first; and the first time he answered me as civil as you could do; and the neist time he bade me no plague him; and then, thought I, three times were aye canny, so I spake to him again for luck's sake, and he called me a chattering old devil; but it was quite and clean in a civil sort of way.'

'Enough, enough, Swertha,' answered Mordaunt; 'and now get up and find me something to eat, for I have dined but poorly.'

'Then you have been at the new folks at Stourburgh; for there is no another house in a' the isles but they wad hae gien ye the best share of the best they had. Saw ye aught of Norna of the Fitful Head? She went to Stourburgh this morning, and returned to the town at night.'

'Returned!—then she is here? How could she travel three leagues and better in so short a time?'

'Wha kens how she travels?' replied Swertha; 'but I heard her tell the Ranzelman wi' my ain lugs, that she intended that day to have gone on to Burgh-Westra, to speak with Minna Troil; but she had seen that at Stourburgh (indeed, she said at Harfra, for she never calls it by the other name of Stourburgh) that sent her back to our town. But gang your ways round, and ye shall have plenty of supper—ours is nae toom pantry, and still less a locked one, though my master be a stranger, and no just that right in the upper rigging, as the Ranzelman says.'

Mordaunt walked round to the kitchen accordingly, where Swertha's care speedily accommodated him with a plentiful, though coarse meal, which indemnified him for the scanty hospitality he had experienced at Stourburgh.

In the morning, some feelings of fatigue made young Mertoun later than usual in leaving his bed; so that, contrary to what was the ordinary case, he found his father in the apartment where they eat, and which served them indeed for every common purpose, save that of a bedchamber or of a kitchen. The son greeted the father in mute re[illegible]ence, and waited until he should address [illegible] yesterday, [illegible]Mordaunt?' said his father, but he had often observ[illegible] that week [illegible] never seemed to notice how time passed [illegible] the period when he was affected with [illegible] vapours. He assented to what [illegible] Mertoun had said.

[illegible] were at Burgh-Westra, as I think?' [illegible]is father.

[illegible] replied Mordaunt.

'Yes [illegible] Mertoun was then silent for some [illegible]

time, and paced the floor in deep silence, with an air of sombre reflection, which seemed as if he were about to relapse into his moody fit. Suddenly turning to his son, however, he observed, in the tone of a query, 'Magnus Troil has two daughters—they must be now young women they are thought handsome, of course?'

'Very generally, sir,' answered Mordaunt, rather surprised to hear his father making any inquiries about the individuals of a sex which he usually thought so light of, a surprise which was much increased by the next question, put as abruptly as the former.

'Which think you the handsomest?'

'I, sir?' replied his son, with some wonder, but without embarrassment—'I really am no judge—I never considered which was absolutely the handsomest. They are both very pretty young women.'

'You evade my question, Mordaunt; perhaps I have some very particular reason for my wish to be acquainted with your taste in this matter. I am not used to waste words for no purpose. I ask you again, which of Magnus Troil's daughters you think most handsome?'

'Really, sir,' replied Mordaunt,—'but you only jest in asking me such a question.'

'Young man,' replied Mertoun, with eyes which began to roll and sparkle with impatience, 'I *never* jest. I desire an answer to my question.'

'Then, upon my word, sir,' said Mordaunt, 'it is not in my power to form a judgment betwixt the young ladies—they are both very pretty, but by no means like each other. Minna is dark-haired, and more grave than her sister—more serious, but by no means either dull or sullen.'

'Um!' replied his father; 'you have been gravely brought up, and this Minna, I suppose, pleases you most?'

'No, sir, really I can give her no preference over her sister Brenda, who is as gay as a lamb in a spring morning—less tall than her sister, but so well formed, and so excellent a dancer'— —

'That she is best qualified to amuse the young man who has a dull home and a moody father?' said Mr. Mertoun.

Nothing in his father's conduct had ever surprised Mordaunt so much as the obstinacy with which he seemed to pursue a theme so foreign to his general train of thought and habits of conversation; but he contented himself with answering once more, 'that both the young ladies were highly admirable, but he had never thought of them with the wish to do either injustice, by ranking her lower than her sister—that others would probably decide between them, as they happened to be partial to a grave or a gay disposition, or to a dark or fair complexion; but that he could see no excellent quality in the one that was not balanced by something equally captivating in the other.'

It is possible that even the coolness with which Mordaunt made this explanation might not have satisfied his father concerning the subject of investigation; but Swertha at this moment entered with breakfast, and the youth, notwithstanding his late supper, engaged in that meal with an air which satisfied Mertoun that he held it matter of more grave importance than the conversation which they had just had, and that he had nothing more to say upon the subject explanatory of the answers he had already given. He shaded his brow with his hand, and looked long fixedly upon the young man as he was busied with his morning meal. There was neither abstraction nor a sense of being observed in any of his motions; all was frank, natural, and open.

'He is fancy-free,' muttered Mertoun to himself—'so young, so lively, and so imaginative, so handsome and so attractive in face and person, strange, that at his age, and in his circumstances, he should have avoided the meshes which catch all the world beside!'

When the breakfast was over, the elder Mertoun, instead of proposing, as usual, that his son, who awaited his commands, should betake himself to one branch or other of his studies, assumed his hat and staff, and desired that Mordaunt should accompany him to the top of the cliff, called Sumburgh Head, and from thence look out upon the state of the ocean, agitated as it must still be by the tempest of the preceding day. Mordaunt was at the age when young men willingly exchange sedentary pursuits for active exercise, and started up with alacrity to comply with his father's request; and in the course of a few minutes they were mounting together the hill, which, ascending from the land side in a long, steep, and grassy slope, sinks at once from the summit to the sea in an abrupt and tremendous precipice.

The day was delightful; there was just so much motion in the air as to disturb the little fleecy clouds which were scattered on the horizon, and, by floating them occasionally over the sun, to chequer the landscape with that variety of light and shade which often gives to a bare and unenclosed scene, for the time at least, a species of charm approaching to the varieties of a cultivated and planted country. A thousand flitting hues of light and shade played over the expanse of wild moor, rocks, and inlets, which, as they climbed higher and higher, spread in wide and wider circuit around them.

The elder Mertoun often paused and looked around upon the scene, and for some time his son supposed that he halted to enjoy its beauties; but, as they ascended still higher up the hill, he remarked his shortened breath and his uncertain and toilsome step, and became assured, with some feelings of alarm, that his father's strength was, for the moment, exhausted, and that he found the ascent more toilsome and fatiguing than usual. To draw close to his side, and offer him in silence the assistance of his arm, was an act of youthful deference to advanced age, as well as of filial reverence; and Mertoun seemed at first so to receive it, for he took in silence the advantage of the aid thus afforded him.

It was but for two or three minutes, however, that the father availed himself of his son's support. They had not ascended fifty yards farther, ere he pushed Mordaunt suddenly, if not rudely, from him; and, as if stung into exertion by some sudden recollection, began to mount the acclivity with such long and quick steps, that Mordaunt, in his turn, was obliged to exert himself to keep pace with him. He knew his father's peculiarity of disposition; he

was aware, from many slight circumstances, that he loved him not, even while he took much pains with his education, and while he seemed to be the sole object of his care upon earth. But the conviction had never been more strongly or more powerfully forced upon him than by the hasty churlishness with which Mertoun rejected from a son that assistance which most elderly men are willing to receive from youths, with whom they are but slightly connected, as a tribute which it is alike graceful to yield and pleasing to receive. Mertoun, however, did not seem to perceive the effect which his unkindness had produced upon his son's feelings. He paused upon a sort of level terrace which they had now attained, and addressed his son with an indifferent tone, which seemed in some degree affected.

'Since you have so few inducements, Mordaunt, to remain in these wild islands, I suppose you sometimes wish to look a little more abroad into the world?'

'By my word, sir,' replied Mordaunt, 'I cannot say I ever have thought on such a subject.'

'And why not, young man?' demanded his father; 'it were but natural, I think, at your age. At your age, the fair and varied breadth of Britain could not gratify me, much less the compass of a sea-girdled peat-moss.'

'I have never thought of leaving Zetland, sir,' replied the son. 'I am happy here, and have friends. You yourself, sir, would miss me, unless indeed'——

'Why, thou wouldst not persuade me,' said his father, somewhat hastily, 'that you stay here, or desire to stay here, for the love of me?'

'Why should I not, sir?' answered Mordaunt mildly; 'it is my duty, and I hope I have hitherto performed it.'

'O ay,' repeated Mertoun, in the same tone—'your duty—your duty. So it is the duty of the dog to follow the groom that feeds him.'

'And does he not do so, sir?' said Mordaunt.

'Ay,' said his father, turning his head aside; 'but he fawns only on those who caress him.'

'I hope, sir,' replied Mordaunt, 'I have not been found deficient?'

'Say no more on't—say no more on't,' said Mertoun abruptly; 'we have both done enough by each other—we must soon part—Let that be our comfort—if our separation should require comfort.'

'I shall be ready to obey your wishes,' said Mordaunt, not altogether displeased at what promised him an opportunity of looking further abroad into the world. 'I presume it will be your pleasure that I commence my travels with a season at the whale-fishing?'

'Whale-fishing!' replied Mertoun; 'that were a mode indeed of seeing the world! but thou speakest but as thou hast learned. Enough of this for the present. Tell me where you had shelter from the storm yesterday.'

'At Stourburgh, the house of the new factor from Scotland.'

'A pedantic, fantastic, visionary schemer,' said Mertoun; 'and whom saw you there?'

'His sister, sir,' replied Mordaunt, 'and old Norna of the Fitful Head.'

'What! the mistress of the potent spell,' answered Mertoun, with a sneer—'she who can change the wind by pulling her curch on one side, as King Erick used to do by turning his cap? The dame journeys far from home—how fares she? Does she get rich by selling favourable winds to those who are port-bound?'*

'I really do not know, sir,' said Mordaunt, whom certain recollections prevented from freely entering into his father's humour.

'You think the matter too serious to be jested with, or perhaps esteem her merchandise too light to be cared after,' continued Mertoun, in the same sarcastic tone, which was the nearest approach he ever made to cheerfulness; 'but consider it more deeply. Everything in the universe is bought and sold, and why not wind, if the merchant can find purchasers? The earth is rented, from its surface down to its most central mines; the fire, and the means of feeding it, are currently bought and sold;—the wretches that sweep the boisterous ocean with their nets, pay ransom for the privilege of being drowned in it. What title has the air to be exempted from the universal course of traffic? All above the earth, under the earth, and around the earth, has its price, its sellers, and its purchasers. In many countries the priests will sell you a portion of heaven—in all countries, men are willing to buy, in exchange for health, wealth, and peace of conscience, a full allowance of hell. Why should not Norna pursue her traffic?'

'Nay, I know no reason against it,' replied Mordaunt; 'only I wish she would part with the commodity in smaller quantities. Yesterday she was a wholesale dealer—whoever treated with her had too great a pennyworth.'

'It is even so,' said the father, pausing on the verge of the wild promontory which they had attained, where the huge precipice sinks abruptly down on the wide and tempestuous ocean, 'and the effects are still visible.'

The face of that lofty cape is composed of the soft and crumbling stone called sand-flag, which gradually becomes decomposed, and yields to the action of the atmosphere, and is split into large masses, that hang loose upon the verge of the precipice, and, detached from it by the fury of the tempests, often descends with great fury into the vexed abyss which lashes the foot of the rock. Numbers of these huge fragments lie strewed beneath the rocks from which they have fallen, and amongst these the tide foams and rages with a fury peculiar to these latitudes.

At the period when Mertoun and his son looked from the verge of the precipice, the wide sea still heaved and swelled with the agitation of yesterday's storm, which had been far too violent in its effects on the ocean to subside speedily. The tide therefore poured on the headland with a fury deafening to the ear and dizzying to the eye, threatening instant destruction to whatever might be at the time involved in its current. The sight of Nature, in her magnificence, or in her beauty, or in her terrors, has at all times an overpowering interest, which even habit cannot greatly weaken; and both father and son sat themselves down on the cliff

* Note E. Sale of Winds.

to look out upon that unbounded war of waters, which rolled in their wrath to the foot of the precipice.

At once Mordaunt, whose eyes were sharper, and probably his attention more alert than that of his father, started up, and exclaimed, 'God in heaven! there is a vessel in the Roost.'

Mertoun looked to the north-westward, and an object was visible amid the rolling tide. 'She shows no sail,' he observed; and immediately added, after looking at the object through his spy-glass, 'She is dismasted, and lies a sheer hulk upon the water.'

'And is drifting on the Sumburgh Head,' exclaimed Mordaunt, struck with horror, 'without the slightest means of weathering the cape!'

'She makes no effort,' answered his father; 'she is probably deserted by her crew.'

'And in such a day as yesterday,' replied Mordaunt, 'when no open boat could live were she manned with the best men ever handled an oar—all must have perished.'

'It is most probable,' said his father, with stern composure; 'and one day, sooner or later, all must have perished. What signifies whether the Fowler, whom nothing escapes, caught them up at one swoop from yonder shattered deck, or whether he clutched them individually, as chance gave them to his grasp? What signifies it? the deck, the battlefield, are scarce more fatal to us than our table and our bed; and we are saved from the one, merely to drag out a heartless and wearisome existence, till we perish at the other. Would the hour were come—that hour which reason would teach us to wish for, were it not that nature has implanted the fear of it so strongly within us! You wonder at such a reflection, because life is yet new to you. Ere you have attained my age, it will be the familiar companion of your thoughts.'

'Surely, sir,' replied Mordaunt, 'such distaste to life is not the necessary consequence of advanced age?'

'To all who have sense to estimate that which it is really worth,' said Mertoun. 'Those who, like Magnus Troil, possess so much of the animal impulse about them, as to derive pleasure from sensual gratification, may perhaps, like the animals, feel pleasure in mere existence.'

Mordaunt liked neither the doctrine nor the example. He thought a man who discharged his duties towards others as well as the good old Udaller, had a better right to have the sun shine fair on his setting, than that which he might derive from mere insensibility. But he let the subject drop; for to dispute with his father had always the effect of irritating him; and again he adverted to the condition of the wreck.

The hulk, for it was little better, was now in the very midst of the current, and drifting at a great rate towards the foot of the precipice, upon whose verge they were placed. Yet it was a long while ere they had a distinct view of the object which they had at first seen as a black speck amongst the waters, and then, at a nearer distance, like a whale, which now scarce shows its back-fin above the waves, now throws to view its large black side. Now, however, they could more distinctly observe the appearance of the ship, for the huge swelling waves which bore her forward to the shore, heaved her alternately high upon the surface, and then plunged her into the trough or furrow of the sea. She seemed a vessel of two or three hundred tons, fitted up for defence, for they could see her port-holes. She had been dismasted probably in the gale of the preceding day, and lay water-logged on the waves, a prey to their violence. It appeared certain that the crew, finding themselves unable either to direct the vessel's course, or to relieve her by pumping, had taken to their boats, and left her to her fate. All apprehensions were therefore unnecessary, so far as the immediate loss of human lives was concerned; and yet it was not without a feeling of breathless awe that Mordaunt and his father beheld the vessel—that rare masterpiece by which human genius aspires to surmount the waves, and contend with the winds—upon the point of falling a prey to them.

Onward she came, the large black hulk seeming larger at every fathom's length. She came nearer until she bestrode the summit of one tremendous billow, which rolled on with her unbroken, till the wave and its burden were precipitated against the rock, and then the triumph of the elements over the work of human hands was at once completed. One wave, we have said, made the wrecked vessel completely manifest in her whole bulk, as it raised her and bore her onward against the face of the precipice. But when that wave receded from the foot of the rock, the ship had ceased to exist; and the retiring billow only bore back a quantity of beams, planks, casks, and similar objects, which swept out to the offing, to be brought in again by the next wave, and again precipitated upon the face of the rock.

It was at this moment that Mordaunt conceived he saw a man floating on a plank or water-cask, which, drifting away from the main current, seemed about to go ashore upon a small spot of sand, where the water was shallow, and the waves broke more smoothly. To see the danger, and to exclaim, 'He lives, and may yet be saved!' was the first impulse of the fearless Mordaunt. The next was, after one rapid glance at the front of the cliff, to precipitate himself—such seemed the rapidity of his movement—from the verge, and to commence, by means of slight fissures, projections, and crevices in the rock, a descent, which, to a spectator, appeared little else than an act of absolute insanity.

'Stop, I command you, rash boy!' said his father; 'the attempt is death. Stop, and take the safer path to the left.' But Mordaunt was already completely engaged in his perilous enterprise.

'Why should I prevent him?' said his father, checking his anxiety with the stern and unfeeling philosophy whose principles he had adopted. 'Should he die now, full of generous and high feeling, eager in the cause of humanity, happy in the exertion of his own conscious activity and youthful strength—should he die now, will he not escape misanthropy, and remorse, and age, and the consciousness of decaying powers, both of body and mind?—I will not look upon it, however—I will not—I cannot behold this young light so suddenly quenched.'

He turned from the precipice accordingly, and hastening to the left for more than a quarter of a

mile, he proceeded towards a *riva*, or cleft in the rock, containing a path, called Erick's Steps, neither safe, indeed, nor easy, but the only one by which the inhabitants of Yarlshof were wont, for any purpose, to seek access to the foot of the precipice.

But long ere Mertoun had reached even the upper end of the pass, his adventurous and active son had accomplished his more desperate enterprise. He had been in vain turned aside from the direct line of descent, by the intervention of difficulties which he had not seen from above – his route became only more circuitous, but could not be interrupted. More than once, large fragments to which he was about to entrust his weight gave way before him, and thundered down into the tormented ocean; and in one or two instances, such detached pieces of rock rushed after him, as if to bear him headlong in their course. A courageous heart, a steady eye, a tenacious hand, and a firm foot, carried him through his desperate attempt; and in the space of seven minutes he stood at the bottom of the cliff, from the verge of which he had achieved his perilous descent.

The place which he now occupied was the small projecting spot of stones, sand, and gravel, that extended a little way into the sea, which on the right hand lashed the very bottom of the precipice, and on the left, was scarce divided from it by a small wave-worn portion of beach that extended as far as the foot of the rent in the rocks called Erick's Steps, by which Mordaunt's father proposed to descend.

When the vessel split and went to pieces, all was swallowed up in the ocean, which had, after the first shock, been seen to float upon the waves, excepting only a few pieces of wreck, casks, chests, and the like, which a strong eddy, formed by the reflux of the waves, had landed, or at least grounded, upon the shallow where Mordaunt now stood. Amongst these, his eager eye discovered the object that had at first engaged his attention, and which now, seen at nigher distance, proved to be in truth a man, and in a most precarious state. His arms were still wrapped with a close and convulsive grasp round the plank to which he had clung in the moment of the shock, but sense and power of motion were fled: and, from the situation in which the plank lay, partly grounded upon the beach, partly floating in the sea, there was every chance that it might be again washed off shore, in which case death was inevitable. Just as he had made himself aware of these circumstances, Mordaunt beheld a huge wave advancing, and hastened to interpose his aid ere it burst, aware that the reflux might probably sweep away the sufferer.

He rushed into the surf, and fastened on the body with the same tenacity, though under a different impulse, with that wherewith the hound seizes his prey. The strength of the retiring wave proved even stronger than he had expected, and it was not without a struggle for his own life, ... that of the stranger, that Mordaunt ... t off with the receding billow, ... swimmer, the strength ... e dashed him against ... to sea. He stood ... other such billow ... e small slip of

from Scotland.'
'A pedantic, fanta...
said Mertoun; 'and whom...
'His sister, sir,' replied M...
Norna of the Fitful Head.'
'What' the mistress of the pot...

dry sand, both the body of the stranger and the plank to which he continued firmly attached. But how to save and to recall the means of ebbing life and strength, and how to remove into a place of greater safety the sufferer, who was incapable of giving any assistance towards his own preservation, were questions which Mordaunt asked himself eagerly, but in vain.

He looked to the summit of the cliff on which he had left his father, and shouted to him for his assistance, but his eye could not distinguish his form, and his voice was only answered by the scream of the sea birds. He gazed again on the sufferer. A dress richly laced, according to the fashion of the times, fine linen, and rings upon his fingers, evinced he was a man of superior rank; and his features showed youth and comeliness, notwithstanding they were pallid and disfigured. He still breathed, but so feebly that his respiration was almost imperceptible, and life seemed to keep such a slight hold of his frame, that there was every reason to fear it would become altogether extinguished, unless it were speedily reinforced. To loosen the handkerchief from his neck, to raise him with his face towards the breeze, to support him with his arms, was all that Mordaunt could do for his assistance, whilst he anxiously looked for some one who might lend his aid in dragging the unfortunate to a more safe situation.

At this moment he beheld a man advancing slowly and cautiously along the beach. He was in hopes, at first, it was his father, but instantly recollected that he had not had time to come round by the circuitous descent, to which he must necessarily have recourse, and besides, he saw that the man who approached him was shorter in stature.

As he came nearer, Mordaunt was at no loss to recognise the pedlar whom the day before he had met with at Harfra, and who was known to him before upon many occasions. He shouted as loud as he could, 'Bryce, hollo! Bryce, come hither!' But the merchant, intent upon picking up some of the spoils of the wreck, and upon dragging them out of reach of the tide, paid for some time little attention to his shouts.

When he did at length approach Mordaunt, it was not to lend him his aid, but to remonstrate with him on his rashness in undertaking the charitable office. 'Are you mad?' said he; 'you that have lived sae lang in Zetland, to risk the saving of a drowning man? Wot ye not, if you bring him to life again, he will be sure to do you some capital injury?[1]—Come, Master Mordaunt, bear a hand to what's mair to the purpose. Help me to get ane or twa of these kists ashore before onybody else comes, and we shall share, like good Christians, what God sends us, and be thankful.'

Mordaunt was indeed no stranger to this inhuman superstition, current at a former period among the lower orders of the Zetlanders, and the more generally adopted, perhaps, that it served as an apology for refusing assistance to the unfortunate victims of shipwreck, while they made plunder of their goods. At any rate, the opinion, that to save a drowning man was to run

[1] **Note H. Reluctance to save drowning men.**

the risk of future injury from him, formed a strange contradiction in the character of these islanders; who, hospitable, generous, and disinterested on all other occasions, were sometimes, nevertheless, induced by this superstition to refuse their aid in those mortal emergencies which were so common upon their rocky and stormy coasts. We are happy to add, that the exhortation and example of the proprietors have eradicated even the traces of this inhuman belief, of which there might be some observed within the memory of those now alive. It is strange that the minds of men should have ever been hardened towards those involved in a distress to which they themselves were so constantly exposed; but perhaps the frequent sight and consciousness of such danger tends to blunt the feelings to its consequences, whether affecting ourselves or others.

Bryce was remarkably tenacious of this ancient belief; the more so, perhaps, that the mounting of his pack depended less upon the warehouses of Lerwick or Kirkwall, than on the consequences of such a north-western gale as that of the day preceding; for which (being a man who, in his own way, professed great devotion) he seldom failed to express his grateful thanks to Heaven. It was indeed said of him, that, if he had spent the same time in assisting the wrecked seamen, which he had employed in rifling their bales and boxes, he would have saved many lives, and lost much linen. He paid no sort of attention to the repeated entreaties of Mordaunt, although he was now upon the same slip of sand with him. It was well known to Bryce as a place on which the eddy was likely to land such spoils as the ocean disgorged; and to improve the favourable moment, he occupied himself exclusively in securing and appropriating whatever seemed most portable, and of greatest value. At length Mordaunt saw the honest pedlar fix his views upon a strong sea-chest, framed of some Indian wood, well secured by brass plates, and seeming to be of a foreign construction. The stout lock resisted all Bryce's efforts to open it, until, with great composure, he plucked from his pocket a very neat hammer and chisel, and began forcing the hinges.

Incensed beyond patience at his assurance, Mordaunt caught up a wooden stretcher which lay near him, and, laying his charge softly on the sand, approached Bryce with a menacing gesture, and exclaimed, 'You cold-blooded, inhuman rascal! either get up instantly and lend me your assistance to recover this man and bear him out of danger from the surf, or I will not only beat you to a mummy on the spot, but inform Magnus Troil of your thievery, that he may have you flogged till your bones are bare, and then banish you from the Mainland!'

The lid of the chest had just sprung open as this rough address saluted Bryce's ears, and the inside presented a tempting view of wearing apparel for sea and land; shirts, plain and with lace ruffles, a silver compass, a silver-hilted sword, and other valuable articles, which the pedlar well knew to be such as stir in the trade. He was half-disposed to start up, draw the sword, which was a cut-and-thrust, and 'darraign battaile,' as Spenser says, rather than quit his prize, or brook interruption. Being, though short, a stout, square-made personage, and not much past the prime of life, having besides the better weapon, he might have given Mordaunt more trouble than his benevolent knight-errantry deserved.

Already, as with vehemence he repeated his injunctions that Bryce should forbear his plunder, and come to the assistance of the dying man, the pedlar retorted with a voice of defiance, 'Dinna swear, sir; dinna swear, sir—I will endure no swearing in my presence; and if you lay a finger on me, that am taking the lawful spoil of the Egyptians, I will give ye a lesson ye shall remember from this day to Yule!'

Mordaunt would speedily have put the pedlar's courage to the test, but a voice behind him suddenly said, 'Forbear!' It was the voice of Norna of the Fitful Head, who, during the heat of their altercation, had approached them unobserved. 'Forbear!' she repeated; 'and, Bryce, do thou render Mordaunt the assistance he requires. It shall avail thee more, and it is I who say the word, than all that you could earn to-day besides.'

'It is se'enteen hundred linen,' said the pedlar, giving a tweak to one of the shirts, in that knowing manner with which matrons and judges ascertain the texture of the loom;—'it's se'enteen hundred linen, and as strong as an it were dowlas. Nevertheless, mother, your bidding is to be done; and I would have done Master Mordaunt's bidding too,' he added, relaxing from his note of defiance into the deferential whining tone with which he cajoled his customers, 'if he hadna made use of profane oaths which made my very flesh grue, and caused me, in some sort, to forget myself.' He then took a flask from his pocket, and approached the shipwrecked man. 'It's the best of brandy,' he said; 'and if that doesna cure him, I ken naught that will.' So saying, he took a preliminary gulp himself, as if to show the quality of the liquor, and was about to put it to the man's mouth, when, suddenly withholding his hand, he looked at Norna—'You insure me against all risk of evil from him, if I am to render him my help?—Ye ken yoursel' what folk say, mother.'

For all other answer, Norna took the bottle from the pedlar's hand, and began to chafe the temples and throat of the shipwrecked man; directing Mordaunt how to hold his head, so as to afford him the means of disgorging the sea-water which he had swallowed during his immersion.

The pedlar looked on inactive for a moment, and then said, 'To be sure there is not the same risk in helping him, now he is out of the water, and lying high and dry on the beach; and, to be sure, the principal danger is to those who first touch him; and, to be sure, it is a world's pity to see how these rings are pinching the puir creature's swalled fingers—they make his hand as blue as a partan's back before boiling.' So saying, he seized one of the man's cold hands, which had just, by a tremulous motion, indicated the return of life, and began his charitable work of removing the rings, which seemed to be of some value.

'As you love your life, forbear,' said Norna

sternly, 'or I will lay that on you which shall spoil your travels through the isles.'

'Now, for mercy's sake, mother, say nae mair about it,' said the pedlar, 'and I'll e'en do your pleasure in your ain way! I *did* feel a rheumatize in my back-spauld yestreen; and it wad be a sair thing for the like of me to be debarred my quiet walk round the country in the way of trade—making the honest penny, and helping myself with what Providence sends on our coasts.'

'Peace, then,' said the woman 'Peace, as thou wouldst not rue it; and take this man on thy broad shoulders. His life is of value, and you will be rewarded.'

'I had muckle need,' said the pedlar, pensively looking at the lidless chest, and the other matters which strewed the sand; 'for he has comed between me and as muckle spreicherie as wad hae made a man of me for the rest of my life; and now it maun lie here till the next tide sweep it a' doun the Roost, after them that aught it yesterday morning.'

'Fear not,' said Norna, 'it will come to man's use. See, there come carrion-crows, of scent as keen as thine own.'

She spoke truly; for several of the people from the hamlet of Yarlshof were now hastening along the beach, to have their share in the spoil. The pedlar beheld them approach with a deep groan. 'Ay, ay,' he said, 'the folk of Yarlshof, they will make clean wark; they are ken'd for that far and wide; they winna leave the value of a rotten ratlin; and what's waur, there isna ane o' them has mense or sense eneuch to give thanks for the mercies when they have gotten them. There is the auld Ranzelman, Neil Ronaldson, that canna walk a mile to hear the minister, but he will hirple ten if he hears of a ship embayed.'

Norna, however, seemed to possess over him so complete an ascendency, that he no longer hesitated to take the man, who now gave strong symptoms of reviving existence, upon his shoulders; and, assisted by Mordaunt, trudged along the sea-beach with his burden, without further remonstrance. Ere he was borne off, the stranger pointed to the chest, and attempted to mutter something, to which Norna replied, 'Enough. It shall be secured.'

Advancing towards the passage called Erick's Steps, by which they were to ascend the cliffs, they met the people from Yarlshof hastening in the opposite direction. Man and woman, as they passed, reverently made room for Norna, and saluted her—not without an expression of fear upon some of their faces. She passed them a few paces, and then, turning back, called aloud to the Ranzelman, who (though the practice was more common than legal) was attending the rest of the hamlet upon this plundering expedition. 'Neil Ronaldson,' she said, 'mark my words. There stands yonder a chest, from which the lid has been just prized off. Look it be brought down to your own house at Yarlshof, just as it now is. Beware of moving or touching the slightest article. He were better in his grave, that so much as looks at the contents. I speak not for nought, nor in aught will I be disobeyed.'

'Your pleasure shall be done, mother,' said Ronaldson. 'I warrant we will not break bulk, since sic is your bidding.'

Far behind the rest of the villagers followed an old woman, talking to herself, and cursing her own decrepitude, which kept her the last of the party, yet pressing forward with all her might to get her share of the spoil.

When they met her, Mordaunt was astonished to recognise his father's old housekeeper. 'How now,' he said, 'Swertha, what make you so far from home?'

'Just e'en daikering out to look after my auld master and your honour,' replied Swertha, who felt like a criminal caught in the manner; for on more occasions than one, Mr. Mertoun had intimated his high disapprobation of such excursions as she was at present engaged in.

But Mordaunt was too much engaged with his own thoughts to take much notice of her delinquency. 'Have you seen my father?' he said.

'And that I have,' replied Swertha—'The gude gentleman was ganging to hirsel himsel' doun Erick's Steps, whilk would have been the ending of him, that is in no way a cragsman. Sae I e'en gat him wiled away hame—and I was just seeking you that you may gang after him to the Hall-house, for, to my thought, he is far frae weel.'

'My father unwell?' said Mordaunt, remembering the faintness he had exhibited at the commencement of that morning's walk.

'Far frae weel—far frae weel,' groaned out Swertha, with a piteous shake of the head—'white o' the gills—white o' the gills—and him to think of coming down the riva!'

'Return home, Mordaunt,' said Norna, who was listening to what had passed. 'I will see all that is necessary done for this man's relief, and you will find him at the Ranzelman's, when you list to inquire. You cannot help him more than you already have done.'

Mordaunt felt this was true, and, commanding Swertha to follow him instantly, betook himself to the path homeward.

Swertha hobbled reluctantly after her young master in the same direction, until she lost sight of him on his entering the cleft of the rock; then instantly turned about, muttering to herself, 'Haste home, in good sooth! haste home, and lose the best chance of getting a new rokelay and owerlay that I have had these ten years! By my certie, na. It's seldom sic rich godsends come on our shore—no since the Jenny and James came ashore in King Charlie's time.'

So saying, she mended her pace as well as she could, and, a willing mind making amends for frail limbs, posted on with wonderful despatch to put in for her share of the spoil. She soon reached the beach, where the Ranzelman, stuffing his own pouches all the while, was exhorting the rest to part things fair, and be neighbourly, and to give to the auld and helpless a share of what was going, which, he charitably remarked, would bring a blessing on the shore, and send them 'mair wrecks ere winter.'*

* Note I. 'Mair wrecks ere winter.'

CHAPTER VIII.

He was a lovely youth, I guess;
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he.
And when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay,
Upon the tropic sea.

WORDSWORTH.

THE light foot of Mordaunt Mertoun was not long of bearing him to Yarlshof. He entered the house hastily, for what he himself had observed that morning corresponded in some degree with the ideas which Swertha's tale was calculated to excite. He found his father, however, in the inner apartment, reposing himself after his fatigue; and his first question satisfied him that the good dame had practised a little imposition to get rid of them both.

'Where is this dying man, whom you have so wisely ventured your own neck to relieve?' said the elder Mertoun to the younger.

'Norna, sir,' replied Mordaunt, 'has taken him under her charge; she understands such matters.'

'And is quack as well as witch?' said the elder Mertoun. 'With all my heart it is a trouble saved. But I hasted home, on Swertha's hint, to look out for lint and bandages; for her speech was of broken bones.'

Mordaunt kept silence, well knowing his father would not persevere in his inquiries upon such a matter, and not willing either to prejudice the old governante, or to excite his father to one of those excesses of passion into which he was apt to burst, when, contrary to his wont, he thought proper to correct the conduct of his domestic.

It was late in the day ere old Swertha returned from her expedition, heartily fatigued, and bearing with her a bundle of some bulk, containing, it would seem, her share of the spoil. Mordaunt instantly sought her out, to charge her with the deceits she had practised on both his father and himself; but the accused matron lacked not her reply.

'By her troth,' she said, 'she thought it was time to bid Mr. Mertoun gang hame and get bandages, when she had seen, with her ain twa een, Mordaunt ganging down the cliff like a wild-cat—it was to be thought broken bones would be the end, and lucky if bandages wad do any good;—and, by her troth, she might weel tell Mordaunt his father was poorly, and him looking sae white in the gills (whilk, she wad die upon it, was the very word she used), and it was a thing that couldna be denied by man at this very moment.'

'But, Swertha,' said Mordaunt, as soon as her clamorous defence gave him time to speak in reply, 'how came you, that should have been busy with your housewifery and your spinning, to be out this morning at Erick's Steps, in order to take all this unnecessary care of my father and me?—And what is in that bundle, Swertha? for I fear, Swertha, you have been transgressing the law, and have been out upon the wrecking system.'

'Fair fa' your sonsy face, and the blessing of Saint Ronald upon you!' said Swertha, in a tone betwixt coaxing and jesting: 'would you keep a puir body frae mending hersel', and sae muckle gear lying on the loose sand for the lifting?—Hout, Maister Mordaunt, a ship ashore is a sight to wile the minister out of his very pu'pit in the middle of his preaching, muckle mair a puir auld ignorant wife frae her rock and her tow. And little did I get for my day's wark—just some rags o' cambric things, and a bit or twa of coorse claith, and sic like—the strong and the hearty get a'thing in this warld.'

'Yes, Swertha,' replied Mertoun, 'and that is rather hard, as you must have your share of punishment in this world and the next, for robbing the poor mariners.'

'Hout, callant, wha wad punish an auld wife like me for a wheen duds?—Folk speak muckle black ill of Earl Patrick;† but he was a freend to the shore, and made wise laws against onybody helping vessels that were like to gang on the breakers.*—And the mariners, I have heard Bryce Yagger say, lose their right frae the time keel touches sand; and, moreover, they are dead and gane, poor souls—dead and gane, and care little about warld's wealth now—nay, nae mair than the great yarls and sea-kings, in the Norse days, did about the treasures that they buried in the tombs and sepulchres auld langsyne. Did I ever tell you the sang, Maister Mordaunt, how Olaf Tryguasson garr'd hide five gold crouns in the same grave with him?'

'No, Swertha,' said Mordaunt, who took pleasure in tormenting the cunning old plunderer—'you never told me that; but I tell you, that the stranger whom Norna has taken down to the town will be well enough to-morrow to ask where you have hidden the goods that you have stolen from the wreck.'

'But wha will tell him a word about it, hinnie?' said Swertha, looking slyly up in her young master's face—'The mair by token, since I maun tell ye that I have a bonnie remnant of silk amang the lave, that will make a dainty waistcoat to yoursel', the first merry-making ye gang to.'

Mordaunt could no longer forbear laughing at the cunning with which the old dame proposed to bribe off his evidence by imparting a portion of her plunder; and, desiring her to get ready what provision she had made for dinner, he returned to his father, whom he found still sitting in the same place, and nearly in the same posture, in which he had left him.

When their hasty and frugal meal was finished, Mordaunt announced to his father his purpose of going down to the town, or hamlet, to look after the shipwrecked sailor.

The elder Mertoun assented with a nod.

'He must be ill accommodated there, sir,' added his son—a hint which only produced another nod of assent. 'He seemed, from his appearance,' pursued Mordaunt, 'to be of very good rank—and admitting these poor people do their best to receive him in his present weak state, yet'——

'I know what you would say,' said his father, interrupting him; 'we, you think, ought to do something towards assisting him. Go to him,:

* This was literally true. † Note J. Earl Patrick.

then—if he lacks money, let him name the sum, and he shall have it; but, for lodging the stranger here, and holding intercourse with him, I neither can nor will do so. I have retired to this farthest extremity of the British Isles, to avoid new friends and new faces, and none such shall intrude on me either their happiness or their misery. When you have known the world half a score of years longer, your early friends will have given you reason to remember them, and to avoid new ones for the rest of your life. Go then—why do you stop?—rid the country of the man—let me see no one about me but those vulgar countenances, the extent and character of whose petty knavery I know, and can submit to, as to an evil too trifling to cause irritation.' He then threw his purse to his son, and signed to him to depart with all speed.

Mordaunt was not long before he reached the village. In the dark abode of Neil Ronaldson, the Ranzelman, he found the stranger seated by the peat-fire, upon the very chest which had excited the cupidity of the devout Bryce Snailsfoot, the pedlar. The Ranzelman himself was absent, dividing, with all due impartiality, the spoils of the wrecked vessel amongst the natives of the community; listening to and redressing their complaints of inequality; and (if the matter in hand had not been, from beginning to end, utterly unjust and indefensible) discharging the part of a wise and prudent magistrate, in all the details. For at this time, and probably until a much later period, the lower orders of the islanders entertained an opinion, common to barbarians also in the same situation, that whatever was cast on their shores became their indisputable property.

Margery Bimbister, the worthy spouse of the Ranzelman, was in the charge of the house, and introduced Mordaunt to her guest, saying, with no great ceremony, 'This is the young tacksman—You will maybe tell him your name, though you will not tell it to us. If it had not been for his four quarters, it's but little you would have said to onybody, sae lang as life lasted.'

The stranger arose, and shook Mordaunt by the hand, observing, he understood that he had been the means of saving his life and chest. 'The rest of the property,' he said, 'is, I see, walking the plank; for they are as busy as the devil in a gale of wind.'

'And what was the use of your seamanship, then,' said Margery, 'that you couldna keep off the Sumburgh Head? It would have been lang ere Sumburgh Head had come to you.'

'Leave us for a moment, good Margery Bimbister,' said Mordaunt; 'I wish to have some private conversation with this gentleman.'

'Gentleman!' said Margery, with an emphasis; 'not but the man is well enough to look at,' she added, again surveying him, 'but I doubt if there is muckle of the gentleman about him.'

Mordaunt looked at the stranger, and was of a different opinion. He was rather above the middle size, and formed handsomely as well as strongly. Mordaunt's intercourse with society was not extensive; but he thought his new acquaintance, to a bold, sunburnt, handsome countenance, which seemed to have faced various climates, added the frank and open manners of a sailor. He answered cheerfully the inquiries which Mordaunt made after his health; and maintained that one night's rest would relieve him from all the effects of the disaster he had sustained. But he spoke with bitterness of the avarice and curiosity of the Ranzelman and his spouse.

'That chattering old woman,' said the stranger, 'has persecuted me the whole day for the name of the ship. I think she might be contented with the share she has had of it. I was the principal owner of the vessel that was lost yonder, and they have left me nothing but my wearing apparel. Is there no magistrate, or justice of the peace, in this wild country, that would lend a hand to help one when he is among the breakers?'

Mordaunt mentioned Magnus Troil, the principal proprietor, as well as the Fowd,* or provincial judge, of the district, as the person from whom he was most likely to obtain redress; and regretted that his own youth, and his father's situation as a retired stranger, should put it out of their power to afford him the protection he required.

'Nay, for your part, you have done enough,' said the sailor; 'but if I had five out of the forty brave fellows that are fishes' food by this time, the devil a man would I ask to do me the right that I could do for myself!'

'Forty hands!' said Mordaunt; 'you were well manned for the size of the ship.'

'Not so well as we needed to be. We mounted ten guns, besides chasers; but our cruise on the Main had thinned us of men, and lumbered us up with goods. Six of our guns were in ballast.—Hands! if I had had enough of hands, we would never have miscarried so infernally. The people were knocked up with working the pumps, and so took to their boats, and left me with the vessel, to sink or swim. But the dogs had their pay, and I can afford to pardon them—The boats swamped in the current—all were lost—and here am I.'

'You had come north about then, from the West Indies?' said Mordaunt.

'Ay, ay; the vessel was the Good Hope of Bristol, a letter of marque. She had fine luck down on the Spanish Main, both with commerce and privateering, but the luck's ended with her now. My name is Clement Cleveland, captain, and part owner, as I said before—I am a Bristol man born—my father was well known on the Tollsell—old Clem Cleveland of the College Green.'

Mordaunt had no right to inquire further, and yet it seemed to him as if his own mind was but half satisfied. There was an affectation of bluntness, a sort of defiance, in the manner of the stranger, for which circumstances afforded no occasion. Captain Cleveland had suffered injustice from the islanders, but from Mordaunt he had only received kindness and protection; yet he seemed as if he involved all the neighbourhood in the wrongs he complained of. Mordaunt looked down and was silent, doubting whether it would be better to take his leave, or to proceed further in his offers of assistance.

* Note K. Fowd.

Cleveland seemed to guess at his thoughts, for he immediately added, in a conciliating manner, —'I am a plain man, Master Mertoun, for that I understand is your name; and I am a ruined man to boot, and that does not mend one's good manners. But you have done a kind and friendly part by me, and it may be I think as much of it as if I thanked you more. And so, before I leave this place, I'll give you my fowling-piece; she will put a hundred swan-shot through a Dutchman's cap at eighty paces—she will carry ball too—I have hit a wild bull within a hundred and fifty yards—but I have two pieces that are as good, or better, so you may keep this for my sake.'

'That would be to take my share of the wreck,' answered Mordaunt, laughing.

'No such matter,' said Cleveland, undoing a case which contained several guns and pistols,—'you see I have saved my private arm-chest, as well as my clothes—that the tall old woman in the dark rigging managed for me. And, between ourselves, it is worth all I have lost; for,' he added, lowering his voice, and looking round, 'when I speak of being ruined in the hearing of these land-sharks, I do not mean ruined stock and block. No, here is something will do more than shoot sea-fowl.' So saying, he pulled out a great ammunition-pouch marked *Swan-shot*, and showed Mordaunt, hastily, that it was full of Spanish pistoles and Portagues (as the broad Portugal pieces were then called). 'No, no,' he added, with a smile, 'I have ballast enough to trim the vessel again; and now, will you take the piece?'

'Since you are willing to give it me,' said Mordaunt, laughing, 'with all my heart. I was just going to ask you, in my father's name,' he added, showing his purse, 'whether you wanted any of that same ballast.'

'Thanks, but you see I am provided—take my old acquaintance, and may she serve you as well as she has served me; but you will never make so good a voyage with her. You can shoot, I suppose?'

'Tolerably well,' said Mordaunt, admiring the piece, which was a beautiful Spanish-barrel gun, inlaid with gold, small in the bore, and of unusual length, such as is chiefly used for shooting sea-fowl, and for ball practice.

'With slugs,' continued the donor, 'never gun shot closer; and with single ball, you may kill a seal two hundred yards at sea from the top of the highest peak of this iron-bound coast of yours. But I tell you again that the old rattler will never do you the service she has done me.'

'I shall not use her so dexterously, perhaps,' said Mordaunt.

'Umph!—perhaps not,' replied Cleveland; 'but that is not the question. What say you to shooting the man at the wheel, just as we run aboard of a Spaniard? So the Don was taken aback, and we laid him athwart the hawse, and carried her cutlass in hand; and worth the while she was—stout brigantine—El Santo Francisco—bound for Porto Bello, with gold and negroes. That little bit of lead was worth twenty thousand pistoles.'

'I have shot at no such game as yet,' said Mordaunt.

'Well, all in good time; we cannot weigh till the tide makes. But you are a tight, handsome, active young man. What is to ail you to take a trip after some of this stuff?' laying his hand on the bag of gold.

'My father talks of my travelling soon,' replied Mordaunt, who, born to hold men-of-warsmen in great respect, felt flattered by this invitation from one who appeared a thoroughbred seaman.

'I respect him for the thought,' said the captain; 'and I will visit him before I weigh anchor. I have a consort off these islands, and be cursed to her. She'll find me out somewhere, though she parted company in the bit of a squall, unless she is gone to Da y Jones too.—Well, she was better found than we, and not so deep loaded—she must have weathered it. We'll have a hammock slung for you aboard, and make a sailor and a man of you in the same trip.'

'I should like it well enough,' said Mordaunt, who eagerly longed to see more of the world than his lonely situation had hitherto permitted; 'but then my father must decide.'

'Your father? pooh!' said Captain Cleveland;—'but you are very right,' he added, checking himself; 'Gad, I have lived so long at sea, that I cannot think anybody has a right to think except the captain and the master. But you are very right. I will go up to the old gentleman this instant, and speak to him myself. He lives in that handsome modern-looking building, I suppose, that I see a quarter of a mile off?'

'In that old half-ruined house,' said Mordaunt, he does indeed live; but he will see no visitors.'

'Then you must drive the point yourself, for I can't stay in this latitude. Since your father is no magistrate, I must go to see this same Magnus—how call you him?—who is not justice of peace, but something else that will do the turn as well. These fellows have got two or three things that I must and will have back—let them keep the rest and be d—d to them. Will you give me a letter to him, just by way of commission?'

'It is scarce needful,' said Mordaunt. 'It is enough that you are shipwrecked, and need his help; but yet I may as well furnish you with a letter of introduction.'

'There,' said the sailor, producing a writing-case from his chest, 'are your writing-tools.—Meantime, since bulk has been broken, I will nail down the hatches, and make sure of the cargo.'

While Mordaunt, accordingly, was engaged in writing to Magnus Troil a letter, setting forth the circumstances in which Captain Cleveland had been thrown upon their coast, the captain, having first selected and laid aside some wearing apparel and necessaries enough to fill the knapsack, took in hand hammer and nails, employed himself in securing the lid of his sea-chest, by fastening it down in a workman-like manner, and then added the corroborating security of a cord, twisted and knotted with nautical dexterity.

'I leave this in your charge,' he said, 'all except this,' showing the bag of gold, 'and these,' pointing to a cutlass and pistols, 'which may prevent all further risk of my parting company with my Portagues.'

'You will find no occasion for weapons in this

country, Captain Cleveland,' replied Mordaunt; 'a child might travel with a purse of gold from Sumburgh Head to the Scaw of Unst, and no soul would injure him.'

'And that's pretty boldly said, young gentleman, considering what is going on without doors at this moment.'

'O,' replied Mordaunt, a little confused, 'what comes on land with the tide, they reckon their lawful property. One would think they had studied under Sir Arthegal, who pronounces—

> For equal right in equal things doth stand,
> And what the mighty sea hath once possess'd,
> And plucked quite from all possessors' hands,
> Or else by wrecks that wretches have distress'd,
> He may dispose, by his resistless might,
> As things at random left, to whom he list.' *

'I shall think the better of plays and ballads as long as I live, for these very words,' said Captain Cleveland; 'and yet I have loved them well enough in my day. But this is good doctrine, and more men than one may trim their sails to such a breeze. What the sea sends is ours, that's sure enough. However, in case that you good folks should think the land as well as the sea may present them with waifs and strays, I will make bold to take my cutlass and pistols. Will you cause my chest to be secured in your own house till you hear from me, and use your influence to procure me a guide to show me the way, and to carry my kit?'

'Will you go by sea or land?' said Mordaunt, in reply.

'By sea!' exclaimed Cleveland. 'What—in one of these cockleshells, and a cracked cockleshell, to boot? No, no—land, land, unless I knew my crew, my vessel, and my voyage.'

They parted accordingly, Captain Cleveland being supplied with a guide to conduct him to Burgh-Westra, and his chest being carefully removed to the mansion-house at Yarlshof.

CHAPTER IX.

> This is a gentle trader, and a prudent.
> He's no Autolycus, to blear your eye,
> With quips of worldly gauds and gamesomeness;
> But seasons all his glittering merchandise
> With wholesome doctrines suited to the use,
> As men sauce goose with sage and rosemary.
>
> OLD PLAY.

On the subsequent morning, Mordaunt, in answer to his father's inquiries, began to give him some account of the shipwrecked mariner whom he had rescued from the waves. But he had not proceeded far in recapitulating the particulars which Cleveland had communicated, when Mr. Mertoun's looks became disturbed; he arose hastily, and, after pacing twice or thrice across the room, he retired into the inner chamber to which he usually confined himself while under the influence of his mental malady. In the evening he reappeared, without any traces of his disorder, but it may be easily supposed that his son avoided recurring to the subject which had affected him.

Mordaunt Mertoun was thus left without assistance, to form at his leisure his own opinion respecting the new acquaintance which the sea had sent him; and, upon the whole, he was himself surprised to find the result less favourable to the stranger than he could well account for. There seemed to Mordaunt to be a sort of repelling influence about the man. True, he was a handsome man, of a frank and prepossessing manner, but there was an assumption of superiority about him which Mordaunt did not quite so much like. Although he was so keen a sportsman as to be delighted with his acquisition of the Spanish barrelled gun, and accordingly mounted and dismounted it with great interest, paying the utmost attention to the most minute parts about the lock and ornaments, yet he was, upon the whole, inclined to have some scruples about the mode in which he had acquired it.

'I should not have accepted it,' he thought; 'perhaps Captain Cleveland might give it me as a sort of payment for the trifling service I did him; and yet it would have been churlish to refuse it in the way it was offered. I wish he had looked more like a man whom one would have chosen to be obliged to.'

But a successful day's shooting reconciled him to his gun, and he became assured, like most young sportsmen in similar circumstances, that all other pieces were but pop-guns in comparison. But then, to be doomed to shoot gulls and seals when there were Frenchmen and Spaniards to be come at—when there were ships to be boarded, and steersmen to be marked off—seemed but a dull and contemptible destiny. His father had mentioned his leaving these islands, and no other mode of occupation occurred to his inexperience save that of the sea, with which he had been conversant from his infancy. His ambition had formerly aimed no higher than at sharing the fatigues and dangers of a Greenland fishing expedition: for it was in that scene that the Zetlanders laid most of their perilous adventures.
But war was again raging, the history of Sir
Francis Drake, Captain Morgan, and other bold
adventurers, an account of whose exploits he
had purchased from Bryce Snailsfoot, had made
much impression on his mind, and the offer of
Captain Cleveland to take him to sea frequently
recurred to him, although the pleasure of such
a project was somewhat damped by a doubt.
whether, in the long run, he. I am a Bristol
many objections to his prop known on the
Thus much he alreadCleveland of the College
ative, and might pro
that, since even kinght to inquire further, and
assumption of superiif his own mind was but
pleasure might contain was an affectation of
disagreeable ingredient ance, in the manner of
to those who sailed unc circumstances afforded
counting all risks, could Cleveland had suffered
be obtained, with whats, but from Mordaunt
would he embark in quness and protection;
strange adventures, in involved all the neigh-
himself to achieve suche complained of. Mor-
theme of many a tand was silent, doubting
Burgh-Westra—talbetter to take his leave, or
weep and Brenda shn his offers of assistance.
marvel! And this
labours and his de K. Fowd.
Magnus Troil had a

* [Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book iv. Canto vi.]

thoughts, and however they might traverse amid his day-dreams, it was the point where they finally settled.

There were times when Mordaunt thought of mentioning to his father the conversation he had held with Captain Cleveland, and the seaman's proposal to him; but the very short and general account which he had given of that person's history, upon the morning after his departure from the hamlet, had produced a sinister effect on Mr. Mertoun's mind, and discouraged him from speaking further on any subject connected with it. It would be time enough, he thought, to mention Captain Cleveland's proposal when his consort should arrive, and when he should repeat his offer in a more formal manner; and these he supposed events likely very soon to happen.

But days grew to weeks, and weeks were numbered into months, and he heard nothing from Cleveland; and only learned, by an occasional visit from Bryce Snailsfoot, that the captain was residing at Burgh-Westra as one of the family. Mordaunt was somewhat surprised at this, although the unlimited hospitality of the islands, which Magnus Troil, both from fortune and disposition, carried to the utmost extent, made it almost a matter of course that he should remain in the family until he disposed of himself otherwise. Still it seemed strange he had not gone to some of the northern isles to inquire after his consort; or that he did not rather choose to make Lerwick his residence, where fishing vessels often brought news from the coasts and ports of Scotland and Holland. Again, why did he not send for the chest he had deposited at Yarlshof? and still further, Mordaunt thought it would have been but polite if the stranger had sent him some sort of message in token of remembrance.

These subjects of reflection were connected with another still more unpleasant, and more difficult to account for. Until the arrival of this person, scarce a week had passed without bringing him some kind greeting or token of recollection from Burgh-Westra; and pretences were scarce ever wanting for maintaining a constant intercourse. Minna wanted the words of a Norse ballad; or desired to have, for her vari[illegible] collections, feathers, or eggs, or shells, or s[illegible]cimens of the rarer sea weeds; or Brenda sen[illegible] a riddle to be resolved, or a song to be lea[illegible]ed; or the honest old Udaller—in a rude m[illegible]nuscript, which might have passed for an ancient Runic inscription—sent his hearty greetings to his good young friend, with a present of something to make good cheer, and an earnest request he would come to Burgh-Westra as soon, and stay there as long, as possible. These kindly tokens of remembrance were often sent by special messenger; besides which, there was never a passenger or traveller who crossed from the one mansion to the other, who did not bring to Mordaunt some friendly greeting from the Udaller and his family. Of late, this intercourse had become more and more infrequent; and no messenger from Burgh-Westra had visited Yarlshof for several weeks. Mordaunt [illegible] observed and felt this alteration, and it dwelt on his mind, while he questioned Bryce as closely as pride and prudence would [illegible] ascertain, if possible, the cause of the change. Yet he endeavoured to assume an indifferent air while he asked the yagger whether there were no news in the country.

'Great news,' the yagger replied; 'and a gey mony of them. That crackbrained carle, the new factor, is for making a change in the *bismars* and the *lispunds*;* and our worthy Fowd, Magnus Troil, has sworn that, sooner than change them for the still-yard or aught else, he'll fling Factor Yellowley from Brassa Craig.'

'Is that all?' said Mordaunt, very little interested.

'All! and eneuch, I think,' replied the pedlar. 'How are folks to buy and sell if the weights are changed on them?'

'Very true,' replied Mordaunt; 'but have you heard of no strange vessels on the coast?'

'Six Dutch doggers off Brassa; and, as I hear, a high-quartered galliot thing, with a gaff mainsail, lying in Scalloway Bay. She will be from Norway.'

'No ships of war or sloops?'

'None,' replied the pedlar, 'since the Kite tender sailed with the impress men. If it was His will, and our men were out of her, I wish the deep sea had her!'

'Were there no news at Burgh-Westra?—Were the family all well?'

'A' weel, and weel to do—out-taken, it may be, something ower muckle daffing and laughing—dancing ilk night, they say, wi' the stranger captain that's living there—him that was ashore on Sumburgh Head the tother day,—less daffing served him then.'

'Daffing! dancing every night!' said Mordaunt, not particularly well satisfied—'Whom does Captain Cleveland dance with?'

'Onybody he likes, I fancy,' said the yagger; 'at ony rate, he gars a'body yonder dance after his fiddle. But I ken little about it, for I am no free in conscience to look upon thae flinging fancies. Folk should mind that life is made but of rotten yarn.'

'I fancy that it is to keep them in mind of that wholesome truth that you deal in such tender wares, Bryce?' replied Mordaunt, dissatisfied as well with the tenor of the reply as with the affected scruples of the respondent.

'That's as muckle as to say, that I suld hae minded you was a flinger and a fiddler yoursel', Maister Mordaunt; but I am an auld man, and maun unburden my conscience. But ye will be for the dance, I sall warrant, that's to be at Burgh-Westra on John's Even (*Saunt* John's, as the blinded creatures ca' him), and nae doubt ye will be for some warldly braws—hose, waistcoats, or sic-like? I hae pieces frae Flanders.'

With that he placed his moveable warehouse on the table, and began to unlock it.

'Dance!' repeated Mordaunt—'Dance on Saint John's Even?—Were you desired to bid me to it, Bryce?'

'Na—but ye ken weel eneuch ye wad be welcome, bidden or no bidden. This Captain—how-ca'-ye-him—is to be skudler, as they ca't—the first of the gang, like.'

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* These are weights of Norwegian origin, still used in Zetland. [*Bismar* is more correctly a steelyard. A *lispund* was a weight equal to 18 lbs. Scots.]

'The devil take him!' said Mordaunt, in impatient surprise.

'A' in gude time,' replied the yagger; 'hurry no man's cattle—the devil will hae his due, I warrant ye, or it winna be for lack of seeking. But it's true I'm telling you, for a' ye stare like a wild-cat; and this same Captain—I watna-his-name—bought ane of the very waistcoats that I am ganging to show ye—purple, wi' a gowd binding, and bonnily broidered; and I have a piece for you, the neighbour of it, wi' a green grund; and if ye mean to streek yoursel' up beside him, ye maun e'en buy it, for it's gowd that glances in the lasses' een now-a-days. See—look till't,' he added, displaying the pattern in various points of view; 'look till *it* through the light, and till the light through *it*—*wi'* the grain, and *against* the grain—it shows ony gate—cam frae Antwerp a' the gate—four dollars is the price; and yon captain was sae weel pleased that he flang down a twenty-shilling Jacobus, and bade me keep the change and be d—d!—poor silly profane creature, I pity him.'

Without inquiring whether the pedlar bestowed his compassion on the worldly imprudence or the religious deficiencies of Captain Cleveland, Mordaunt turned from him, folded his arms, and paced the apartment, muttering to himself, 'Not asked—A stranger to be king of the feast!'—Words which he repeated so earnestly, that Bryce caught a part of their import.

'As for asking, I am almaist bauld to say that ye will be asked, Maister Mordaunt.'

'Did they mention my name, then?' said Mordaunt.

'I canna preceesely say that,' said Bryce Snailsfoot; 'but ye needna turn awa your head sae sourly, like a sealgh when he leaves the shore; for, do you see, I heard distinctly that a' the revellers about are to be there; and is't to be thought they would leave out you, an auld kend freend, and the lightest foot at sic frolics (Heaven send you a better praise in his ain gude time!) that ever flung at a fiddle-squeak, between this and Unst? Sae I consider ye altogether the same as invited—and ye had best provide yoursell wi' a waistcoat, for brave and brisk will every man be that's there—the Lord pity them!'

He thus continued to follow with his green glazen eyes the motions of young Mordaunt Mertoun, who was pacing the room in a very pensive manner, which the yagger probably misinterpreted, as he thought, like Claudio, that if a man is sad, it must needs be because he lacks money. Bryce, therefore, after another pause, thus accosted him. 'Ye needna be sad about the matter, Maister Mordaunt; for although I got the just price of the article from the captain-man, yet I maun deal freendly wi' you, as a kend freend and customer, and bring the price, as they say, within your purse-mouth—or it's the same to me to let it lie ower till Martinmas, or e'en to Candlemas. I am decent in the warld, Maister Mordaunt—forbid that I should hurry onybody, far mair a freend that has paid me siller afore now. Or I wad be content to swap the garment for the value in feathers or sea-otters' skins, or ony kind of peltrie—nane kens better than yoursel' how to come by sic ware—and I am sure I hae furnished you wi' the primest o' powder. I dinna ken if I tell'd ye it was out o' the kist of Captain Plunket that perished on the Scaw of Unst, wi' the armed brig Mary, sax years syne. He was a prime fowler himself, and luck it was that the kist came ashore dry. I sell that to nane but gude marksmen. And so, I was saying, if ye had ony wares ye liked to coup* for the waistcoat, I wad be ready to trock wi' you, for assuredly ye will be wanted at Burgh-Westra on Saint John's Even; and ye wadna like to look waur than the captain—that wadna be setting.'

'I will be there, at least, whether wanted or not,' said Mordaunt, stopping short in his walk, and taking the waistcoat piece hastily out of the pedlar's hand; 'and, as you say, will not disgrace them.'

'Haud a care—haud a care, Maister Mordaunt,' exclaimed the pedlar; 'ye handle it as it were a bale of coarse wadmaal—ye'll fray't to bits—ye might weel say my ware is tender—and ye'll mind the price is four dollars. Sall I put ye in my book for it?'

'No,' said Mordaunt hastily; and, taking out his purse, he flung down the money.

'Grace to ye to wear the garment,' said the joyous pedlar, 'and to me to guide the siller; and protect us from earthly vanities and earthly covetousness; and send you the white linen raiment, whilk is mair to be desired than the muslins, and cambrics, and lawns, and silks of this world; and send me the talents which avail more than much fine Spanish gold, or Dutch dollars either—and—but, God guide the callant, what for is he wrapping the silk up that gait, like a wisp of hay?'

At this moment, old Swertha the housekeeper entered, to whom, as if eager to get rid of the subject, Mordaunt threw his purchase, with something like careless disdain; and, telling her to put it aside, snatched his gun, which stood in the corner, threw his shooting accoutrements about him, and, without noticing Bryce's attempt to enter into conversation upon the 'braw seal-skin, as saft as doe-leather,' which made the sling and cover of his fowling-piece, he left the apartment abruptly.

The yagger, with those green, goggling, and gain-descrying kind of optics, which we have already described, continued gazing for an instant after the customer, who treated his wares with such irreverence.

Swertha also looked after him with some surprise. 'The callant's in a creel,' quoth she.

'In a creel!' echoed the pedlar; 'he will be as wowf as ever his father was. To guide in that gait a bargain that cost him four dollars!—very, very Fifish, as the east-country fish folk say.'

'Four dollars for that green rag!' said Swertha, catching at the words which the yagger had unwarily suffered to escape—'that was a bargain indeed! I wonder whether he is the greater fule, or you the mair rogue, Bryce Snailsfoot.'

'I didna say it cost him preceesely four dollars,' said Snailsfoot; 'but if it had, the lad's siller's

* Barter.

his ain, I hope; and he is auld eneuch to make his ain bargains. Mair by token the gudes are weel worth the money, and mair.'

'Mair by token,' said Swertha coolly, 'I will see what his father thinks about it '

'Ye'll no be sae ill-natured, Mistress Swertha,' said the yagger; 'that will be but cauld thanks for the bonnie owerlay that I hae brought you a' the way frae Lerwick.'

'And a bonnie price ye'll be setting on't,' said Swertha; 'for that's the gait your good deeds end.'

'Ye sall hae the fixing of the price yoursel'; or it may lie ower till ye're buying something for the house, or for your master, and it can make a' ae count.'

'Troth and that's true, Bryce Snailsfoot; I am thinking we'll want some napery sune – for it's no to be thought we can spin, and the like, as if there was a mistress in the house; and sae we make nane at hame.'

'And that's what I ca' walking by the Word,' said the yagger. '"Go unto those that buy and sell;" there's muckle profit in that text.'

'There's a pleasure in dealing with a discreet man, that can make profit of onything,' said Swertha; 'and now that I take another look at that daft callant's waistcoat-piece, I think it *is* honestly worth four dollars.'

CHAPTER X.

I have possessed the regulation of the weather and the distribution of the seasons. The sun has listened to my dictates, and passed from tropic to tropic by my direction; the clouds, at my command, have poured forth their waters.

RASSELAS.

ANY sudden cause for anxious and mortifying reflection, which, in advanced age, occasions sullen and pensive inactivity, stimulates youth to eager and active exertion; as if, like the hurt deer, they endeavoured to drown the pain of the shaft by the rapidity of motion. When Mordaunt caught up his gun, and rushed out of the house of Yarlshof, he walked on with great activity over waste and wild, without any determined purpose, except that of escaping, if possible, from the smart of his own irritation. His pride was effectually mortified by the report of the yagger, which coincided exactly with some doubts he had been led to entertain, by the long and unkind silence of his friends at Burgh-Westra.

If the fortunes of Cæsar had doomed him, as the poet suggests, to have been

But the best wrestler on the green,

it is nevertheless to be presumed that a foil from a rival, in that rustic exercise, would have mortified him as much as a defeat from a competitor, when he was struggling for the empery of the world. And even so Mordaunt Mertoun, degraded in his own eyes from the height which he had occupied as the chief amongst the youth of the island, felt vexed and irritated, as well as humbled. The two beautiful sisters, also, whose smiles all were so desirous of acquiring, with whom he had lived on terms of such familiar affection, that, with the same ease and innocence, there was unconsciously mixed a shade of deeper though undefined tenderness than characterizes fraternal love—they also seemed to have forgotten him. He could not be ignorant that, in the universal opinion of all Dunrossness, nay, of the whole Mainland, he might have had every chance of being the favoured lover of either; and now at once, and without any failure on his part, he was become so little to them, that he had lost even the consequence of an ordinary acquaintance. The old Udaller, too, whose hearty and sincere character should have made him more constant in his friendships, seemed to have been as fickle as his daughters, and poor Mordaunt had at once lost the smiles of the fair and the favour of the powerful. These were uncomfortable reflections, and he doubled his pace, that he might outstrip them if possible.

Without exactly reflecting upon the route which he pursued, Mordaunt walked briskly on through a country where neither hedge, wall, nor enclosure of any kind interrupts the steps of the wanderer, until he reached a very solitary spot, where, embosomed among steep heathy hills, which sunk suddenly down on the verge of the water, lay one of those small fresh-water lakes which are common in the Zetland isles, whose outlets form the sources of the small brooks and rivulets by which the country is watered, and serve to drive the little mills which manufacture their grain.

It was a mild summer day; the beams of the sun, as is not uncommon in Zetland, were moderated and shaded by a silvery haze, which filled the atmosphere, and, destroying the strong contrast of light and shade, gave even to noon the sober livery of the evening twilight. The little lake, not three-quarters of a mile in circuit, lay in profound quiet; its surface undimpled, save when one of the numerous water-fowl, which glided on its surface, dived for an instant under it. The depth of the water gave the whole that cerulean tint of bluish green, which occasioned its being called the Green Loch; and at present it formed so perfect a mirror to the bleak hills by which it was surrounded, and which lay reflected in its bosom, that it was difficult to distinguish the water from the land; nay, in the shadowy uncertainty occasioned by the thin haze, a stranger could scarce have been sensible that a sheet of water lay before him. A scene of more complete solitude, having all its peculiarities heightened by the extreme serenity of the weather, the quiet grey composed tone of the atmosphere, and the perfect silence of the elements, could hardly be imagined. The very aquatic birds, who frequented the spot in great numbers, forbore their usual flight and screams, and floated in profound tranquillity upon the silent water.

Without taking any determined aim—without having any determined purpose—almost without thinking what he was about, Mordaunt presented his fowling-piece, and fired across the lake. The large swan-shot dimpled its surface like a partial shower of hail—the hills took up the noise of the report, and repeated it again, and again, and again, to all their echoes; the water-fowl took

to wing in eddying and confused wheel, answering the echoes with a thousand varying screams, from the deep note of the swabie, or swartback, to the querulous cry of the tirracke and kittywake.

Mordaunt looked for a moment on the clamorous crowd with a feeling of resentment, which he felt disposed at the moment to apply to all nature, and all her objects, animate or inanimate, however little concerned with the cause of his internal mortification.

'Ay, ay,' he said, 'wheel, dive, scream, and clamour as you will, and all because you have seen a strange sight, and heard an unusual sound. There is many a one like you in this round world. But you, at least, shall learn,' he added, as he reloaded his gun, 'that strange sights and strange sounds, ay, and strange acquaintances to boot, have sometimes a little shade of danger connected with them.—But why should I wreak my own vexation on these harmless sea-gulls?' he subjoined, after a moment's pause; 'they have nothing to do with the friends that have forgotten me.—I loved them all so well—and to be so soon given up for the first stranger whom chance threw on the coast!'

As he stood resting upon his gun, and abandoning his mind to the course of these unpleasant reflections, his meditations were unexpectedly interrupted by some one touching his shoulder. He looked around, and saw Norna of the Fitful Head, wrapped in her dark and ample mantle. She had seen him from the brow of the hill, and had descended to the lake, through a small ravine which concealed her, until she came with noiseless step so close to him that he turned round at her touch.

Mordaunt Mertoun was by nature neither timorous nor credulous, and a course of reading more extensive than usual had, in some degree, fortified his mind against the attacks of superstition; but he would have been an actual prodigy, if, living in Zetland in the end of the seventeenth century, he had possessed the philosophy which did not exist in Scotland generally until at least two generations later. He doubted in his own mind the extent, nay, the very existence, of Norna's supernatural attributes, which was a high flight of incredulity in the country where they were universally received; but still his incredulity went no further than doubts. She was unquestionably an extraordinary woman, gifted with an energy above others, acting upon motives peculiar to herself, and apparently independent of mere earthly considerations. Impressed with these ideas, which he had imbibed from his youth, it was not without something like alarm that he beheld this mysterious female standing on a sudden so close beside him, and looking upon him with such sad and severe eyes, as those with which the Fatal Virgins, who, according to northern mythology, were called the *Valkyriur*, or 'Choosers of the Slain,' were supposed to regard the young champions whom they selected to share the banquet of Odin.

It was, indeed, reckoned unlucky, to say the least, to meet with Norna suddenly alone, and in a place remote from witnesses; and she was supposed, on such occasions, to have been usually a prophetess of evil, as well as an omen of misfortune, to those who had such a rencontre. There were few or none of the islanders, however familiarized with her occasional appearance in society, that would not have trembled to meet her on the solitary banks of the Green Loch.

'I bring you no evil, Mordaunt Mertoun,' she said, reading perhaps something of this superstitious feeling in the looks of the young man. 'Evil from me you never felt, and never will.'

'Nor do I fear any,' said Mordaunt, exerting himself to throw aside an apprehension which he felt to be unmanly. 'Why should I, mother? You have been ever my friend.'

'Yet, Mordaunt, thou art not of our region; but to none of Zetland blood, no, not even to those who sit around the hearthstone of Magnus Troil, the noble descendants of the ancient Yarls of Orkney, am I more a well-wisher, than I am to thee, thou kind and brave-hearted boy. When I hung around thy neck that gifted chain, which all in our isles know was wrought by no earthly artist, but by the drows,* in the secret recesses of their caverns, thou wert then but fifteen years old; yet thy foot had been on the Maiden Skerry of Northmaven, known before but to the webbed sole of the swartback, and thy skiff had been in the deepest cavern of Brinnastir, where the *haaf-fish* † had before slumbered in dark obscurity. Therefore I gave thee that noble gift; and well thou knowest that, since that day, every eye in these isles has looked on thee as a son, or as a brother, endowed beyond other youths, and the favoured of those whose hour of power is when the night meets with the day.'

'Alas, mother!' said Mordaunt, 'your kind gift may have given me favour, but it has not been able to keep it for me, or I have not been able to keep it for myself.—What matters it? I shall learn to set as little by others as they do by me. My father says that I shall soon leave these islands, and therefore, Mother Norna, I will return to you your fairy gift, that it may bring more lasting luck to some other than it has done to me.'

'Despise not the gift of the nameless race,' said Norna, frowning; then suddenly changing her tone of displeasure to that of mournful solemnity, she added, 'Despise them not, but, O Mordaunt, court them not! Sit down on that grey stone—thou art the son of my adoption, and I will doff, as far as I may, those attributes that sever me from the common mass of humanity, and speak with you as a parent with a child.'

There was a tremulous tone of grief which mingled with the loftiness of her language and carriage, and was calculated to excite sympathy, as well as to attract attention. Mordaunt sat down on the rock which she pointed out, a fragment which, with many others that lay scattered around, had been torn by some winter storm from the precipice at the foot of which it lay, upon the very verge of the water. Norna took her own seat on a stone at about three feet

* Note L. The Drows.

† The larger seal, or sea-calf, which seeks the most solitary recesses for its abode. See Dr. Edmonston's *Zetland*, vol. ii. p. 294.

distance, adjusted her mantle so that little more than her forehead, her eyes, and a single lock of her grey hair, were seen from beneath the shade of her dark wadmaal cloak, and then proceeded in a tone in which the imaginary consequence and importance so often assumed by lunacy, seemed to contend against the deep workings of some extraordinary and deeply-rooted mental affliction.

'I was not always,' she said, 'that which I now am. I was not always the wise, the powerful, the commanding, before whom the young stand abashed, and the old uncover their grey heads. There was a time when my appearance did not silence mirth, when I sympathised with human passion, and had my own share in human joy or sorrow. It was a time of helplessness—it was a time of folly—it was a time of idle and unfruitful laughter—it was a time of causeless and senseless tears;—and yet, with its follies, and its sorrows, and its weaknesses, what would Norna of Fitful Head give to be again the unmarked and happy maiden that she was in her early days! Hear me, Mordaunt, and bear with me; for you hear me utter complaints which have never sounded in mortal ears, and which in mortal ears shall never sound again. I will be what I ought,' she continued, starting up and extending her lean and withered arm, 'the queen and protectress of these wild and neglected isles,—I will be her whose foot the wave wets not, save by her permission; ay, even though its rage be at its wildest madness—whose robe the whirlwind respects, when it rends the house-rigging from the roof-tree. Bear me witness, Mordaunt Mertoun,—you heard my words at Harfra—you saw the tempest sink before them—Speak, bear me witness!'

To have contradicted her in this strain of high-toned enthusiasm, would have been cruel and unavailing, even had Mordaunt been more decidedly convinced than he was, that an insane woman, not one of supernatural power, stood before him.

'I heard you sing,' he replied, 'and I saw the tempest abate.'

'Abate!' exclaimed Norna, striking the ground impatiently with her staff of black oak; 'thou speakest it but half—it sunk at once—sunk in shorter space than the child that is hushed to silence by the nurse.—Enough, you know my power—but you know not—mortal man knows not, and never shall know, the price which I paid to attain it. No, Mordaunt, never for the widest sway that the ancient Norsemen boasted, when their banners waved victorious from Bergen to Palestine—never, for all that the round world contains, do thou barter thy peace of mind for such greatness as Norna's.' She resumed her seat upon the rock, drew the mantle over her face, rested her head upon her hands, and, by the convulsive motion which agitated her bosom, appeared to be weeping bitterly.

'Good Norna,' said Mordaunt, and paused, scarce knowing what to say that might console the unhappy woman—'Good Norna,' he again resumed, 'if there be aught in your mind that troubles it, were you not best to go to the worthy minister at Dunrossness? Men say you have not for many years been in a Christian congregation—that cannot be well, or right. You are yourself well known as a healer of bodily disease; but when the mind is sick, we should draw to the Physician of our souls.'

Norna had raised her person slowly from the stooping posture in which she sat; but at length she started up on her feet, threw back her mantle, extended her arm, and while her lip foamed, and her eye sparkled, exclaimed in a tone resembling a scream,—'Me did you speak—me did you bid seek out a priest!—Would you kill the good man with horror? Me in a Christian congregation!—Would you have the roof to fall on the sackless assembly, and mingle their blood with their worship? I—I seek to the good Physician!—Would you have the fiend claim his prey openly before God and man?'

The extreme agitation of the unhappy speaker naturally led Mordaunt to the conclusion which was generally adopted and accredited in that superstitious country and period. 'Wretched woman,' he said, 'if indeed thou hast leagued thyself with the powers of evil, why should you not seek even yet for repentance? But do as thou wilt, I cannot, dare not, as a Christian, abide longer with you; and take again your gift,' he said, offering back the chain; 'good can never come of it, if indeed evil hath not come already.'

'Be still and hear me, thou foolish boy,' said Norna calmly, as if she had been restored to reason by the alarm and horror which she perceived in Mordaunt's countenance; 'hear me, I say. I am not of those who have leagued themselves with the Enemy of mankind, or derive skill or power from his ministry. And although the unearthly powers *were* propitiated by a sacrifice which human tongue can never utter, yet, God knows, my guilt in that offering was no more than that of the blind man who falls from the precipice which he could neither see nor shun. O, leave me not—shun me not—in this hour of weakness! Remain with me till the temptation be passed, or I will plunge myself into that lake, and rid myself at once of my power and my wretchedness!'

Mordaunt, who had always looked up to this singular woman with a sort of affection, occasioned no doubt by the early kindness and distinction which she had shown to him, was readily induced to resume his seat, and listen to what she had further to say, in hopes that she would gradually overcome the violence of her agitation. It was not long ere she seemed to have gained the victory her companion expected, for she addressed him in her usual steady and authoritative manner.

'It was not of myself, Mordaunt, that I proposed to speak, when I beheld you from the summit of yonder grey rock, and came down the path to meet with you. My fortunes are fixed beyond change, be it for weal or for woe. For myself I have ceased to feel much; but for those whom she loves, Norna of the Fitful Head has still those feelings which link her to her kind. Mark me. There is an eagle, the noblest that builds in these airy precipices, and into that eagle's nest there has crept an adder—wilt thou lend thy aid to crush the reptile, and to save the noble brood of the lord of the north sky?'

'You must speak more plainly, Norna,' said Mordaunt, 'if you would have me understand or answer you. I am no guesser of riddles.'

'In plain language, then, you know well the family of Burgh-Westra—the lovely daughters of the generous old Udaller, Magnus Troil,—Minna and Brenda, I mean? You know them, and you love them.'

'I have known them, mother,' replied Mordaunt, 'and I have loved them—none knows it better than yourself.'

'To know them once,' said Norna emphatically, 'is to know them always. To love them once, is to love them for ever.'

'To have loved them once is to wish them well for ever,' replied the youth; 'but it is nothing more. To be plain with you, Norna, the family at Burgh-Westra have of late totally neglected me. But show me the means of serving them, I will convince you how much I have remembered old kindness, how little I resent late coldness.'

'It is well spoken, and I will put your purpose to the proof,' replied Norna. 'Magnus Troil has taken a serpent into his bosom—his lovely daughters are delivered up to the machinations of a villain.'

'You mean the stranger, Cleveland?' said Mordaunt.

'The stranger who so calls himself,' replied Norna—'the same whom we found flung ashore, like a waste heap of seaweed, at the foot of the Sumburgh Cape. I felt that within me, that would have prompted me to let him lie till the tide floated him off, as it had floated him on shore. I repent me I gave not way to it.'

'But,' said Mordaunt, 'I cannot repent that I did my duty as a Christian man. And what right have I to wish otherwise? If Minna, Brenda, Magnus, and the rest, like that stranger better than me, I have no title to be offended; nay, I might well be laughed at for bringing myself into comparison.'

'It is well, and I trust they merit thy unselfish friendship.'

'But I cannot perceive,' said Mordaunt, 'in what you can propose that I should serve them. I have but just learned by Bryce the yagger, that this Captain Cleveland is all in all with the ladies at Burgh-Westra, and with the Udaller himself. I would like ill to intrude myself where I am not welcome, or to place my home-bred merit in comparison with Captain Cleveland's. He can tell them of battles, when I can only speak of birds' nests—can speak of shooting Frenchmen, when I can only tell of shooting seals—he wears gay clothes, and bears a brave countenance; I am plainly dressed and plainly nurtured. Such gay gallants as he can noose the hearts of those he lives with, as the fowler nooses the guillemot with his rod and line.'

'You do wrong to yourself,' replied Norna, 'wrong to yourself, and greater wrong to Minna and Brenda. And trust not the reports of Bryce—he is like the greedy chaffer-whale, that will change his course and dive for the most petty coin which a fisher can cast at him. Certain it is, that if you have been lessened in the opinion of Magnus Troil, that sordid fellow hath had some share in it. But let him count his vantage, for my eye is upon him.'

'And why, mother,' said Mordaunt, 'do you not tell to Magnus what you have told to me?'

'Because,' replied Norna, 'they who wax wise in their own conceit must be taught a bitter lesson by experience. It was but yesterday that I spoke with Magnus, and what was his reply?—"Good Norna, you grow old." And this was spoken by one bounden to me by so many and such close ties—by the descendant of the ancient Norse earls—this was from Magnus Troil to me; and it was said in behalf of one whom the sea flung forth as wreck-weed! Since he despises the counsel of the aged, he shall be taught by that of the young; and well that he is not left to his own folly. Go, therefore, to Burgh-Westra, as usual, upon the Baptist's festival.'

'I have had no invitation,' said Mordaunt; 'I am not wanted, not wished for, not thought of—perhaps I shall not be acknowledged if I go thither; and yet, mother, to confess the truth, thither I had thought to go.'

'It was a good thought, and to be cherished,' replied Norna; 'we seek our friends when they are sick in health, why not when they are sick in mind, and surfeited with prosperity? Do not fail to go—it may be, we shall meet there. Meanwhile our roads lie different. Farewell, and speak not of this meeting.'

They parted, and Mordaunt remained standing by the lake, with his eyes fixed on Norna, until her tall dark form became invisible among the windings of the valley down which she wandered, and Mordaunt returned to his father's mansion, determined to follow counsel which coincided so well with his own wishes.

CHAPTER XI.

——All your ancient customs,
And long-descended usages, I'll change.
Ye shall not eat, nor drink, nor speak, nor move,
Think, look, or walk, as ye were wont to do.
Even your marriage-beds shall know mutation;
The bride shall have the stock, the groom the wall;
For all old practice will I turn and change,
And call it reformation—marry, will I!
'TIS EVEN THAT WE'RE AT ODDS.

THE festal day approached, and still no invitation arrived for that guest, without whom, but a little space since, no feast could have been held in the island; while, on the other hand, such reports as reached them on every side spoke highly of the favour which Captain Cleveland enjoyed in the family of the old Udaller of Burgh-Westra. Swertha and the old Ranzelman shook their heads at these mutations, and reminded Mordaunt, by many a half-hint and innuendo, that he had incurred this eclipse by being so imprudently active to secure the safety of the stranger, when he lay at the mercy of the next wave beneath the cliffs of Sumburgh Head. 'It is best to let saut water take its gate,' said Swertha; 'luck never came of crossing it.'

'In troth,' said the Ranzelman, 'they are wise folks that let wave and withy haud their ain—luck never came of a half-drowned man, or a half-hanged ane either. Who was't shot Will

Paterson off the Noss?*—the Dutchman that he saved from sinking, I trow. To fling a drowning man a plank or a tow, may be the part of a Christian; but I say, keep hands aff him, if ye wad live and thrive free frae his danger.'

'Ye are a wise man, Ranzelman, and a worthy,' echoed Swertha, with a groan, 'and ken how and whan to help a neighbour, as weel as ony man that ever drew a net.'

'In troth, I have seen length of days,' answered the Ranzelman, 'and I have heard what the auld folk said to each other anent sic matters; and nae man in Zetland shall go further than I will in any Christian service to a man on firm land; but if he cry "Help!" out of the saut waves, that's another story.'

'And yet to think of this lad Cleveland standing in our Maister Mordaunt's light,' said Swertha, 'and with Magnus Troil, that thought him the flower of the island but on Whitsunday last, and Magnus, too, that's both held (when he's fresh, honest man) the wisest and wealthiest of Zetland!'

'He canna win by it,' said the Ranzelman, with a look of the deepest sagacity. 'There's whiles, Swertha, that the wisest of us (as I am sure I humbly confess mysel' not to be) may be little better than gulls, and can no more win by doing deeds of folly than I can step over Sumburgh Head. It has been my own case once or twice in my life. But we shall see soon what ill is to come of all this, for good there cannot come.'

And Swertha answered, with the same tone of prophetic wisdom, 'Na, na, gude can never come on it, and that is ower truly said.'

These doleful predictions, repeated from time to time, had some effect upon Mordaunt. He did not indeed suppose that the charitable action of relieving a drowning man had subjected him, as a necessary and fatal consequence, to the unpleasant circumstances in which he was placed; yet he felt as if a sort of spell were drawn around him, of which he neither understood the nature nor the extent; that some power, in short, beyond his own control, was acting upon his destiny, and, as it seemed, with no friendly influence. His curiosity, as well as his anxiety, was highly excited, and he continued determined, at all events, to make his appearance at the approaching festival, when he was impressed with the belief that something uncommon was necessarily to take place, which should determine his future views and prospects in life.

As the elder Mertoun was at this time in his ordinary state of health, it became necessary that his son should intimate to him his intended visit to Burgh-Westra. He did so; and his father desired to know the especial reason of his going thither at this particular time.

'It is a time of merry-making,' replied the youth, 'and all the country are assembled.'

'And you are doubtless impatient to add another fool to the number.—Go—but beware how you walk in the path which you are about to tread—a fall from the cliffs of Foulah were not more fatal.'

'May I ask the reason of your caution, sir?' replied Mordaunt, breaking through the reserve which ordinarily subsisted betwixt him and his singular parent.

'Magnus Troil,' said the elder Mertoun, 'has two daughters—you are of the age when men look upon such gauds with eyes of affection, that they may afterwards learn to curse the day that first opened their eyes upon heaven! I bid you beware of them; for, as sure as that death and sin came into the world by woman, so sure are their soft words, and softer looks, the utter destruction and ruin of all who put faith in them.'

Mordaunt had sometimes observed his father's marked dislike to the female sex, but had never before heard him give vent to it in terms so determined and precise. He replied, that the daughters of Magnus Troil were no more to him than any other females in the islands; 'they were even of less importance,' he said, 'for they had broken off their friendship with him without assigning any cause.'

'And you go to seek the renewal of it?' answered his father. 'Silly moth, that hast once escaped the taper without singeing thy wings, are you not contented with the safe obscurity of these wilds, but must hasten back to the flame, which is sure at length to consume thee? But why should I waste arguments in deterring thee from thy inevitable fate?—Go where thy destiny calls thee.'

On the succeeding day, which was the eve of the great festival, Mordaunt set forth on his road to Burgh-Westra, pondering alternately on the injunctions of Norna—on the ominous words of his father—on the inauspicious auguries of Swertha and the Ranzelman of Yarlshof—and not without experiencing that gloom with which so many concurring circumstances of ill omen combined to oppress his mind.

'It bodes me but a cold reception at Burgh-Westra,' said he; 'but my stay shall be the shorter. I will but find out whether they have been deceived by this seafaring stranger, or whether they have acted out of pure caprice of temper, and love of change of company. If the first be the case, I will vindicate my character, and let Captain Cleveland look to himself;—if the latter, why, then, good-night to Burgh-Westra and all its inmates.'

As he mentally meditated this last alternative, hurt pride, and a return of fondness for those to whom he supposed he was bidding farewell for ever, brought a tear into his eye, which he dashed off hastily and indignantly, as, mending his pace, he continued on his journey.

The weather being now serene and undisturbed, Mordaunt made his way with an ease that formed a striking contrast to the difficulties which he had encountered when he last travelled the same route; yet there was a less pleasing subject for comparison within his own mind.

'My breast,' he said to himself, 'was then against the wind, but my heart within was serene and happy. I would I had now the same careless feelings, were they to be bought by

*['This is an immensely high cape, called by the islanders the Noup of Noss, but by sailors Hang Cliff, from its having a projecting appearance. Its height has never been measured; but I should judge it exceeds 600 feet. Our steersman, however, had often descended this precipitous rock having only the occasional assistance of a rope, one end of which he secured from time to time round some projecting cliff.'—From the Author's Lighthouse Diary.]

battling with the severest storm that ever blew across these lonely hills!'

With such thoughts, he arrived about noon at Harfra, the habitation, as the reader may remember, of the ingenious Mr. Yellowley. Our traveller had, upon the present occasion, taken care to be quite independent of the niggardly hospitality of this mansion, which was now become infamous on that account through the whole island, by bringing with him, in his small knapsack, such provisions as might have sufficed for a longer journey. In courtesy, however, or rather, perhaps, to get rid of his own disquieting thoughts, Mordaunt did not fail to call at the mansion, which he found in singular commotion. Triptolemus himself, invested with a pair of large jack-boots, went clattering up and down stairs, screaming out questions to his sister and his serving-woman Tronda, who replied with shriller and more complicated screeches. At length Mistress Baby herself made her appearance, her venerable person endued with what was then called a Joseph, an ample garment, which had once been green, but now, betwixt stains and patches, had become like the vesture of the patriarch whose name it bore—a garment of divers colours. A steeple-crowned hat, the purchase of some long-past moment, in which vanity had got the better of avarice, with a feather which had stood as much wind and rain as if it had been part of a sea-mew's wing, made up her equipment, save that in her hand she held a silver-mounted whip of antique fashion. This attire, as well as an air of determined bustle in the gait and appearance of Mistress Barbara Yellowley, seemed to bespeak that she was prepared to take a journey, and cared not, as the saying goes, who knew that such was her determination.

She was the first that observed Mordaunt on his arrival, and she greeted him with a degree of mingled emotion. 'Be good to us!' she exclaimed, 'if there is not the canty callant that wears yon thing about his neck, and that snapped up our goose as light as if it had been a sandy-lavrock!' The admiration of the gold chain, which had formerly made so deep an impression on her mind, was marked in the first part of her speech, the recollection of the untimely fate of the smoked goose was commemorated in the second clause. 'I will lay the burden of my life,' she instantly added, 'that he is ganging our gate.'

'I am bound for Burgh-Westra, Mistress Yellowley,' said Mordaunt.

'And blithe will we be of your company,' she added—'it's early day to eat; but if you liked a barley scone and a drink of bland—natheless, it is ill travelling on a full stomach, besides quelling your appetite for the feast that is biding you this day; for all sort of prodigality there will doubtless be.'

Mordaunt produced his own stores, and, explaining that he did not love to be burdensome to them on this second occasion, invited them to partake of the provisions he had to offer. Poor Triptolemus, who seldom saw half so good a dinner as his guest's luncheon, threw himself upon the good cheer, like Sancho on the scum of Camacho's kettle, and even the lady herself could not resist the temptation, though she gave way to it with more moderation, and with something like a sense of shame. 'She had let the fire out,' she said, 'for it was a pity wasting fuel in so cold a country, and so she had not thought of getting anything ready, as they were to set out so soon; and so she could not but say that the young gentleman's *nacket* looked very good; and besides, she had some curiosity to see whether the folks in that country cured their beef in the same way they did in the north of Scotland.' Under which combined considerations, Dame Baby made a hearty experiment on the refreshments which thus unexpectedly presented themselves.

When their extemporary repast was finished, the factor became solicitous to take the road; and now Mordaunt discovered that the alacrity with which he had been received by Mistress Baby was not altogether disinterested. Neither she nor the learned Triptolemus felt much disposed to commit themselves to the wilds of Zetland without the assistance of a guide; and although they could have commanded the assistance of one of their own labouring folks, yet the cautious agriculturist observed that it would be losing at least one day's work; and his sister multiplied his apprehensions by echoing back, 'One day's work!—ye may weel say twenty—for, set ane of their noses within the smell of a kail-pot, and their lugs within the sound of a fiddle, and whistle them back if you can!'

Now the fortunate arrival of Mordaunt, in the very nick of time, not to mention the good cheer which he brought with him, made him as welcome as any one could possibly be to a threshold, which, on all ordinary occasions, abhorred the passage of a guest; nor was Mr. Yellowley altogether insensible of the pleasure he promised himself in detailing his plans of improvement to his young companion, and enjoying, what his fate seldom assigned him—the company of a patient and admiring listener.

As the factor and his sister were to prosecute their journey on horseback, it only remained to mount their guide and companion; a thing easily accomplished, where there are such numbers of shaggy, long-backed, short-legged ponies, running wild upon the extensive moors, which are the common pasturage for the cattle of every township, where shelties, geese, swine, goats, sheep, and little Zetland cows, are turned out promiscuously, and often in numbers which can obtain but precarious subsistence from the niggard vegetation. There is, indeed, a right of individual property in all these animals, which are branded or tattooed by each owner with his own peculiar mark; but when any passenger has occasional use for a pony, he never scruples to lay hold of the first which he can catch, puts on a halter, and, having rode him as far as he finds convenient, turns the animal loose to find his way back again as he best can—a matter in which the ponies are sufficiently sagacious.

Although this general exercise of property was one of the enormities which in due time the factor intended to abolish, yet, like a wise man, he scrupled not, in the meantime, to avail himself of so general a practice, which, he condescended to allow, was particularly convenient for those who (as chanced to be his own case) Wi

case) had no ponies of their own on which their neighbours could retaliate. Three shelties, therefore, were procured from the hill—little shagged animals, more resembling wild bears than anything of the horse tribe, yet possessed of no small degree of strength and spirit, and able to endure as much fatigue and indifferent usage as any creatures in the world.

Two of these horses were already provided and fully accoutred for the journey. One of them, destined to bear the fair person of Mistress Baby, was decorated with a huge side-saddle of venerable antiquity—a mass, as it were, of cushion and padding, from which depended, on all sides, a housing of ancient tapestry, which, having been originally intended for a horse of ordinary size, covered up the diminutive palfrey over which it was spread, from the ears to the tail, and from the shoulder to the fetlock, leaving nothing visible but its head, which looked fiercely out from these enfoldments, like the heraldic representation of a lion looking out of a bush. Mordaunt gallantly lifted up the fair Mistress Yellowley, and, at the expense of very slight exertion, placed her upon the summit of her mountainous saddle. It is probable that, on feeling herself thus squired and attended upon, and experiencing the long unwonted consciousness that she was attired in her best array, some thoughts dawned upon Mistress Baby's mind, which chequered for an instant those habitual ideas about thrift, that formed the daily and all-engrossing occupation of her soul. She glanced her eye upon her faded Joseph, and on the long housings of her saddle, as she observed, with a smile, to Mordaunt, that 'travelling was a pleasant thing in fine weather and agreeable company, if,' she added, glancing a look at a place where the embroidery was somewhat frayed and tattered, 'it was not sae wasteful to ane's horse-furniture.'

Meanwhile, her brother stepped stoutly to his steed; and as he chose, notwithstanding the serenity of the weather, to throw a long red cloak over his other garments, his pony was even more completely enveloped in drapery than that of his sister. It happened, moreover, to be an animal of a high and contumacious spirit, bouncing and curveting occasionally under the weight of Triptolemus, with a vivacity which, notwithstanding his Yorkshire descent, rather deranged him in the saddle; gambols which, as the palfrey itself was not visible, except upon the strictest inspection, had, at a little distance, an effect as if they were the voluntary movements of the cloaked cavalier, without the assistance of any other legs than those with which nature had provided him, and, to any who had viewed Triptolemus under such a persuasion, the gravity, and even distress, announced in his countenance, must have made a ridiculous contrast to the vivacious caprioles with which he piaffed along the moor.

Mordaunt kept up with this worthy couple, mounted, according to the simplicity of the time and country, on the first and readiest pony which they had been able to press into the service, with no other accoutrement of any kind than the halter which served to guide him; while Mr. Yellowley, [illegible] with pleasure his guide thus readily provided with a steed, privately resolved that this rude custom of helping travellers to horses, without leave of the proprietor, should not be abated in Zetland, until he came to possess a herd of ponies belonging in property to himself, and exposed to suffer in the way of retaliation.

But to other uses or abuses of the country, Triptolemus Yellowley showed himself less tolerant. Long and wearisome were the discourses he held with Mordaunt, or (to speak much more correctly) the harangues which he inflicted upon him, concerning the changes which his own advent in these isles was about to occasion. Unskilled as he was in the modern arts, by which an estate may be improved to such a high degree that it shall altogether slip through the proprietor's fingers, Triptolemus had at least the zeal, if not the knowledge, of a whole agricultural society in his own person; nor was he surpassed by any one who has followed him, in that noble spirit which scorns to balance profit against outlay, but holds the glory of effecting a great change on the face of the land, to be, like virtue, in a great degree its own reward.

No part of the wild and mountainous region over which Mordaunt guided him, but what suggested to his active imagination some scheme of improvement and alteration. He would make a road through yon scarce passable glen, where at present nothing but the sure-footed creatures on which they were mounted could tread with any safety. He would substitute better houses for the skeoes, or sheds built of dry stones, in which the inhabitants cured or manufactured their fish—they should brew good ale instead of bland—they should plant forests where tree never grew, and find mines of treasure where a Danish skilling was accounted a coin of a most respectable denomination. All these mutations, with many others, did the worthy factor resolve upon, speaking at the same time with the utmost confidence of the countenance and assistance which he was to receive from the higher classes, and especially from Magnus Troil.

'I will impart some of my ideas to the poor man,' he said, 'before we are both many hours older; and you will mark how grateful he will be to the instructor who brings him knowledge, which is better than wealth.'

'I would not have you build too strongly on that,' said Mordaunt, by way of caution; 'Magnus Troil's boat is kittle to trim—he likes his own ways, and his country-ways, and you will as soon teach your sheltie to dive like a scalgh, as bring Magnus to take a Scottish fashion in the place of a Norse one—and yet, if he is steady to his old customs, he may perhaps be as changeable as another in his old friendships.'

'*Heus, tu inepte!*' said the scholar of Saint Andrews; 'steady or unsteady, what can it matter?—am not I here in point of trust, and in point of power? and shall a Fowd, by which barbarous appellative this Magnus Troil still calls himself, presume to measure judgment and weigh reasons with me, who represent the full dignity of the Chamberlain of the islands of Orkney and Zetland?'

'Still,' said Mordaunt, 'I would advise you not to advance too rashly upon his prejudices. Magnus Troil, from the hour of his birth to this

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day, never saw a greater man than himself, and it is difficult to bridle an old horse for the first time. Besides, he has at no time in his life been a patient listener to long explanations, so it is possible that he may quarrel with your proposed reformation, before you can convince him of its advantages.'

'How mean you, young man?' said the factor. 'Is there one who dwells in these islands, who is so wretchedly blind as not to be sensible of their deplorable defects? Can a man,' he added, rising into enthusiasm as he spoke, 'or even a beast, look at that thing there, which they have the impudence to call a corn-mill,* without trembling to think that corn should be entrusted to such a miserable molendinary? The wretches are obliged to have at least fifty in each parish, each trundling away upon its paltry mill-stone, under the thatch of a roof no bigger than a bee-skep, instead of a noble and seemly baron's mill, of which you would hear the clack through the haill country, and that casts the meal through the mill-eye by forpits at a time!'

'Ay, ay, brother,' said his sister, 'that's spoken like your wise sel'. The mair cost the mair honour—that's your word ever mair. Can it no creep into your wise head, man, that ilka body grinds their ain nievefu' of meal in this country, without plaguing themsel's about baron's mills, and thirls, and sucken, and the like trade? How mony a time have I heard you bell-the-cat with auld Edie Netherstane, the miller at Grindleburn, and wi' his very knave too, about in-town and out-town multures—lock, gowpen, and knaveship, and a' the lave o't; and now naething less will serve you than to bring in the very same fashery on a wheen puir bodies, that big ilk ane a mill for themselves, sic as it is?'

'Dinna tell me of gowpen and knaveship!' exclaimed the indignant agriculturist; 'better pay the half of the grist to the miller, to have the rest grund in a Christian manner, than put good grain into a bairn's whirligig. Look at it for a moment, Baby—Bide still, ye cursed imp!' This interjection was applied to his pony, which began to be extremely impatient, while its rider interrupted his journey, to point out all the weak points of the Zetland mill—'Look at it, I say—it's just one degree better than a hand-quern—it has neither wheel nor trindle—neither cog nor happer—Bide still, there's a canny beast It canna grind a bickerfu' of meal in a quarter of an hour, and that will be mair like a mash for horse than a meltith for man's use—Wherefore—Bide still, I say—wherefore—wherefore—The deil's in the beast, and nae good, I think!'

As he uttered the last words, the shelty, which had pranced and curveted for some time with much impatience, at length got its head betwixt its legs, and at once canted its rider into the little rivulet, which served to drive the depreciated engine he was surveying; then, emancipating itself from the folds of the cloak, fled back towards its own wilderness, neighing in scorn, and flinging out its heels at every five yards.

Laughing heartily at his disaster, Mordaunt helped the old man to arise; while his sister sarcastically congratulated him on having fallen rather into the shallows of a Zetland rivulet than the depths of a Scottish mill-pond. Disdaining to reply to this sarcasm, Triptolemus, as soon as he had recovered his legs, shaken his ears, and found that the folds of his cloak had saved him from being much wet in the scanty streamlet, exclaimed aloud, 'I will have cussers from Lanarkshire—brood mares from Ayrshire—I will not have one of these cursed abortions left on the islands, to break honest folk's necks—I say, Baby, I will rid the land of them.'

'You had better wring your ain cloak, Triptolemus,' answered Baby.

Mordaunt meanwhile was employed in catching another pony, from a herd which strayed at some distance; and, having made a halter out of twisted rushes, he seated the dismayed agriculturist in safety upon a more quiet though less active steed than that which he had at first bestrode.

But Mr. Yellowley's fall had operated as a considerable sedative upon his spirits, and, for the full space of five miles' travel, he said scarce a word, leaving full course to the melancholy aspirations and lamentations which his sister Baby bestowed on the old bridle, which the pony had carried off in its flight, and which, she observed, after having lasted for eighteen years come Martinmas, might now be considered as a castaway thing. Finding she had thus the field to herself, the old lady launched forth into a lecture upon economy, according to her own idea of that virtue, which seemed to include a system of privations, which, though observed with the sole purpose of saving money, might, if undertaken upon other principles, have ranked high in the history of a religious ascetic.

She was but little interrupted by Mordaunt, who, conscious he was now on the eve of approaching Burgh-Westra, employed himself rather in the task of anticipating the nature of the reception he was about to meet with there from two beautiful young women, than with the prosing of an old one, however wisely she might prove that small beer was more wholesome than strong ale, and that if her brother had bruised his anklebone in his tumble, cumfrey and butter was better to bring him round again, than all the doctors' drugs in the world.

But now the dreary moorlands, over which their path had hitherto lain, were exchanged for a more pleasant prospect, opening on a salt-water lake, or arm of the sea, which ran up far inland, and was surrounded by flat and fertile ground, producing crops better than the experienced eye of Triptolemus Yellowley had as yet witnessed in Zetland. In the midst of this Goshen stood the mansion of Burgh-Westra, screened from the north and east by a ridge of heathy hills which lay behind it, and commanding an interesting prospect of the lake and its parent ocean, as well as the islands and more distant mountains. From the mansion itself, as well as from almost every cottage in the adjacent hamlet, arose such a rich cloud of vapoury smoke, as showed that the preparations for the festival were not confined to the principal residence of Magnus himself, but extended through the whole vicinage.

'My certie,' said Mistress Baby Yellowley, 'ane wad think the haill town was on fire! The

* Note M. Zetland corn-mills.

very hill-side smells of their wastefulness, and a hungry heart wad scarce seek better kitchen * to a barley scone, than just to waft it in the reek that's rising out of yon lums.'

CHAPTER XII.

——— Thou hast described
A hot friend cooling. Ever note, Lucilius,
When love begins to sicken and decay,
It useth an enforced ceremony,
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith.
JULIUS CÆSAR.

If the smell which was wafted from the chimneys of Burgh-Westra up to the barren hills by which the mansion was surrounded, could, as Mistress Barbara opined, have refreshed the hungry, the noise which proceeded from thence might have given hearing to the deaf. It was a medley of all sounds, and all connected with jollity and kind welcome. Nor were the sights associated with them less animating.

Troops of friends were seen in the act of arriving—their dispersed ponies flying to the moors in every direction, to recover their own pastures in the best way they could;—such, as we have already said, being the usual mode of discharging the cavalry which had been levied for a day's service. At a small but commodious harbour, connected with the house and hamlet, those visitors were landing from their boats, who, living in distant islands, and along the coast, had preferred making their journey by sea. Mordaunt and his companions might see each party pausing frequently to greet each other, and strolling on successively to the house, whose ever open gate received them alternately in such numbers, that it seemed the extent of the mansion, though suited to the opulence and hospitality of the owner, was scarce, on this occasion, sufficient for the guests.

Among the confused sounds of mirth and welcome which arose at the entrance of each new company, Mordaunt thought he could distinguish the loud laugh and hearty salutation of the sire of the mansion, and began to feel more deeply than before the anxious doubt, whether that cordial reception, which was distributed so freely to all others, would be on this occasion extended to him. As they came on, they heard the voluntary scrapings and bravura effusions of the gallant fiddlers, who impatiently flung already from their bows those sounds with which they were to animate the evening. The clamour of the cook's assistants, and the loud, scolding tones of the cook himself, were also to be heard—sounds of dissonance at any other time, but which, subdued with others, and by certain happy associations, form no disagreeable part of the full chorus which always precedes a rural feast.

Meanwhile, the guests advanced, each full of their own thoughts. Mordaunt's we have already noticed. Baby was wrapped up in the melancholy grief and surprise excited by the positive conviction that so much victuals had been cooked at once as were necessary to feed all the mouths which were clamouring around her—an enormity of expense, which, though she was no way concerned in bearing it, affected her nerves, as the beholding a massacre would touch those of the most indifferent spectator, however well assured of his own personal safety. She sickened, in short, at the sight of so much extravagance, like Abyssinian Bruce, when he saw the luckless minstrels of Gondar hacked to pieces by the order of Ras Michael. As for her brother, they being now arrived where the rude and antique instruments of Zetland agriculture lay scattered in the usual confusion of a Scottish barn-yard, his thoughts were at once engrossed in the deficiencies of the one-stilted plough—of the *twiscar*, † with which they dig peats—of the sledges, on which they transport commodities—of all and every thing, in short, in which the usages of the islands differed from those of the mainland of Scotland. The sight of these imperfect instruments stirred the blood of Triptolemus Yellowley, as that of the bold warrior rises at seeing the arms and insignia of the enemy he is about to combat; and, faithful to his high emprise, he thought less of the hunger which his journey had occasioned, although about to be satisfied by such a dinner as rarely fell to his lot, than upon the task which he had undertaken, of civilising the manners, and improving the cultivation, of Zetland.

'*Jacta est alea*,' he muttered to himself; 'this very day shall prove whether the Zetlanders are worthy of our labours, or whether their minds are as incapable of cultivation as their peat-mosses. Yet let us be cautious, and watch the soft time of speech. I feel, by my own experience, that it were best to let the body, in its present state, take the place of the mind. A mouthful of that same roast-beef, which smells so delicately, will form an apt introduction to my grand plan for improving the breed of stock.'

By this time the visitors had reached the low but ample front of Magnus Troil's residence, which seemed of various dates, with large and ill-imagined additions, hastily adapted to the original building, as the increasing estate, or enlarged family, of successive proprietors, appeared to each to demand. Beneath a low, broad, and large porch, supported by two huge carved posts, once the head ornaments of vessels which had found shipwreck upon the coast, stood Magnus himself, intent on the hospitable toil of receiving and welcoming the numerous guests who successively approached. His strong portly figure was well adapted to the dress which he wore—a blue coat of an antique cut, lined with scarlet, and laced and looped with gold down the seams and button-holes, and along the ample cuffs. Strong and masculine features, rendered ruddy and brown by frequent exposure to severe weather—a quantity of most venerable silver hair, which fell in unshorn profusion from under his gold-laced hat, and was carelessly tied with a ribbon behind, expressed at once his advanced age, his hasty, yet well-conditioned temper, and his robust constitution. As our travellers approached him, a shade of displeasure seemed to cross his brow, and to interrupt for an

* What is eaten by way of relish to dry bread, is called *kitchen* in Scotland, as cheese, dried fish, or the like relishing morsels.

† Note N. The Twiscar.

instant the honest and hearty burst of hilarity with which he had been in the act of greeting all prior arrivals. When he approached Triptolemus Yellowley, he drew himself up, so as to mix, as it were, some share of the stately importance of the opulent Udaller with the welcome afforded by the frank and hospitable landlord.

'You are welcome, Mr. Yellowley,' was his address to the factor; 'you are welcome to Westra—the wind has blown you on a rough coast, and we that are the natives must be kind to you as we can. This, I believe, is your sister—Mistress Barbara Yellowley, permit me the honour of a neighbourly salute.'—And so saying, with a daring and self-devoted courtesy, which would find no equal in our degenerate days, he actually ventured to salute the withered cheek of the spinstress, who relaxed so much of her usual peevishness of expression as to receive the courtesy with something which approached to a smile. He then looked full at Mordaunt Mertoun, and, without offering his hand, said, in a tone somewhat broken by suppressed agitation, 'You too are welcome, Master Mordaunt.'

'Did I not think so,' said Mordaunt, naturally offended by the coldness of his host's manner, 'I had not been here—and it is not yet too late to turn back.'

'Young man,' replied Magnus, 'you know better than most that from these doors no man can turn, without an offence to their owner. I pray you, disturb not my guests by your ill-timed scruples. When Magnus Troil says welcome, all are welcome who are within hearing of his voice, and it is an indifferent loud one.—Walk on, my worthy guests, and let us see what cheer my lasses can make you within doors.'

So saying, and taking care to make his manner so general to the whole party, that Mordaunt should not be able to appropriate any particular portion of the welcome to himself, nor yet to complain of being excluded from all share in it, the Udaller ushered the guests into his house, where two large outer rooms, which, on the present occasion, served the purpose of a modern saloon, were already crowded with guests of every description.

The furniture was sufficiently simple, and had a character peculiar to the situation of these stormy islands. Magnus Troil was, indeed, like most of the higher class of Zetland proprietors, a friend to the distressed traveller, whether by sea or land, and had repeatedly exerted his whole authority in protecting the property and persons of shipwrecked mariners; yet so frequent were wrecks upon that tremendous coast, and so many unappropriated articles were constantly flung ashore, that the interior of the house bore sufficient witness to the ravages of the ocean, and to the exercise of those rights which the lawyers term *flotsom and jetsam*. The chairs, which were arranged around the walls, were such as are used in cabins, and many of them were of foreign construction; the mirrors and cabinets, which were placed against the walls for ornament or convenience, had, it was plain from their form, been constructed for shipboard, and one or two of the latter were of strange and unknown wood. Even the partition which separated the two apartments seemed constructed out of the bulk-heads of some large vessel, clumsily adapted to the service which it at present performed, by the labour of some native joiner. To a stranger, these evident marks and tokens of human misery might, at the first glance, form a contrast with the scene of mirth with which they were now associated; but the association was so familiar to the natives, that it did not for a moment interrupt the course of their glee.

To the younger part of these revellers the presence of Mordaunt was like a fresh charm of enjoyment. All came around him to marvel at his absence, and all, by their repeated inquiries, plainly showed that they conceived it had been entirely voluntary on his side. The youth felt that this general acceptation relieved his anxiety on one painful point. Whatever prejudice the family of Burgh-Westra might have adopted respecting him, it must be of a private nature; and at least he had not the additional pain of finding that he was depreciated in the eyes of society at large; and his vindication, when he found opportunity to make one, would not require to be extended beyond the circle of a single family. This was consoling; though his heart still throbbed with anxiety at the thought of meeting with his estranged, but still beloved friends. Laying the excuse of his absence on his father's state of health, he made his way through the various groups of friends and guests, each of whom seemed willing to detain him as long as possible, and having, by presenting them to one or two families of consequence, got rid of his travelling companions, who at first stuck fast as burrs, he reached at length the door of a small apartment, which, opening from one of the large exterior rooms we have mentioned, Minna and Brenda had been permitted to fit up after their own taste, and to call their peculiar property.

Mordaunt had contributed no small share of the invention and mechanical execution employed in fitting up this favourite apartment, and in disposing its ornaments. It was, indeed, during his last residence at Burgh-Westra, as free to his entrance and occupation as to its proper mistresses. But now, so much were times altered, that he remained with his finger on the latch, uncertain whether he should take the freedom to draw it, until Brenda's voice pronounced the words, 'Come in, then,' in the tone of one who is interrupted by an unwelcome disturber, who is to be heard and despatched with all the speed possible.

At this signal Mertoun entered the fanciful cabinet of the sisters, which by the addition of many ornaments, including some articles of considerable value, had been fitted up for the approaching festival. The daughters of Magnus, at the moment of Mordaunt's entrance, were seated in deep consultation with the stranger Cleveland, and with a little slight-made old man, whose eye retained all the vivacity of spirit which had supported him under the thousand vicissitudes of a changeful and precarious life, and which, accompanying him in his old age, rendered his grey hairs less awfully reverend, perhaps, but not less beloved, than would a more grave and less imaginative expression of countenance and character. There was even [illegible] town was on [illegible]

mingled in the look of curiosity with which, as he stepped for an instant aside, he seemed to watch the meeting of Mordaunt with the two lovely sisters.

The reception the youth met with resembled, in general character, that which he had experienced from Magnus himself; but the maidens could not so well cover their sense of the change of circumstances under which they met. Both blushed, as, rising, and without extending the hand, far less offering the cheek, as the fashion of the times permitted, and almost exacted, they paid to Mordaunt the salutation due to an ordinary acquaintance. But the blush of the older was one of those transient evidences of flitting emotion, that vanish as fast as the passing thought which excites them. In an instant she stood before the youth calm and cold, returning, with guarded and cautious courtesy, the usual civilities, which, with a faltering voice, Mordaunt endeavoured to present to her. The emotion of Brenda bore, externally at least, a deeper and more agitating character. Her blush extended over every part of her beautiful skin which her dress permitted to be visible, including her slender neck and the upper region of a finely-formed bosom. Neither did she even attempt to reply to what share of his confused compliment Mordaunt addressed to her in particular, but regarded him with eyes in which displeasure was evidently mingled with feelings of regret and recollections of former times. Mordaunt felt, as it were, assured upon the instant that the regard of Minna was extinguished, but that it might be yet possible to recover that of the milder Brenda; and such is the waywardness of human fancy, that, though he had never hitherto made any distinct difference betwixt these two beautiful and interesting girls, the favour of her which seemed most absolutely withdrawn, became at the moment the most interesting in his eyes.

He was disturbed in these hasty reflections by Cleveland, who advanced, with military frankness, to pay his compliments to his preserver, having only delayed long enough to permit the exchange of the ordinary salutation betwixt the visitor and the ladies of the family. He made his approach with so good a grace, that it was impossible for Mordaunt, although he dated his loss of favour at Burgh-Westra from the stranger's appearance on the coast and domestication in the family, to do less than return his advances as courtesy demanded, accept his thanks with an appearance of satisfaction, and hope that his time had passed pleasantly since their last meeting.

Cleveland was about to answer, but he was anticipated by the little old man, formerly noticed, who now, thrusting himself forward, and seizing Mordaunt's hand, kissed him on the forehead; and then at the same time echoed and answered his question—'How passes time at Burgh-Westra? Was it you that asked it, my prince of the cliff and of the scaur? How should it pass, but with all the wings that beauty and joy can add to help its flight!'

'And wit and song too, my good old friend,' said Mordaunt, half serious, half jesting, as he shook the old man cordially by the hand—'These cannot be wanting where Claud Halcro comes!'

'Jeer me not, Mordaunt, my good lad,' replied the old man; 'when your foot is as slow as mine, your wit frozen, and your song out of tune'——

'How can you belie yourself, my good master?' answered Mordaunt, who was not unwilling to avail himself of his old friend's peculiarities to introduce something like conversation, break the awkwardness of this singular meeting, and gain time for observation, ere requiring an explanation of the change of conduct which the family seemed to have adopted towards him. 'Say not so,' he continued. 'Time, my old friend, lays his hand lightly on the bard. Have I not heard you say, the poet partakes the immortality of his song? and surely the great English poet you used to tell us of was elder than yourself when he pulled the bow-oar among all the wits of London.'

This alluded to a story which was, as the French term it, Halcro's *cheval de bataille*, and any allusion to which was certain at once to place him in the saddle, and to push his hobby-horse into full career.

His laughing eye kindled with a sort of enthusiasm, which the ordinary folk of this world might have called crazed, while he dashed into the subject which he best loved to talk upon. 'Alas, alas! my dear Mordaunt Mertoun, silver is silver, and waxes not dim by use—and pewter is pewter, and grows the longer the duller. It is not for poor Claud Halcro to name himself in the same twelvemonth with the immortal John Dryden. True it is, as I may have told you before, that I have seen that great man, nay, I have been in the Wits' Coffeehouse, as it was then called, and had once a pinch out of his own very snuff-box. I must have told you all how it happened, but here is Captain Cleveland who never heard it. I lodged, you must know, in Russel Street—I question not but you know Russel Street, Covent Garden, Captain Cleveland?'

'I should know its latitude pretty well, Mr. Halcro,' said the captain, smiling; 'but I believe you mentioned the circumstance yesterday, and besides we have the day's duty in hand—you must play us this song which we are to study.'

'It will not serve the turn now,' said Halcro; 'we must think of something that will take in our dear Mordaunt, the first voice in the island, whether for a part or solo. I will never be he will touch a string to you, unless Mordaunt Mertoun is to help us out.—What say you, my fairest Night?—what think you, my sweet Dawn of Day?' he added, addressing the young women, upon whom, as we have said elsewhere, he had long before bestowed these allegorical names.

'Mr. Mordaunt Mertoun,' said Minna, 'has come too late to be of our band on this occasion—it is our misfortune, but it cannot be helped.'

'How? what?' said Halcro hastily—'too late and you have practised together all your lives! take my word, my bonnie lasses, that old tunes are sweetest, and old friends surest. Mr. Cleveland has a fine bass, that must be allowed; but I would have you trust for the first effect to one of the twenty fine airs you can sing, where Mordaunt's tenor joins so well with your own witchery—here is my lovely Day approves the change in her heart.'

'You were never in your life more mistaken, Father Halcro,' said Brenda, her cheeks again reddening, more with displeasure, it seemed, than with shame.

'Nay, but how is this?' said the old man, pausing, and looking at them alternately. 'What have we got here?—a cloudy Night and a red Morning?—that betokens rough weather.—What means all this, young women?—where lies the offence?—In me, I fear; for the blame is always laid upon the oldest when young folks like you go by the ears.'

'The blame is not with you, Father Halcro,' said Minna, rising and taking her sister by the arm, 'if indeed there be blame anywhere.'

'I should fear, then, Minna,' said Mordaunt, endeavouring to soften his tone into one of indifferent pleasantry, 'that the new comer has brought the offence along with him.'

'When no offence is taken,' replied Minna, with her usual gravity, 'it matters not by whom such may have been offered.'

'Is it possible, Minna?' exclaimed Mordaunt, 'and is it you who speak thus to me?—And you too, Brenda, can you too judge so harshly of me, yet without permitting me one moment of honest and frank explanation?'

'Those who should know best,' answered Brenda, in a low but decisive tone of voice, 'have told us their pleasure, and it must be done.—Sister, I think we have stayed too long here, and shall be wanted elsewhere.—Mr. Mertoun will excuse us on so busy a day.'

The sisters linked their arms together. Halcro in vain endeavoured to stop them, making, at the same time, a theatrical gesture, and exclaiming,

'Now, Day and Night, but this is wondrous strange!'

Then turned to Mordaunt Mertoun, and added—'The girls are possessed with the spirit of mutability, showing, as our Master Spenser well saith, that

Among all living creatures, more or lesse,
Change still doth reign, and keep the greater sway.

Captain Cleveland,' he continued, 'know you anything that has happened to put these two juvenile Graces out of tune?'

'He will lose his reckoning,' answered Cleveland, 'that spends time in inquiring why the wind shifts a point, or why a woman changes her mind. Were I Mr. Mordaunt, I would not ask the proud wenches another question on such a subject.'

'It is a friendly advice, Captain Cleveland,' replied Mordaunt, 'and I will not hold it the less so that it has been given unasked. Allow me to inquire if you are yourself as indifferent to the opinion of your female friends, as it seems you would have me to be?'

'Who, I?' said the captain, with an air of frank indifference; 'I never thought twice upon such a subject. I never saw a woman worth thinking twice about after the anchor was a-peak—on shore it is another thing; and I will laugh, sing, dance, and make love, if they like it, with twenty girls, were they but half so pretty as those who have left us, and make them heartily welcome to change their course in the sound of a boatswain's whistle. It will be odds but I wear as fast as they can.'

A patient is seldom pleased with that sort of consolation which is founded on holding light the malady of which he complains; and Mordaunt felt disposed to be offended with Captain Cleveland, both for taking notice of his embarrassment, and intruding upon him his own opinion; and he replied, therefore, somewhat sharply, 'that Captain Cleveland's sentiments were only suited to such as had the art to become universal favourites wherever chance happened to throw them, and who could not lose in one place more than their merit was sure to gain for them in another.'

This was spoken ironically; but there was, to confess the truth, a superior knowledge of the world, and a consciousness of external merit, at least, about the man, which rendered his interference doubly disagreeable. As Sir Lucius O'Trigger says, there was an air of success about Captain Cleveland which was mighty provoking. Young, handsome, and well assured, his air of nautical bluntness sat naturally and easily upon him, and was perhaps particularly well fitted to the simple manners of the remote country in which he found himself; and where, even in the best families, a greater degree of refinement might have rendered his conversation rather less acceptable. He was contented, in the present instance, to smile good-humouredly at the obvious discontent of Mordaunt Mertoun, and replied, 'You are angry with me, my good friend, but you cannot make me angry with you. The fair hands of all the pretty women I ever saw in my life would never have fished me up out of the Roost of Sumburgh. So, pray, do not quarrel with me; for here is Mr. Halcro witness that I have struck both jack and topsail, and, should you fire a broadside into me, cannot return a single shot.'

'Ay, ay,' said Halcro, 'you must be friends with Captain Cleveland, Mordaunt. Never quarrel with your friend because a woman is whimsical. Why, man, if they kept one humour, how the devil could we make so many songs on them as we do? Even old Dryden himself, glorious old John, could have said little about a girl that was always of one mind—as well write verses upon a mill-pond. It is your tides and your roosts, and your currents and eddies, that come and go, and ebb and flow (by Heaven! I run into rhyme when I so much as think upon them), that smile one day, rage the next, flatter and devour, delight and ruin us, and so forth—it is these that give the real soul of poetry. Did you never hear my Adieu to the Lass of Northmaven—that was poor Bet Stimbister, whom I call Mary for the sound's sake, as I call myself Hacon after my great ancestor Hacon Goldemund, or Haco with the golden mouth, who came to the island with Harold Harfager, and was his chief Scald?—Well, but where was I?—O ay—poor Bet Stimbister, she (and partly some debt) was the cause of my leaving the isles of Hjaltland (better so called than Shetland, or Zetland even), and taking to the broad world. I have had a tramp of it since that time—I have battled my way through the world, Captain, as a man of mold may, that has a light head, a light purse,

and a heart as light as them both—fought my way, and paid my way—that is, either with money or wit—have seen kings changed and deposed, as you would turn a tenant out of a scathold—knew all the wits of the age, and especially the glorious John Dryden—what man in the islands can say as much, barring lying?—I had a pinch out of his own snuff-box—I will tell you how I came by such promotion.'

'But the song, Mr. Halcro?' said Captain Cleveland.

'The song?' answered Halcro, seizing the captain by the button,—for he was too much accustomed to have his audience escape from him during recitation, not to put in practice all the usual means of prevention,—'The song? Why, I gave a copy of it, with fifteen others, to the immortal John. You shall hear it—you shall hear them all, if you will but stand still a moment; and you too, my dear boy, Mordaunt Mertoun, I have scarce heard a word from your mouth these six months, and now you are running away from me.' So saying, he secured him with his other hand.

'Nay, now he has got us both in tow,' said the seaman, 'there is nothing for it but hearing him out, though he spins as tough a yarn as ever an old man-of-war's-man twisted on the watch at midnight.'

'Nay, now, be silent, be silent, and let one of us speak at once,' said the poet imperatively; while Cleveland and Mordaunt, looking at each other with a ludicrous expression of resignation to their fate, waited in submission for the well-known and inevitable tale. 'I will tell you all about it,' continued Halcro. 'I was knocked about the world like other young fellows, doing this, that, and t'other, for a livelihood; for, thank God, I could turn my hand to anything—but loving still the Muses as much as if the ungrateful jades had found me, like so many blockheads, in my own coach-and-six. However, I held out till my cousin, old Lawrence Linkletter, died, and left me the bit of an island yonder; although, by the way, Cultmalindie was as near to him as I was; but Lawrence loved wit, though he had little of his own. Well, he left me the wee bit island—it is as barren as Parnassus itself. What then?—I have a penny to spend, a penny to keep my purse, a penny to give to the poor—ay, and a bed and a bottle for a friend, as you shall know, boys, if you will go back with me when this merriment is over.—But where was I in my story?'

'Near port, I hope,' answered Cleveland; but Halcro was too determined a narrator to be interrupted by the broadest hint.

'O ay,' he resumed, with the self-satisfied air of one who has recovered the thread of a story, 'I was in my old lodgings in Russel Street, with old Timothy Thimblethwaite, the master fashioner, then the best-known man about town. He made for all the wits, and for the dull boobies of fortune besides, and made the one pay for the other. He never denied a wit credit save in jest, or for the sake of getting a repartee; and he was in correspondence with all that was worth knowing about town. He had letters from Crowne, and Tate, and Prior, and Tom Brown, and all the famous fellows of the time, with such pellets of wit, that there was no reading them without laughing ready to die, and all ending with craving a further term for payment.'

'I should have thought the tailor would have found that jest rather serious,' said Mordaunt.

'Not a bit—not a bit,' replied his eulogist; 'Tim Thimblethwaite (he was a Cumberland man by birth) had the soul of a prince—ay, and died with the fortune of one; for woe betide the custard-gorged alderman that came under Tim's goose after he had got one of those letters—egad, he was sure to pay the kain! Why, Thimblethwaite was thought to be the original of little Tom Bibber, in glorious John's comedy of the Wild Gallant; and I know that he has trusted, ay, and lent John money to boot out of his own pocket, at a time when all his fine court friends blew cold enough. He trusted me too, and I have been two months on the score at a time for my upper room. To be sure, I was obliging in his way—not that I exactly could shape or sew, nor would that have been decorous for a gentleman of good descent; but I—eh, eh—I drew bills—summed up the books'——

'Carried home the clothes of the wits and aldermen, and got lodging for your labour,' interrupted Cleveland.

'No, no—damn it, no,' replied Halcro; 'no such thing—you put me out in my story—where was I?'

'Nay, the devil help you to the latitude,' said the captain, extricating his button from the gripe of the unmerciful bard's finger and thumb, 'for I have no time to take an observation.' So saying, he bolted from the room.

'A silly, ill-bred, conceited fool,' said Halcro, looking after him; 'with as little manners as wit in his empty coxcomb. I wonder what Magnus and these silly wenches can see in him—he tells such damnable long-winded stories, too, about his adventures and sea-fights—every second word a lie, I doubt not. Mordaunt, my dear boy, take example by that man—that is, take warning by him—never tell long stories about yourself. You are sometimes given to talk too much about your own exploits on crags and skerries, and the like, which only breaks conversation, and prevents other folk from being heard. Now I see you are impatient to hear out what I was saying.—Stop, whereabouts was I?'

'I fear we must put it off, Mr. Halcro, until after dinner,' said Mordaunt, who also meditated his escape, though desirous of effecting it with more delicacy towards his old acquaintance than Captain Cleveland had thought it necessary to use.

'Nay, my dear boy,' said Halcro, seeing himself about to be utterly deserted, 'do not you leave me too—never take so bad an example as to set light by old acquaintance, Mordaunt. I have wandered many a weary step in my day; but they were always lightened when I could get hold of the arm of an old friend like yourself.'

So saying, he quitted the youth's coat, and, sliding his hand gently under his arm, grappled him more effectually; to which Mordaunt submitted, a little moved by the poet's observation upon the unkindness of old acquaintances, under

which he himself was an immediate sufferer. But when Halcro renewed his formidable question, 'Whereabouts was I?' Mordaunt, preferring his poetry to his prose, reminded him of the song which he said he had written upon his first leaving Zetland,—a song to which, indeed, the inquirer was no stranger, but which, as it must be new to the reader, we shall here insert as a favourable specimen of the poetical powers of this tuneful descendant of Haco the Golden-mouthed; for, in the opinion of many tolerable judges, he held a respectable rank among the inditers of madrigals of the period, and was as well qualified to give immortality to his Nancies of the hills or dales, as many a gentle sonnetteer of wit and pleasure about town. He was something of a musician also, and on the present occasion seized upon a sort of lute, and, quitting his victim, prepared the instrument for an accompaniment, speaking all the while, that he might lose no time.

'I learned the lute,' he said, 'from the same man who taught honest Shadwell—plump Tom, as they used to call him—somewhat roughly treated by the glorious John, you remember—Mordaunt, you remember—

> Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
> The lute still trembling underneath thy nail;
> At thy well-sharpen'd thumb, from shore to shore,
> The trebles squeak for fear, the basses roar.

Come, I am indifferently in tune now—what was it to be?—ay, I remember—nay, The Lass of Northmaven is the ditty—poor Bet Stimbister! I have called her Mary in the verses. Betsy does well for an English song; but Mary is more natural here.' So saying, after a short prelude, he sung, with a tolerable voice and some taste, the following verses:—

Mary.

> Farewell to Northmaven,
> Grey Hillswicke, farewell!
> To the calms of thy haven,
> The storms on thy fell—
> To each breeze that can vary
> The mood of thy main,
> And to thee, bonnie Mary!
> We meet not again.
>
> Farewell the wild ferry,
> Which Hacon could brave,
> When the peaks of the Skerry
> Were white in the wave.
> There's a maid may look over
> These wild waves in vain,
> For the skiff of her lover—
> He comes not again.
>
> The vows thou hast broke,
> On the wild currents fling them;
> On the quicksand and rock
> Let the mermaiden sing them.
> New sweetness they'll give her
> Bewildering strain;
> But there's one who will never
> Believe them again.
>
> O, were there an island,
> Though ever so wild,
> Where woman could smile, and
> No man be beguiled—
> Too tempting a snare
> To poor mortals were given,
> And the hope would fix there,
> That should anchor on heaven!

'I see you are softened, my young friend,' said Halcro, when he had finished his song; 'so are most who hear that same ditty. Words and music both mine own; and without saying much of the wit of it, there is a sort of—eh—eh—simplicity and truth about it, which gets its way to most folk's heart. Even your father cannot resist it—and he has a heart as impenetrable to poetry and song as Apollo himself could draw an arrow against. But then he has had some ill luck in his time with the women-folk, as is plain from his owing them such a grudge.—Ay, ay, there the charm lies—none of us but has felt the same sore in our day. But come, my dear boy, they are mustering in the hall, men and women both—plagues as they are, we should get on ill without them—but before we go, only mark the last turn—

> And the hope would fix there,—

that is, in the supposed island—a place which neither was nor will be—

> That should anchor on heaven.

Now, you see, my good young man, there are here none of your heathenish rants, which Rochester, Etheridge, and these wild fellows, used to string together. A parson might sing the song, and his clerk bear the burden—but there is the confounded bell—we must go now—but never mind—we'll get into a quiet corner at night, and I'll tell you all about it.'

CHAPTER XIII.

> Full in the midst the polish'd table shines,
> And the bright goblets, rich with generous wines;
> Now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares,
> Portions the food, and each the portion shares;
> Nor till the rage of thirst and hunger ceased,
> To the high host approach'd the sagacious guest.
> ODYSSEY.

THE hospitable profusion of Magnus Troil's board, the number of guests who feasted in the hall, the much greater number of retainers, attendants, humble friends, and domestics of every possible description, who revelled without, with the multitude of the still poorer, and less honoured assistants, who came from every hamlet or township within twenty miles round, to share the bounty of the munificent Udaller, were such as altogether astonished Triptolemus Yellowley, and made him internally doubt whether it would be prudent in him at this time, and amid the full glow of his hospitality, to propose to the host who presided over such a splendid banquet, a radical change in the whole customs and usages of his country.

True, the sagacious Triptolemus felt conscious that he possessed in his own person wisdom far superior to that of all the assembled feasters, to say nothing of the landlord, against whose prudence the very extent of his hospitality formed, in Yellowley's opinion, sufficient evidence. But yet the Amphitryon with whom one dines, holds, for the time at least, an influence over the minds of his most distinguished guests; and if the dinner be in good style, and the wines of the right quality, it is humbling to

see that neither art nor wisdom, scarce external rank itself, can assume their natural and wonted superiority over the distributor of these good things, until coffee has been brought in. Triptolemus felt the full weight of this temporary superiority, yet he was desirous to do something that might vindicate the vaunts he had made to his sister and his fellow-traveller, and he stole a look at them from time to time, to mark whether he was not sinking in their esteem from postponing his promised lecture on the enormities of Zetland.

But Mistress Barbara was busily engaged in noting and registering the waste incurred in such an entertainment as she had probably never before looked upon, and in admiring the host's indifference to, and the guests' absolute negligence of, those rules of civility in which her youth had been brought up. The feasters desired to be helped from a dish which was unbroken, and might have figured at supper, with as much freedom as if it had undergone the ravages of half-a-dozen guests; and no one seemed to care—the landlord himself least of all—whether those dishes only were consumed, which, from their nature, were incapable of re-appearance, or whether the assault was extended to the substantial rounds of beef, pasties, and so forth, which, by the rules of good housewifery, were destined to stand two attacks, and which, therefore, according to Mistress Barbara's ideas of politeness, ought not to have been annihilated by the guests upon the first onset, but spared, like Outis in the cave of Polyphemus, to be devoured the last. Lost in the meditations to which these breaches of convivial discipline gave rise, and in the contemplation of an ideal larder of cold meat which she could have saved out of the wreck of roast, boiled, and baked, sufficient to have supplied her cupboard for at least a twelvemonth, Mistress Barbara cared very little whether or not her brother supported in its extent the character which he had calculated upon assuming.

Mordaunt Mertoun also was conversant with far other thoughts than those which regarded the proposed reformer of Zetland enormities. His seat was betwixt two blithe maidens of Thule, who, not taking scorn that he had upon other occasions given preference to the daughters of the Udaller, were glad of the chance which assigned to them the attentions of so distinguished a gallant, who, as being their squire at the feast, might in all probability become their partner in the subsequent dance. But, whilst rendering to his fair neighbours all the usual attentions which society required, Mordaunt kept up a covert, but accurate and close observation, upon his estranged friends, Minna and Brenda. The Udaller himself had a share of his attention; but in him he could remark nothing, except the usual tone of hearty and somewhat boisterous hospitality with which he was accustomed to animate the banquet upon all such occasions of general festivity. But in the differing mien of the two maidens there was much more room for painful remark.

Captain Cleveland sat betwixt the sisters, was sedulous in his attentions to both, and Mordaunt was so placed that he could observe all, and hear a great deal, of what passed between them. But Cleveland's peculiar regard seemed devoted to the elder sister. Of this the younger was perhaps conscious, for more than once her eye glanced towards Mordaunt, and, as he thought, with something in it which resembled regret for the interruption of their intercourse, and a sad remembrance of former and more friendly times; while Minna was exclusively engrossed by the attentions of her neighbour; and that it should be so, filled Mordaunt with surprise and resentment.

Minna, the serious, the prudent, the reserved, whose countenance and manners indicated so much elevation of character—Minna, the lover of solitude, and of those paths of knowledge in which men walk best without company—the enemy of light mirth, the friend of musing melancholy, and the frequenter of fountain-heads and pathless glens—she whose character seemed, in short, the very reverse of that which might be captivated by the bold, coarse, and daring gallantry of such a man as this Captain Cleveland, gave, nevertheless, her eye and ear to him, as he sat beside her at table, with an interest and a graciousness of attention which, to Mordaunt, who well knew how to judge of her feelings by her manner, intimated a degree of the highest favour. He observed this, and his heart rose against the favourite by whom he had been thus superseded, as well as against Minna's indiscreet departure from her own character.

'What is there about the man,' he said within himself, 'more than the bold and daring assumption of importance which is derived from success in petty enterprises, and the exercise of petty despotism over a ship's crew?—His very language is more professional than is used by the superior officers of the British navy; and the wit which has excited so many smiles, seems to me such as Minna would not formerly have endured for an instant. Even Brenda seems less taken with his gallantry than Minna, whom it should have suited so little.'

Mordaunt was doubly mistaken in these his angry speculations. In the first place, with an eye which was, in some respects, that of a rival, he criticised far too severely the manners and behaviour of Captain Cleveland. They were unpolished, certainly; which was of the less consequence in a country inhabited by so plain and simple a race as the ancient Zetlanders. On the other hand, there was an open, naval frankness in Cleveland's bearing—much natural shrewdness—some appropriate humour—an undoubting confidence in himself—and that enterprising hardihood of disposition, which, without any other recommendable quality, very often leads to success with the fair sex. But Mordaunt was further mistaken, in supposing that Cleveland was likely to be disagreeable to Minna Troil, on account of the opposition of their characters in so many material particulars. Had his knowledge of the world been a little more extensive, he might have observed that, as unions are often formed betwixt couples differing in complexion and stature, they take place more frequently betwixt persons totally differing in feelings, in taste, in pursuits, and in understanding; and it

would not be saying, perhaps, too much, to aver that two-thirds of the marriages around us have been contracted betwixt persons who, judging *à priori*, we should have thought had scarce any charms for each other.

A moral and primary cause might be easily assigned for these anomalies, in the wise dispensations of Providence, that the general balance of wit, wisdom, and amiable qualities of all kinds, should be kept up through society at large. For what a world were it, if the wise were to intermarry only with the wise, the learned with the learned, the amiable with the amiable, nay, even the handsome with the handsome? and is it not evident that the degraded castes of the foolish, the ignorant, the brutal, and the deformed (comprehending, by the way, far the greater portion of mankind), must, when condemned to exclusive intercourse with each other, become gradually as much brutalized in person and disposition as so many ourang-outangs? When, therefore, we see the 'gentle joined to the rude,' we may lament the fate of the suffering individual, but we must not the less admire the mysterious disposition of that wise Providence which thus balances the moral good and evil of life; which secures for a family, unhappy in the dispositions of one parent, a share of better and sweeter blood, transmitted from the other, and preserves to the offspring the affectionate care and protection of at least one of those from whom it is naturally due. Without the frequent occurrence of such alliances and unions—mis-sorted as they seem at first sight—the world could not be that for which Eternal Wisdom has designed it—a place of mixed good and evil—a place of trial at once and of suffering, where even the worst ills are checkered with something that renders them tolerable to humble and patient minds, and where the best blessings carry with them a necessary alloy of embittering depreciation.

When, indeed, we look a little closer on the causes of those unexpected and ill-suited attachments, we have occasion to acknowledge that the means by which they are produced do not infer that complete departure from, or inconsistency with, the character of the parties, which we might expect when the result alone is contemplated. The wise purposes which Providence appears to have had in view, by permitting such intermixture of dispositions, tempers, and understandings, in the married state, are not accomplished by any mysterious impulse by which, in contradiction to the ordinary laws of nature, men or women are urged to a union with those whom the world see to be unsuitable to them. The freedom of will is permitted to us in the occurrences of ordinary life, as in our moral conduct; and in the former as well as the latter case, is often the means of misguiding those who possess it. Thus it usually happens, more especially to the enthusiastic and imaginative, that, having formed a picture of admiration in their own mind, they too often deceive themselves by some faint resemblance in some existing being, whom their fancy, as speedily as gratuitously, invests with all the attributes necessary to complete the *beau idéal* of mental perfection. No one, perhaps, even in the happiest marriage, with an object really beloved, ever discovered by experience all the qualities he expected to possess; but in far too many cases, he finds he has practised a much higher degree of mental deception, and has erected his airy castle of felicity upon some rainbow, which owed its very existence only to the peculiar state of the atmosphere.

Thus, Mordaunt, if better acquainted with life, and with the course of human things, would have been little surprised that such a man as Cleveland, handsome, bold, and animated,—a man who had obviously lived in danger, and who spoke of it as sport,—should have been invested, by a girl of Minna's fanciful character, with an extensive share of those qualities which, in her active imagination, were held to fill up the accomplishments of a heroic character. The plain bluntness of his manner, if remote from courtesy, appeared at least as widely different from deceit; and, unfashioned as he seemed by forms, he had enough both of natural sense and natural good-breeding to support the delusion he had created, at least as far as externals were concerned. It is scarce necessary to add that these observations apply exclusively to what are called love-matches; for when either party fix their attachment upon the substantial comforts of a rental, or a jointure, they cannot be disappointed in the acquisition, although they may be cruelly so in their over-estimation of the happiness it was to afford, or in having too slightly anticipated the disadvantages with which it was to be attended.

Having a certain partiality for the dark beauty whom we have described, we have willingly dedicated this digression, in order to account for a line of conduct which we allow to seem absolutely unnatural in such a narrative as the present, though the most common event in ordinary life; namely, in Minna's appearing to have over-estimated the taste, talent, and ability of a handsome young man, who was dedicating to her his whole time and attention, and whose homage rendered her the envy of almost all the other young women of that numerous party. Perhaps, if our fair readers will take the trouble to consult their own bosoms, they will be disposed to allow that the distinguished good taste exhibited by any individual, who, when his attentions would be agreeable to a whole circle of rivals, selects *one* as their individual object, entitles him, on the footing of reciprocity, if on no other, to a large share of that individual's favourable, and even partial esteem. At any rate, if the character shall, after all, be deemed inconsistent and unnatural, it concerns not us, who record the facts as we find them, and pretend no privilege for bringing closer to nature those incidents which may seem to diverge from it; or for reducing to consistence that most inconsistent of all created things,—the heart of a beautiful and admired female.

Necessity, which teaches all the liberal arts, can render us also adepts in dissimulation; and Mordaunt, though a novice, failed not to profit in her school. It was manifest that in order to observe the demeanour of those on whom his attention was fixed, he must needs put constraint on his own, and appear, at least, so much engaged with the damsels betwixt whom he sat, that Minna and Brenda should suppose him indiffer-

ent to what was passing around him. The ready cheerfulness of Maddie and Clara Groatsetter, who were esteemed considerable fortunes in the island, and were at this moment too happy in feeling themselves seated somewhat beyond the sphere of vigilance influenced by their aunt, the good old Lady Glowrowrum, met and requited the attempts which Mordaunt made to be lively and entertaining; and they were soon engaged in a gay conversation, to which, as usual on such occasions, the gentleman contributed wit, or what passes for such, and the ladies their prompt laughter and liberal applause. But, amidst this seeming mirth, Mordaunt failed not, from time to time, as covertly as he might, to observe the conduct of the two daughters of Magnus; and still it appeared as if the elder, wrapped up in the conversation of Cleveland, did not cast away a thought on the rest of the company; and as if Brenda, more openly as she conceived his attention withdrawn from her, looked with an expression both anxious and melancholy towards the group of which he himself formed a part. He was much moved by the diffidence, as well as the trouble, which her looks seemed to convey, and tacitly formed the resolution of seeking a more full explanation with her in the course of the evening. Norna, he remembered, had stated that these two amiable young women were in danger, the nature of which she left unexplained, but which he suspected to arise out of their mistaking the character of this daring and all-engrossing stranger; and he secretly resolved that, if possible, he would be the means of detecting Cleveland, and of saving his early friends.

As he revolved these thoughts, his attention to the Miss Groatsetters gradually diminished, and perhaps he might altogether have forgotten the necessity of his appearing an uninterested spectator of what was passing, had not the signal been given for the ladies retiring from the table. Minna, with a native grace, and somewhat of stateliness in her manner, bent her head to the company in general, with a kinder and more particular expression as her eye reached Cleveland. Brenda, with the blush which attended her slightest personal exertion when exposed to the eyes of others, hurried through the same departing salutation with an embarrassment which almost amounted to awkwardness, but which her youth and timidity rendered at once natural and interesting. Again Mordaunt thought that her eye distinguished him amongst the numerous company. For the first time he ventured to encounter and to return the glance; and the consciousness that he had done so doubled the glow of Brenda's countenance, while something resembling displeasure was blended with her emotion.

When the ladies had retired, the men betook themselves to the deep and serious drinking, which, according to the fashion of the times, preceded the evening exercise of the dance. Old Magnus himself, by precept and example, exhorted them 'to make the best use of their time, since the ladies would soon summon them to shake their feet.' At the same time giving the signal to a grey-headed domestic, who stood behind him in the dress of a Dantzic skipper, and who added to many other occupations that of butler, 'Eric Scambester,' he said, 'has the good ship the Jolly Mariner of Canton got her cargo on board?'

'Chokeful loaded,' answered the Ganymede of Burgh-Westra, 'with good Nantz, Jamaica sugar, Portugal lemons, not to mention nutmeg and toast, and water taken in from the Shellicoat spring.'

Loud and long laughed the guests at this stated and regular jest betwixt the Udaller and his butler, which always served as a preface to the introduction of a punch-bowl of enormous size, the gift of the captain of one of the Honourable East India Company's vessels, which, bound from China homeward, had been driven northabout by stress of weather into Lerwick Bay, and had there contrived to get rid of part of the cargo, without very scrupulously reckoning for the king's duties.

Magnus Troil, having been a large customer, besides otherwise obliging Captain Coolie, had been remunerated, on the departure of the ship, with this splendid vehicle of conviviality, at the very sight of which, as old Eric Scambester bent under its weight, a murmur of applause ran through the company. The good old toasts dedicated to the prosperity of Zetland were then honoured with flowing bumpers. 'Death to the head that never wears hair!' was a sentiment quaffed to the success of the fishing, as proposed by the sonorous voice of the Udaller. Claud Halcro proposed with general applause, 'The health of their worthy landmaster, the sweet sister meat-mistresses; health to man, death to fish, and growth to the produce of the ground.' The same recurring sentiment was proposed more concisely by a whiteheaded compeer of Magnus Troil, in the words, 'God open the mouth of the grey fish, and keep his hand about the corn!'*

Full opportunity was afforded to all to honour these interesting toasts. Those nearest the capacious Mediterranean of punch were accommodated by the Udaller with their portions, dispensed in huge rummer glasses by his own hospitable hand, whilst they who sat at a greater distance replenished their cups by means of a rich silver flagon, facetiously called the Pinnace; which, filled occasionally at the bowl, served to dispense its liquid treasures to the more remote parts of the table, and occasioned many right merry jests on its frequent voyages. The commerce of the Zetlanders with foreign vessels and homeward-bound West Indiamen had early served to introduce among them the general use of the generous beverage with which the Jolly Mariner of Canton was loaded; nor was there a man in the archipelago of Thule more skilled in combining its rich ingredients than old Eric Scambester, who indeed was known far and wide through the isles by the name of the Punchmaker, after the fashion of the ancient Norwegians, who conferred on Rollo the Walker, and other heroes of their strain, epithets expressive of the feats of strength or dexterity in which they excelled all other men.

The good liquor was not slow in performing

* See Hibbert's *Description of the Shetland Islands*, 470.

its office of exhilaration, and, as the revel advanced, some ancient Norse drinking-songs were sung with great effect by the guests, tending to show that, if, from want of exercise, the martial virtues of their ancestors had decayed among the Zetlanders, they could still actively and intensely enjoy so much of the pleasures of Valhalla as consisted in quaffing the oceans of mead and brown ale, which were promised by Odin to those who should share his Scandinavian paradise. At length, excited by the cup and song, the diffident grew bold, and the modest loquacious all became desirous of talking, and none were willing to listen—each man mounted his own special hobby-horse, and began eagerly to call on his neighbours to witness his agility. Amongst others, the little bard, who had now got next to our friend Mordaunt Mertoun, evinced a positive determination to commence and conclude, in all its longitude and latitude, the story of his introduction to glorious John Dryden; and Triptolemus Yellowley, as his spirits arose, shaking off a feeling of involuntary awe, with which he was impressed by the opulence indicated in all he saw around him, as well as by the respect paid to Magnus Troil by the assembled guests, began to broach, to the astonished and somewhat offended Udaller, some of those projects for ameliorating the islands, which he had boasted of to his fellow-travellers upon their journey of the morning.

But the innovations which he suggested, and the reception which they met with at the hand of Magnus Troil, must be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

> We'll keep our customs—what is law itself,
> But old-establish'd custom? What religion
> (I mean, with one-half of the men that use it),
> Save the good use and wont that carries them
> To worship how and where their fathers worshipp'd?
> All things resolve in custom—we'll keep ours.
>
> OLD PLAY.

WE left the company of Magnus Troil engaged in high wassail and revelry. Mordaunt alone... his father, shunned the festive cup... take in the cheerfulness which the... among the guests as they unloosed it, and the Pinnace, as it circumnavigated the table. But, in low spirits as he seemed, he was the more meet prey for the story-telling Halcro, who had fixed upon him, as in a favourable state to play the part of listener, with something of the same instinct that directs the hooded crow to the sick sheep among the flock, which will most patiently suffer itself to be made a prey of. Joyfully did the poet avail himself of the advantages afforded by Mordaunt's absence of mind, and unwillingness to exert himself in the means of active defence. With the unfailing pertinacity peculiar to prosers, he contrived to spin out his tale to double its usual length... exercise of the privilege of unlimited... ; so that the story, like a horse on the grand pas, seemed to be advancing with rapidity, while, in reality, it scarce was progressive at the rate of a yard in the quarter of an hour. At length, however, he had discussed, in all its various bearings and relations, the history of his friendly landlord, the master fashioner in Russel Street, including a short sketch of five of his relations, and anecdotes of three of his principal rivals, together with some general observations upon the dress and fashion of the period; and, having marched thus far through the environs and outworks of his story, he arrived at the body of the place, for so the Wits' Coffeehouse might be termed. He paused on the threshold, however, to explain the nature of his landlord's right occasionally to intrude himself into this well-known temple of the Muses.

'It consisted,' said Halcro, 'in the two principal points of bearing and forbearing; for my friend Thimblethwaite was a person of wit himself, and never quarrelled with any jest which the wags who frequented that house were flinging about, like squibs and crackers on a rejoicing night: and then, though some of the wits—ay, and I daresay the greater number, might have had some dealings with him in the way of trade, he never was the person to put any man of genius in unpleasant remembrance of such trifles. And though, my dear young Master Mordaunt, you may think this is but ordinary civility, because in this country it happens seldom that there is either much borrowing or lending, and because, praised be Heaven, there are neither bailiffs nor sheriff-officers to take a poor fellow by the neck, and because there are no prisons to put him into when they have done so, yet, let me tell you, that such a lamb-like forbearance as that of my poor dear deceased landlord Thimblethwaite is truly uncommon within the London bills of mortality. I could tell you of such things that have happened even to myself, as well as others, with these cursed London tradesmen, as would make your hair stand on end. But what the devil has put old Magnus into such note? he shouts as if he were trying his voice against a north-west gale of wind.'

Loud indeed was the roar of the old Udaller, as, worn out of patience by the schemes of improvement which the factor was now undauntedly pressing upon his consideration, he answered him (to use an Ossianic phrase), like a wave upon a rock.

'Trees, Sir Factor—talk not to me of trees! I care not though there never be one on the island, tall enough to hang a coxcomb upon. We will have no trees but those that rise in our havens—the good trees that have yards for boughs, and standing rigging for leaves.'

'But touching the draining of the lake... Braebaster, whereof I spoke to you, Master... Magnus Troil,' answered the persevering agriculturist, 'whilk I opine would be of so ... consequence, there are two ways,—down ... Linklater glen, or by the Sealmester burn ... having taken the level of both'——

'There is a third way, Master Yellowley,' answered the landlord.

'... profess I can see none,' replied ... with as much good faith as a jok... in the subject of his wit, 'in resp... called Braebaster on the south ... bank on the north, of whilk I ... me rightly in my head'——

... with ... tanch ... by the ... Jolly ... a pledge ... and to the ... ever other ... as an apology ... punch. ... ancing-room, an ... simplicity of the ... rawing-rooms and ... n Scotland, save in

'Do not tell us of hills and banks, Maste Yellowley—there is a third way of draining th loch, and it is the only way that shall be trie in my day. You say my Lord Chamberlain and I are the joint proprietors—so be it—let each o us start an equal proportion of brandy, lime juice, and sugar, into the loch—a ship's cargo o two will do the job—let us assemble all the jolly udallers of the country, and in twenty-four hour you shall see dry ground where the loch of Brae baster now is.'

A loud laugh of applause, which for a tim actually silenced Triptolemus, attended a jest s very well suited to time and place—a jolly toast was given—a merry song was sung—the Shi unloaded her sweets—the Pinnace made its genia rounds—the duet betwixt Magnus and Tripto lemus, which had attracted the attention of th whole company from its superior vehemence, now once more sunk, and merged into the general hum of the convivial table, and the poet Halcro again resumed his usurped possession of the ear of Mordaunt Mertoun.

'Whereabouts was I?' he said, with a tone which expressed to his weary listener more plainly than words could, how much of his desultory tale yet remained to be told. 'O, I remember—we were just at the door of the Wits' Coffeehouse—it was set up by one'——

'Nay, but, my dear Mr. Halcro,' said his hearer, somewhat impatiently, 'I am des 's to hear of your meeting with Dryden.'

'What, with glorious John?—true—ay—where was I? At the Wits' Coffeehouse—Well, in at the door we got—the waiters, and so forth, staring at me; for as to Thimblethwaite, honest fellow, his was a well-known face—I can tell you a story about that'——

'Nay, but John Dryden,' said Mordaunt, in a tone which deprecated further digression.

'Ay, ay, glorious John—where was I?—Well, as we stood close by the bar, where one fellow sat grinding coffee, and another putting up tobacco int ny parcels—a pipe and a dish cost just a penny—then and there it was that I had the first peep of him. One Dennis sat near him, who'——

'Nay, but John D what like was he?' demanded Mordaunt.

'Like a little fat old man, with his own grey hair, and in a full-trimmed black suit, that sat close as a glove. Honest Thimblethwaite let no one but himself shape for glorious John, and he had a slashing hand at a sleeve, I promise you—But there is no getting a mouthful of common nse spoken here—d n that Scotchman, he Magnus are at it again!'

was very true; and although the inter- on did not resemble a thunder-clap, to thr the former stentorian exclamation of the erc night have been likened, it was a close dance orous dispute, maintained by question, had botort, and repartee, as closely huddled Anxious, other as the sounds which announce own disap nce a close and sustained fire of wise to ent proached his sir?' said the Udaller; 'we will so acceptable speak reason too; and if reason ing one of th all have rhyme to boot.—Ha, alcro!'

Though cut off in the middle of his best story (if that could be said to have a middle which had neither beginning nor end), the bard bristled up at the summons, like a corps of light infantry when ordered up to the support of the grenadiers, looked smart, slapped the table with his hand, and denoted his becoming readiness to back his hospitable landlord as becomes a well-entertained guest. Triptolemus was a little daunted at this reinforcement of his adversary; he paused, like a cautious general, in the sweeping attack which he had commenced on the peculiar usages of Zetland, and spoke not again until the Udaller poked him with the insulting query, 'Where is your reason now, Master Yellowley, that you were deafening me with a moment since?'

'Be but patient, worthy sir,' replied the agriculturist; 'what on earth can you or any other man say in defence of that thing you call a plough, in this blinded country? Why, even the savage Highlandmen, in Caithness and Sutherland, can make more work, and better, with their gascromh, or whatever they call it.'

'But what ails you at it, sir?' said the Udaller; 'let me hear your objections to it. It tills our land, and what would ye more?'

'It hath but one handle or stilt,' replied Triptolemus.

'And who the devil,' said the poet, aiming at something smart, 'would wish to need a pair of stilts, if he can manage to walk with a single one?'

'Or tell me,' said Magnus Troil, 'how it were possible for Neil of Lupness, that lost one arm by his fall from the crag of Nekbreckan, to manage a plough with two handles?'

'The harness is of raw sealskin,' said Triptolemus.

'It will save dressed leather,' answered Magnus Troil.

'It is drawn by four wretched bullocks,' said the agriculturist, 'that are yoked breast-fashion; and two women must follow this unhappy instrument, and complete the furrows with a couple of shovels.'

'Drink about, Master Yellowley,' said the Udaller; 'and, as you say in Scotland, "never fash your thumb." Our cattle are too high-spirited to let one go before the other; our men are too gentle and well-nurtured to take the working-field without the women's company; our ploughs till our land—our land bears us barley; we rew our ale, eat our bread, and make strangers welcome to their share of it. Here's to you, Master Yellowley.'

This was said in a tone meant to be decisive of the question; and, accordingly, Halcro whispered to Mordaunt, 'That has settled the matter, and now we will get on with glorious John.—There he sat in his suit of full-trimmed black; two years due was the bill, as ine honest landlord afterwards told me,—and s an eye in his head!—none of your burning, blighting, falcon eyes, which we poets are apt to make a rout about,—but a soft, full en htful, yet penetrating glance—never saw slow it of it in my life, unless it were little Ste Kleancogg's, the fiddler, at Papastow, who'——

'Nay, but John Dryden?' said Mordaunt, who, for want of better amusement, had begun

to take a sort of pleasure in keeping the old gentleman to his narrative, as men herd a restive sheep, when they wish to catch him. He returned to his theme, with his usual phrase of 'Ay, true —glorious John—Well, sir, he cast his eye, such as I have described it, on my landlord, and "Honest Tim," said he, "what hast thou got here?" and all the wits and lords, and gentlemen, that used to crowd round him, like the wenches round a pedlar at a fair, they made way for us, and up we came to the fireside, where he had his own established chair,—I have heard it was carried to the balcony in summer, but it was by the fireside when I saw it,—so up came Tim Thimblethwaite, through the midst of them, as bold as a lion, and I followed with a small parcel under my arm, which I had taken up partly to oblige my landlord, as the shop-porter was not in the way, and partly that I might be thought to have something to do there, for you are to think there was no admittance at the Wits' for strangers who had no business there. I have heard that Sir Charles Sedley said a good thing about that'——

'Nay, but you forget glorious John,' said Mordaunt.

'Ay, glorious you may well call him. They talk of their Blackmore, and Shadwell, and such like,—not fit to tie the latchets of John's shoes —"Well," he said to my landlord, "what have you got there?" and he, bowing, I warrant, lower than he would to a duke, said he had made bold to come and show him the stuff which Lady Elizabeth had chose for her night-gown. —"And which of your geese is that, Tim, who has got it tucked under his wing?"—"He is an Orkney goose, if it please you, Mr. Dryden," said Tim, who had wit at will, "and he hath brought you a copy of verses for your honour to look at."—"Is he amphibious?" said glorious John, taking the paper,—and methought I could rather have faced a battery of cannon than the crackle it gave as it opened, though he did not speak in a way to dash one neither;—and then he looked at the verses, and he was pleased to say, in a very encouraging way indeed, with a sort of good-humoured smile on his face, and certainly, for a fat elderly gentleman,—for I would not compare it to Minna's smile, or Brenda's,—he had the pleasantest smile I ever saw,—"Why, Tim," he said, "this goose of yours will prove a swan on our hands." With that he smiled a little, and they all laughed, and none louder than those who stood too far off to hear the jest; for every one knew when he smiled there was something worth laughing at, and so took it upon trust; and the word passed through among the young Templars, and the wits, and the smarts, and there was nothing but question on question who we were; and one French fellow was trying to tell them it was only Monsieur Tim Thimblethwaite; but he made such work with his Dambletate and Timbletate, that I thought his explanation would have lasted'——

'As long as your own story,' thought Mordaunt; but the narrative was at length finally cut short by the strong and decided voice of the Udaller.

'I will hear no more on it, Master Factor,' he exclaimed.

'At least let me say something about the breed of horses,' said Yellowley, in rather a cry-mercy tone of voice. 'Your horses, my dear sir, resemble cats in size, and tigers in devilry!'

'For their size,' said Magnus, 'they are the easier for us to get off and on them'—(as Triptolemus experienced this morning, thought Mordaunt to himself)—'and as for their devilry, let no one mount them that cannot manage them.'

A twinge of self-conviction, on the part of the agriculturist, prevented him from reply. He darted a deprecatory glance at Mordaunt, as if for the purpose of imploring secrecy respecting his tumble; and the Udaller, who saw his advantage, although he was not aware of the cause, pursued it with the high and stern tone proper to one who had all his life been unaccustomed to meet with, and unapt to endure, opposition.

'By the blood of Saint Magnus the Martyr,' he said, 'but you are a fine fellow, Master Factor Yellowley! You come to us from a strange land, understanding neither our laws, nor our manners, nor our language, and you propose to become governor of the country, and that we should all be your slaves!'

'My pupils, worthy sir, my pupils!' said Yellowley, 'and that only for your own proper advantage.'

'We are too old to go to school,' said the Zetlander. 'I tell you once more, we will sow and reap our grain as our fathers did—we will eat what God sends us, with our doors open to the stranger, even as theirs were open. If there is aught imperfect in our practice, we will amend it in time and season; but the blessed Baptist's holiday was made for light hearts and quick heels. He that speaks a word more of reason, as you call it, or anything that looks like it, shall swallow a pint of sea-water—he shall, by this hand!—and so fill up the good ship, the Jolly Mariner of Canton, once more, for the benefit of those that will stick by her; and let the rest have a fling with the fiddlers, who have been summoning us this hour. I will warrant every wench is on tiptoe by this time. Come, Master Yellowley, no unkindness, man—why, man, thou feelest the rolling of the Jolly Mariner still'—(for, in truth, honest Triptolemus showed a little unsteadiness of motion, as he rose to attend his host)—'but never mind, we shall have thee find thy hind-legs to reel it with yonder bonnie belles. Come along, Triptolemus—let me grapple thee fast, lest thou *trip*, old Triptolemus—ha, ha, ha!'

So saying, the portly though weatherbeaten hulk of the Udaller sailed off like a man-of-war that had braved a hundred gales, having his guest in tow like a recent prize. The greater part of the revellers followed their leader with loud jubilee, although there were several staunch topers, who, taking the option left them by the Udaller, remained behind to relieve the Jolly Mariner of a fresh cargo, amidst many a pledge to the health of their absent landlord, and to the prosperity of his roof-tree, with whatsoever other wishes of kindness could be devised, as an apology for another pint-bumper of noble punch.

The rest soon thronged the dancing-room, an apartment which partook of the simplicity of the time and of the country. Drawing-rooms and saloons were then unknown in Scotland, save in

the houses of the nobility, and of course absolutely so in Zetland; but a long, low, anomalous storeroom, sometimes used for the depositation of merchandise, sometimes for putting aside lumber, and a thousand other purposes, was well known to all the youth of Dunrossness, and of many a district besides, as the scene of the merry dance, which was sustained with so much glee when Magnus Troil gave his frequent feasts.

The first appearance of this ballroom might have shocked a fashionable party, assembled for the quadrille or the waltz. Low as we have stated the apartment to be, it was but imperfectly illuminated by lamps, candles, ship-lanterns, and a variety of other *candelabra*, which served to throw a dusky light upon the floor, and upon the heaps of merchandise and miscellaneous articles which were piled around; some of them stores for the winter; some, goods destined for exportation; some, the tribute of Neptune, paid at the expense of shipwrecked vessels, whose owners were unknown; some, articles of barter received by the proprietor, who, like most others at the period, was somewhat of a merchant as well as a landholder, in exchange for the fish, and other articles, the produce of his estate. All these, with the chests, boxes, casks, etc., which contained them, had been drawn aside, and piled one above the other, in order to give room for the dancers, who, light and lively as if they had occupied the most splendid saloon in the parish of Saint James's, executed their national dances with equal grace and activity.

The group of old men who looked on, bore no inconsiderable resemblance to a party of aged Tritons, engaged in beholding the sports of the sea-nymphs; so hard a look had most of them acquired by contending with the elements, and so much did the shaggy hair and beards, which many of them cultivated after the ancient Norwegian fashion, give their heads the character of these supposed natives of the deep. The young people, on the other hand, were uncommonly handsome, tall, well-made, and shapely; the men with long fair hair, and, until broken by the weather, a fresh, ruddy complexion, which, in the females, was softened into a bloom of infinite delicacy. Their natural good ear for music qualified them to second to the utmost the exertions of a band, whose strains were by no means contemptible; while the elders, who stood around, or sat quiet upon the old sea chests, which served for chairs, criticised the dancers, as they compared their execution with their own exertions in former days; or, warmed by the cup and flagon, which continued to circulate among them, snapped their fingers, and beat time with their feet to the music.

Mordaunt looked upon this scene of universal mirth with the painful recollection that he, thrust aside from his pre-eminence, no longer exercised the important duties of chief of the dancers, or office of leader of the revels, which had been assigned to the stranger Cleveland. Anxious, however, to suppress the feelings of his own disappointment, which he felt it was neither wise to entertain nor manly to display, he approached his fair neighbours to whom he had been so acceptable at table, with the purpose of inviting one of them to become his partner in the dance. But the awfully ancient old lady, even the Lady Glowrowrum, who had only tolerated the exuberance of her nieces' mirth during the time of dinner, because her situation rendered it then impossible for her to interfere, was not disposed to permit the apprehended renewal of the intimacy implied in Mertoun's invitation. She therefore took upon herself, in the name of her two nieces, who sat pouting beside her in displeased silence, to inform Mordaunt, after thanking him for his civility, that the hands of her nieces were engaged for that evening; and, as he continued to watch the party at a little distance, he had an opportunity of being convinced that the alleged engagement was a mere apology to get rid of him, when he saw the two good humoured sisters join the dance under the auspices of the next young men who asked their hands. Incensed at so marked a slight, and unwilling to expose himself to another, Mordaunt Mertoun drew back from the circle of dancers, shrouded himself amongst the mass of inferior persons who crowded into the bottom of the room as spectators, and there, concealed from the observation of others, digested his own mortification as well as he could—that is to say, very ill- and with all the philosophy of his age—that is to say, with none at all.

CHAPTER XV.

> A torch for me: let wantons, light of heart,
> Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels;
> For I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase—
> I'll be a candle holder, and look on.
>
> ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE youth, says the moralist Johnson, cares not for the boy's hobby-horse, nor the man for the youth's mistress; and therefore the distress of Mordaunt Mertoun, when excluded from the merry dance, may seem trifling to many of my readers, who would, nevertheless, think they did well to be angry if deposed from their usual place in an assembly of a different kind. There lacked not amusement, however, for those whom the dance did not suit, or who were not happy enough to find partners to their liking. Halcro, now completely in his element, had assembled round him an audience, to whom he was declaiming his poetry with all the enthusiasm of glorious John himself, and receiving in return the usual degree of applause allowed to minstrels who recite their own rhymes so long at least as the author is within hearing of the criticism. Halcro's poetry might indeed have interested the antiquary as well as the admirer of the Muses, for several of his pieces were translations or imitations from the Scaldic sagas, which continued to be sung by the fishermen of these islands even until a very late period; insomuch that, when Gray's poems first found their way to Orkney, the old people recognised at once, in the ode of the 'Fatal Sisters,' the Runic rhymes which had amused or terrified their infancy under the title of the 'Magicians,' and which the fishers of North Ronaldsha, and other remote isles, used still to sing when asked for a Norse ditty.*

* See Note C.

Half-listening, half-lost in his own reflections, Mordaunt Mertoun stood near the door of the apartment, and in the outer ring of the little circle formed around old Halcro, while the bard chanted to a low, wild, monotonous air, varied only by the efforts of the singer to give interest and emphasis to particular passages, the following imitation of a northern war-song:—

The Song of Harold Harfager.

The sun is rising dimly red,
The wind is wailing low and dread,
From his cliff the eagle sallies,
Leaves the wolf his darksome valleys;
In the mist the ravens hover,
Peep the wild-dogs from the cover,
Screaming, croaking, baying, yelling,
Each in his wild accents telling,
'Soon we feast on dead and dying,
Fair-hair'd Harold's flag is flying.'

Many a crest in air is streaming,
Many a helmet darkly gleaming,
Many an arm the axe uprears,
Doom'd to hew the wood of spears.
All along the crowded ranks,
Horses neigh and armour clanks;
Chiefs are shouting, clarions ringing,
Louder still the bard is singing,
'Gather, footmen—gather, horsemen,
To the field, ye valiant Norsemen!

'Halt ye not for food or slumber,
View not vantage, count not number;
Jolly reapers, forward still;
Grow the crop on vale or hill,
Thick or scatter'd, stiff or lithe,
It shall down before the scythe.
Forward with your sickles bright,
Reap the harvest of the fight—
Onward, footmen,- onward, horsemen,
To the charge, ye gallant Norsemen!

'Fatal chooser of the Slaughter,
O'er you hovers Odin's daughter;
Hear the choice she spreads before ye,—
Victory, and wealth, and glory;
Or old Valhalla's roaring hail,
Her ever-circling mead and ale,
Where for eternity unite
The joys of wassail and of fight.
Headlong forward, foot and horsemen,
Charge and fight, and die like Norsemen!'

'The poor unhappy blinded heathens!' said Triptolemus, with a sigh deep enough for a groan; 'they speak of their eternal cups of ale, and I question if they ken'd how to manage a croft land of grain!'

'The cleverer fellows they, neighbour Yellow
ley,' answered the poet, 'if they m... will prove
barley.' ...he smiled a
'Barley!—alack-a-day!' ...and none louder
accurate agriculturist; '... off to hear the jest;
in these parts? Be... ...ien he smiled there was
all they have, ar... ...ghing at, and so took it upon
they ever see... ...ord passed through among the
with a bit ... ...s, and the wits, and the smarts,
weel give it ... nothing but question on question
kame. O t... and one French fellow was trying
the sole-cl... ...of ...nly Monsieur Tim Thimble-
with a chiel... made such work with his
laying a we... ...d Timbletate, that I thought his
mountain; t... ...ld have lasted'—— ... down a
broad-breasted... our own story,' ...and as many
soil and till, ... narrative wa... ...es, going through
would carry ... strong ... a fur in the ground
...er like a causeyed syver! They that have seen a sight like that, have seen something to crack about in another sort, than those unhappy auld-warld stories of war and slaughter, of which the land has seen even but too mickle, for a' your singing and soughing awa in praise of such bloodthirsty doings, Master Claud Halcro.'

'It is a heresy,' said the animated little poet, bridling and drawing himself up, as if the whole defence of the Orcadian archipelago rested on his single arm—'It is a heresy so much as to name one's native country, if a man is not prepared when and how to defend himself—ay, and to annoy another. The time has been, that, if we made not good ale and aquavitæ, we knew well enough where to find that which was ready made to our hand; but now the descendants of sea-kings, and champions, and Berserkars, are become as incapable of using their swords as if they were so many women. Ye may praise them for a strong pull on an oar, or a sure foot on a skerry; but what else could glorious John himself say of ye, my good Hjaltlanders, that any man would listen to?'

'Spoken like an angel, most noble poet,' said Cleveland, who, during an interval of the dance, stood near the party in which this conversation was held. 'The old champions you talked to us about yesternight were the men to make a harp ring—gallant fellows that were friends to the sea, and enemies to all that sailed on it. Their ships, I suppose, were clumsy enough; but if it is true that they went upon the account as far as the Levant, I scarce believe that ever better fellows unloosed a topsail.'

'Ay,' replied Halcro, 'there you spoke them right. In those days none could call their life and means of living their own, unless they dwelt twenty miles out of sight of the blue sea. Why, they had public prayers put up in every church in Europe, for deliverance from the ire of the Northmen. In France and England, ay, and in Scotland too, for as high as they hold their head now-a-days, there was not a bay or a haven, but it was freer to our forefathers than to the poor devils of natives; and now we cannot, forsooth, so much as grow our own barley without Scottish help'—(here he darted a sarcastic glance at the factor)—'I would I saw the time we were to measure arms with them again.'

'Spoken like a hero once more,' said Cleveland.

'Ah!' continued the little bard, 'I would it were possible to see our barks, once the water-dragons of the world, swimming with the black raven standard waving at the topmast, and their ...cks glimmering with arms, instead of being ...aped up with stockfish—winning with our fearless hands what the niggard soil denies—paying back all old scorn and modern injury—reaping where we never sowed, and felling what we never planted—living and laughing through the world, and smiling when we were summoned to quit it!'

So spoke Claud Halcro, in no serious, or at least most certainly in no sober mood, his brain (never the most stable) whizzing under...ology influence of fifty well-remembered sagas, ... five bumpers of usquebaugh and br..., and Cleveland, between jest and earnest, clapped him on the shoulder, and again repeated, 'Spoken like a hero!'

'Spoken like a fool, I think,' said Magnus Troil, whose attention had been also attracted by the vehemence of the little bard—'where would you cruise upon, or against whom?—we are all subjects of one realm, I trow, and I would have you to remember that your voyage may bring up at Execution-dock. I like not th Scots—no offence, Master Yellowley—that is, I would like them well enough if they would stay quiet in their own land, and leave us at peace with our own people, and manners, and fashions; and if they would but abide there till I went to harry them like a mad old Berserkar, I would leave them in peace till the day of judgment. With what the sea sends us, and the land lends us, as the proverb says, and a set of honest neighbourly folks to help us to consume it, so help me, Saint Magnus, as I think we are even but too happy!'

'I know what war is,' said an old man, 'and I would as soon sail through Sumburgh Roost in a cockleshell, or in a worse loom, as I would venture there again.'

'And pray, what wars knew your valour?' said Halcro, who, though forbearing to contradict his landlord from a sense of respect, was not a whit inclined to abandon his argument to any meaner authority.

'I was pressed,' answered the old Triton, 'to serve under Montrose, when he came here about the sixteen hundred and fifty-one, and carried a sort of us off, will ye nill ye, to get our throats cut in the wilds of Strathnavern* -I shall never forget it—we had been hard put to it for victuals —what would I have given for a luncheon of Burgh-Westra beef—ay, or a mess of sour sillocks?—When our Highlandmen brought in a dainty drove of kyloes, much ceremony there was not, for we shot, and felled, and flayed, and roasted, and broiled, as it came to every man's hand; till, just as our beards were at the greasiest, we heard- God preserve us—a tramp of horse, then twa or three drapping shots,-- then came a full salvo,—and then, when the officers were crying on us to stand, and maist of us looking which way we might run away, down they broke, horse and foot, with old John Urry, or Hurry,† or whatever they call him—he hurried us that day, and worried us to boot—and we began to fall as thick as the stots that we were felling five minutes before.'

'And Montrose,' said the soft voice of the graceful Minna; 'what became of Montrose, or how looked he?'

'Like a lion with the hunters before him,' answered the old gentleman; 'but I looked not twice his way, for my own lay right over the hill.'

'And so you left him?' said Minna, in a tone of the deepest contempt.

'It was no fault of mine, Mistress Minna,' answered the old man, somewhat out of countenance; 'but I was there with no choice of my own; and, besides, what good could I have done?—all the rest were running like sheep, and why should I have stayed?'

'You might have died with him,' said Minna.

'And lived with him to all eternity, in immortal verse!' added Claud Halcro.

'I thank you, Mistress Minna,' replied the plain-dealing Zetlander; 'and I thank you, my old friend Claud;—but I would rather drink both your healths in this good bicker of ale, like a living man as I am, than that you should be making songs in my honour, for having died forty or fifty years agone. But what signified it,—run or fight, 'twas all one;—they took Montrose, poor fellow, for all his doughty deeds, and they took me, that did no doughty deeds at all; and they hanged him, poor man, and as for me'—

'I trust in Heaven they flogged and pickled you,' said Cleveland, worn out of patience with the dull narrative of the peaceful Zetlander's poltroonery, of which he seemed so wondrous little ashamed.

'Flog horses, and pickle beef,' said Magnus; 'why, you have not the vanity to think that, with all your quarterdeck airs, you will make poor old neighbour Haagen ashamed that he was not killed some scores of years since? You have looked on death yourself, my doughty young friend, but it was with the eyes of a young man who wishes to be thought of; but we are a peaceful people,—peaceful, that is, as long as any one should be peaceful, and that is till some one has the impudence to wrong us, or our neighbours; and then, perhaps, they may not find our northern blood much cooler in our veins than was that of the old Scandinavians that gave us our names and lineage.—Get ye along, get ye along to the sword-dance,‡ that the strangers that are amongst us may see that our hands and our weapons are not altogether unacquainted even yet.'

A dozen cutlasses, selected hastily from an old arm-chest, and whose rusted hue bespoke how seldom they left the sheath, armed the same number of young Zetlanders, with whom mingled six maidens, led by Minna Troil; and the minstrelsy instantly commenced a tune appropriate to the ancient Norwegian war-dance, the evolutions of which are perhaps still practised in those remote islands.

The first movement was graceful and majestic, the youths holding their swords erect, and without much gesture; but the tune, and the corresponding motions of the dancers, became [illegible]radu[illegible] [illegible]e and more rapid,—they clashed their [illegible] together, in measured time, with a spir[illegible] gave the exercise a dangerous appeara[illegible] [illegible]ye of the spectator, though the firm[illegible] [illegible]ese [illegible]d accuracy with which the da[illegible] [illegible]much that, [illegible]the stroke of their weapons [illegible]eir way to Orkney, [illegible] safety. The most sin[illegible] at [illegible]ce, in the ode [illegible]tion was the courage ex[illegible] Runic rhymes wh[illegible] [illegible]rformers, who now, surroun[illegible] infancy under [illegible]en, seemed like the Sabine maiden which the [illegible] of their Roman lovers; now, moving remote isl[illegible] arch of steel which the young men ha[illegible] ditt[illegible]ed, by crossing

* Montrose, in his last and ill-advised attempt to invade An[illegible]d, augmented his small army of Danes and Scottish [illegible]wn [illegible] by some bands of ra[illegible] [illegible]s, hastily levied, or rath[illegible] [illegible]ed into his service, in the Orkney and Zetland Isles, who, having little heart either to the cause or manner of service, behaved but indifferently when they came into action.

† Note O. Sir John Urry.

‡ Note P. The sword-dance.

their weapons over the heads of their fair partners, resembled the band of Amazons when they first joined in the Pyrrhic dance with the followers of Theseus. But by far the most striking and appropriate figure was that of Minna Troil, whom Halcro had long since entitled the Queen of Swords, and who, indeed, moved amidst the swordsmen with an air, which seemed to hold all the drawn blades, as the proper accompaniments of her person, and the implements of her pleasure. And when the mazes of the dance became more intricate, when the close and continuous clash of the weapons made some of her companions shrink, and show signs of fear, her cheek, her lip, and her eye seemed rather to announce that, at the moment when the weapons flashed fastest and rung sharpest around her, she was most completely self-possessed, and in her own element. Last of all, when the music had ceased, and she remained for an instant upon the floor by herself, as the rule of the dance required, the swordsmen and maidens, who departed from around her, seemed the guards and the train of some princess, who, dismissed by her signal, were leaving her for a time to solitude. Her own look and attitude, wrapped, as she probably was, in some vision of the imagination, corresponded admirably with the ideal dignity which the spectators ascribed to her; but, almost immediately recollecting herself, she blushed, as if conscious she had been, though but for an instant, the object of undivided attention, and gave her hand gracefully to Cleveland, who, though he had not joined in the dance, assumed the duty of conducting her to her seat.

As they passed, Mordaunt Mertoun might observe that Cleveland whispered into Minna's ear, and that her brief reply was accompanied with even more discomposure of countenance than she had manifested when encountering the gaze of the whole assembly. Mordaunt's suspicions were strongly awakened by what he observed, for he knew Minna's character well, and with what equanimity and indifference she was in the custom of receiving the usual compliments and gallantries with which her beauty and her situation rendered her sufficiently familiar.

'Can it be possible she really loves this stranger?' was the unpleasant thought that instantly shot across Mordaunt's mind; 'And if she does, what is my interest in the matter?' was the second; and which was quickly followed by the reflection, that, though he claimed no interest at any time but as a friend, and though that interest was now withdrawn, he was still, in consideration of their former intimacy, entitled both to be sorry and angry at her for throwing away her affections on one he judged unworthy of her. In this process of reasoning, it is probable that a little mortified vanity, or some indescribable shade of selfish regret, might be endeavouring to assume the disguise of disinterested generosity; but there is so much of base alloy in our very best (unassisted) thoughts, that it is melancholy work to criticise too closely the motives of our most worthy actions; at least we would recommend to every one to let those of his neighbours pass current, however narrowly he may examine the purity of his own.

The sword-dance was succeeded by various other specimens of the same exercise, and by songs, to which the singers lent their whole soul, while the audience were sure, as occasion offered, to unite in some favourite chorus. It is upon such occasions that music, though of a simple and even rude character, finds its natural empire over the generous bosom, and produces that strong excitement which cannot be attained by the most learned compositions of the first masters, which are caviare to the common ear, although, doubtless, they afford a delight, exquisite in its kind, to those whose natural capacity and education have enabled them to comprehend and relish those difficult and complicated combinations of harmony.

It was about midnight when a knocking at the door of the mansion, with the sound of the *Gue* and the *Langspiel*,* announced, by their tinkling chime, the arrival of fresh revellers, to whom, according to the hospitable custom of the country, the apartments were instantly thrown open.

CHAPTER XVI.

——My mind misgives,
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE new comers were, according to the frequent custom of such frolickers all over the world, disguised in a sort of masquing habits, and designed to represent the Tritons and Mermaids with whom ancient tradition and popular belief have peopled the northern seas. The former, called by Zetlanders of that time, Shoupeltins, were represented by young men grotesquely habited, with false hair and beards made of flax, and chaplets composed of sea-ware interwoven with shells and other marine productions, with which also were decorated their light-blue or greenish mantles of wadmaal, repeatedly before mentioned. They had fish-spears, and other emblems of their assumed quality, amongst which the classical taste of Claud Halcro, by whom the masque was arranged, had not forgotten the conch-shells, which were stoutly and hoarsely winded, from time to time, by one or two of the aquatic deities, to the great annoyance of all who stood near them.

The Nereids and water-nymphs who attended on this occasion, displayed, as usual, a little more taste and ornament than was to be seen amongst their male attendants. Fantastic garments of green silk, and other materials of superior cost and fashion, had been contrived, so as to imitate their idea of the inhabitants of the waters, and, at the same time, to show the shape and features of the fair wearers to the best advantage. The bracelets and shells, which adorned the necks, arms, and ankles of the pretty Mermaidens, were, in some cases, intermixed

* [Musical instruments formerly used in Shetland,—the latter was a small harp.]

with real pearls; and the appearance, upon the whole, was such as might have done no discredit to the court of Amphitrite, especially when the long bright locks, blue eyes, fair complexions, and pleasing features of the maidens of Thule were taken into consideration. We do not indeed pretend to aver that any of these seeming Mermaids had so accurately imitated the real Siren, as commentators have supposed those attendant on Cleopatra did, who, adopting the fish's train of their original, were able, nevertheless, to make their 'bends,' or 'ends' (said commentators cannot tell which), 'adornings.'* Indeed, had they not left their extremities in their natural state, it would have been impossible for the Zetland Sirens to have executed the very pretty dance with which they reward the company for the ready admission which had been granted to them.

It was soon discovered that these masquers were no strangers, but a part of the guests, who, stealing out a little time before, had thus disguised themselves, in order to give variety to the mirth of the evening. The muse of Claud Halcro, always active on such occasions, had supplied them with an appropriate song, of which we may give the following specimen. The song was alternate betwixt a Nereid or Mermaid, and a Merman or Triton—the males and females on either part forming a semi-chorus, which accompanied and bore burden to the principal singer.

Mermaid.

Fathoms deep beneath the wave,
  Stringing beads of glistering pearl,
Singing the achievements brave
  Of many an old Norwegian earl;
Dwelling where the tempest's raving
  Falls as light upon our ear,
As the sigh of lover, craving
  Pity from his lady dear;
Children of wild Thule, we,
From the deep caves of the sea,
As the lark springs from the lea,
Hither come, to share your glee.

II.

Merman.

From reining of the water-horse,
  That bounded till the waves were foaming,
Watching the infant tempest's course,
  Chasing the sea-snake in his roaming;
From winding charge-notes on the shell,
  When the huge whale and sword-fish duel,
Or tolling shroudless seamen's knell,
  When the winds and waves are cruel;
Children of wild Thule, we
Have plough'd such furrows on the sea,
As the steer draws on the lea,
And hither we come to share your glee.

III.

Mermaids and Mermen.

We heard you in our twilight caves,
  A hundred fathom deep below;
For notes of joy can pierce the waves,
  That drown each sound of war and woe.
Those who dwell beneath the sea
  Love the sons of Thule well;
Thus, to aid your mirth, bring we
  Dance, and song, and sounding shell.
Children of dark Thule, know,
Those who dwell by haaf and voe,
Where your daring shallops row,
Come to share the festal show.

* See some admirable discussion on this passage in the Variorum Shakespeare.

The final chorus was borne by the whole voices, excepting those carrying the conch-shells, who had been trained to blow them in a sort of rude accompaniment, which had a good effect. The poetry, as well as the performance of the masquers, received great applause from all who pretended to be judges of such matters; but, above all, from Triptolemus Yellowley, who, his ear having caught the agricultural sounds of plough and furrow, and his brain being so well drenched that it could only construe the words in their most literal acceptation, declared roundly, and called Mordaunt to bear witness, that, though it was a shame to waste so much good lint as went to form the Tritons' beards and periwigs, the song contained the only words of common sense which he had heard all that long day.

But Mordaunt had no time to answer the appeal, being engaged in attending with the utmost vigilance to the motions of one of the female masquers, who had given him a private signal as they entered, which induced him, though uncertain whom she might prove to be, to expect some communication from her of importance. The Siren who had so boldly touched his arm, and had accompanied the gesture with an expression of eye which bespoke his attention, was disguised with a good deal more care than her sister-masquers, her mantle being loose, and wide enough to conceal her shape completely, and her face hidden beneath a silk mask. He observed that she gradually detached herself from the rest of the masquers, and at length placed herself, as if for the advantage of the air, near the door of a chamber which remained open, looked earnestly at him again, and then, taking an opportunity when the attention of the company was fixed upon the rest of her party, she left the apartment.

Mordaunt did not hesitate instantly to follow his mysterious guide, for such we may term the masquer, as she paused to let him see the direction she was about to take, and then walked swiftly towards the shore of the *voe*, or salt-water lake, now lying full before them, its small summer-waves glistening and rippling under the influence of a broad moonlight, which, added to the strong twilight of those regions during the summer solstice, left no reason to regret the absence of the sun, the path of whose setting was still visible on the waves of the west, while the horizon on the east side was already beginning to glimmer with the lights of dawn.

Mordaunt had therefore no difficulty in keeping sight of his disguised guide, as she tripped it over height and hollow to the sea-side, and, winding among the rocks, led the way to the spot where his own labours, during the time of his former intimacy with Burgh-Westra, had constructed a sheltered and solitary seat, where the daughters of Magnus were accustomed to spend, when the weather was suitable, a good deal of their time. Here then was to be the place of explanation; for the masquer stopped, and, after a moment's hesitation, sat down on the rustic settle. But from the lips of whom was he to receive it? Norna had first occurred to him; but her tall figure and slow, majestic step were entirely different from the size and gait of the more fairy-formed Siren, who had

preceded him with as light a trip as if she had been a real Nereid, who, having remained too late upon the shore, was, under the dread of Amphitrite's displeasure, hastening to regain her native element. Since it was not Norna, it could be only, he thought, Brenda, who thus singled him out; and when she had seated herself upon the bench, and taken the mask from her face, Brenda it accordingly proved to be. Mordaunt had certainly done nothing to make him dread her presence; and yet, such is the influence of bashfulness over the ingenuous youth of both sexes, that he experienced all the embarrassment of one who finds himself unexpectedly placed before a person who is justly offended with him. Brenda felt no less embarrassment; but as she had courted this interview, and was sensible it must be a brief one, she was compelled, in spite of herself, to begin the conversation.

'Mordaunt,' she said, with a hesitating voice; then, correcting herself, she proceeded—'You must be surprised, Mr. Mertoun, that I should have taken this uncommon freedom.'

'It was not till this morning, Brenda,' replied Mordaunt, 'that any mark of friendship or intimacy from you or from your sister could have surprised me. I am far more astonished that you should shun me without reason for so many hours, than that you should now allow me an interview. In the name of Heaven, Brenda, in what have I offended you? or why are we on these unusual terms?'

'May it not be enough to say,' replied Brenda, looking downward, 'that it is my father's pleasure?'

'No, it is not enough,' returned Mertoun. 'Your father cannot have so suddenly altered his whole thoughts of me, and his whole actions towards me, without acting under the influence of some strong delusion. I ask you but to explain of what nature it is; for I will be contented to be lower in your esteem than the meanest hind in these islands, if I cannot show that his change of opinion is only grounded upon some infamous deception, or some extraordinary mistake.'

'It may be so,' said Brenda—'I hope it is so—that I do hope it is so, my desire to see you thus in private may well prove to you. But it is difficult—in short it is impossible for me to explain to you the cause of my father's resentment. Norna has spoken with him concerning it boldly, and I fear they parted in displeasure; and you well know no light matter could cause that.'

'I have observed,' said Mordaunt, 'that your father is most attentive to Norna's counsel, and more complaisant to her peculiarities than to those of others—this I have observed, though he is no willing believer in the supernatural qualities to which she lays claim.'

'They are related distantly,' answered Brenda, 'and were friends in youth—nay, as I have heard, it was once supposed they would have been married; but Norna's peculiarities showed themselves immediately on her father's death, and there was an end of that matter, if ever there was anything in it. But it is certain my father regards her with much interest; and it is, I fear, a sign how deeply his prejudices respecting you must be rooted, since they have in some degree quarrelled on your account.'

'Now, blessings upon you, Brenda, that you have called them prejudices,' said Mertoun, warmly and hastily—'a thousand blessings on you! You were ever gentle-hearted—you could not have maintained even the show of unkindness long.'

'It was indeed but a show,' said Brenda, softening gradually into the familiar tone in which they had conversed from infancy; 'I could never think, Mordaunt,—never, that is, seriously believe,—that you could say aught unkind of Minna or of me.'

'And who dares to say I have?' said Mordaunt, giving way to the natural impetuosity of his disposition—'Who dares to say that I have, and ventures at the same time to hope that I will suffer his tongue to remain in safety betwixt his jaws? By Saint Magnus the Martyr, I will feed the hawks with it!'

'Nay, now,' said Brenda, 'your anger only terrifies me, and will force me to leave you.'

'Leave me,' said he, 'without telling either the calumny, or the name of the villanous calumniator!'

'O, there are more than one,' answered Brenda, 'that have possessed my father with an opinion—which I cannot myself tell you—but there are more than one who say'——

'Were they hundreds, Brenda, I will do no less to them than I have said—Sacred Martyr! —to accuse me of speaking unkindly of those whom I most respected and valued under heaven! —I will back to the apartment this instant, and your father shall do me right before all the world.'

'Do not go, for the love of Heaven!' said Brenda; 'do not go, as you would not render me the most unhappy wretch in existence!'

'Tell me, then, at least, if I guess aright,' said Mordaunt, 'when I name this Cleveland for one of those who have slandered me.'

'No, no,' said Brenda vehemently; 'you run from one error into another more dangerous. You say you are my friend; —I am willing to be yours:—be still for a moment, and hear what I have to say;—our interview has lasted but too long already, and every additional moment brings additional danger with it.'

'Tell me, then,' said Mertoun, much softened by the poor girl's extreme apprehension and distress, 'what it is that you require of me; and believe me, it is impossible for you to ask aught that I will not do my very uttermost to comply with.'

'Well, then—this captain,' said Brenda, 'this Cleveland'——

'I knew it, by Heaven!' said Mordaunt; 'my mind assured me that that fellow was, in one way or other, at the bottom of all this mischief and misunderstanding.'

'If you cannot be silent and patient for an instant,' replied Brenda, 'I must instantly quit you: what I meant to say had no relation to you, but to another,—in one word, to my sister Minna. I have nothing to say concerning her dislike to you, but an anxious tale to tell concerning his attention to her.'

'It is obvious, striking, and marked,' said

Mordaunt; 'and unless my eyes deceive me, it is received as welcome, if, indeed, it is not returned.'

'That is the very cause of my fear,' said Brenda. 'I, too, was struck with the external appearance, frank manners, and romantic conversation of this man.'

'His appearance!' said Mordaunt; 'he is stout and well-featured enough, to be sure; but, as old Sinclair of Quendale said to the Spanish admiral, "Farcie on his face! I have seen many a fairer hang on the Borough Moor."—From his manners, he might be captain of a privateer; and by his conversation, the trumpeter to his own puppet-show; for he speaks of little else than his own exploits.'

'You are mistaken,' answered Brenda; 'he speaks but too well on all that he has seen and learned; besides, he has really been in many distant countries, and in many gallant actions, and he can tell them with as much spirit as modesty. You would think you saw the flash and heard the report of the guns. And he has other tones of talking, too—about the delightful trees and fruits of distant climates; and how the people wear no dress, through the whole year, half so warm as our summer gowns, and, indeed, put on little except cambric and muslin.'

'Upon my word, Brenda, he does seem to understand the business of amusing young ladies,' replied Mordaunt.

'He does indeed,' said Brenda, with great simplicity. 'I assure you that, at first, I liked him better than Minna did; and yet, though she is so much cleverer than I am, I know more of the world than she does; for I have seen more of cities, having been once at Kirkwall; besides that, I was thrice at Lerwick, when the Dutch ships were there, and so I should not be very easily deceived in people.'

'And pray, Brenda,' said Mertoun, 'what was it that made you think less favourably of the young fellow, who seems to be so captivating?'

'Why,' said Brenda, after a moment's reflection, 'at first he was much livelier; and the stories he told were not quite so melancholy, or so terrible; and he laughed and danced more.'

'And perhaps, at that time, danced oftener with Brenda than with her sister?' added Mordaunt.

'No—I am not sure of that,' said Brenda; 'and yet, to speak plain, I could have no suspicion of him at all while he was attending quite equally to us both; for you know that then he could have been no more to us than yourself, Mordaunt Mertoun, or young Swaraster, or any other young man in the islands.'

'But why, then,' said Mordaunt, 'should you not see him, with patience, become acquainted with your sister?—He is wealthy, or seems to be so, at least. You say he is accomplished and pleasant;—what else would you desire in a lover for Minna?'

'Mordaunt, you forget who we are,' said the maiden, assuming an air of consequence, which sat as gracefully upon her simplicity, as did the different tone in which she had spoken hitherto. 'This is a little world of ours, this Zetland, inferior, perhaps, in soil and climate, to other parts of the earth, at least so strangers say; but it is our own little world, and we, the daughters of Magnus Troil, hold a first rank in it. It would, I think, little become us, who are descended from sea-kings and yarls, to throw ourselves away upon a stranger, who comes to our coast, like the eider-duck in spring, from we know not whence, and may leave it in autumn, to go we know not where.'

'And who may ne'ertheless entice a Zetland golden-eye to accompany his migration,' said Mertoun.

'I will hear nothing light on such a subject,' replied Brenda indignantly; 'Minna, like myself, is the daughter of Magnus Troil, the friend of strangers, but the father of Hjaltland. He gives them the hospitality they need; but let not the proudest of them think that they can, at their pleasure, ally with his house.'

She said this in a tone of considerable warmth, which she instantly softened, as she added, 'No, Mordaunt, do not suppose that Minna Troil is capable of so far forgetting what she owes to her father and her father's blood, as to think of marrying this Cleveland; but she may lend an ear to him so long as to destroy her future happiness. She has that sort of mind into which some feelings sink deeply;—you remember how Ulla Storlson used to go, day by day, to the top of Vossdale Head, to look for her lover's ship that was never to return? When I think of her slow step, her pale cheek, her eye that grew dimmer and dimmer, like the lamp that is half-extinguished for lack of oil,—when I remember the fluttered look, of something like hope, with which she ascended the cliff at morning, and the deep, dead despair which sat on her forehead when she returned,—when I think on all this, can you wonder that I fear for Minna, whose heart is formed to entertain, with such deep-rooted fidelity, any affection that may be implanted in it?'

'I do not wonder,' said Mordaunt, eagerly sympathising with the poor girl; for, besides the tremulous expression of her voice, the light could almost show him the tear which trembled in her eye, as she drew the picture to which her fancy had assimilated her sister,—'I do not wonder that you should feel and fear whatever the purest affection can dictate; and if you can but point out to me in what I can serve your sisterly love, you shall find me as ready to venture my life, if necessary, as I have been to go out on the crag to get you the eggs of the guillemot; and, believe me, that whatever has been told to your father or yourself, of my entertaining the slightest thoughts of disrespect or unkindness, is as false as a fiend could devise.'

'I believe it,' said Brenda, giving him her hand; 'I believe it, and my bosom is lighter, now I have renewed my confidence in so old a friend. How you can aid us, I know not; but it was by the advice, I may say by the commands, of Norna, that I have ventured to make this communication; and I almost wonder,' she added, as she looked around her, 'that I have had courage to carry me through it. At present you know all that I can tell you of the risk in which my sister stands. Look after this Cleveland—beware how you quarrel with him, since you must

so surely come by the worst with an experienced soldier.'

'I do not exactly understand,' said the youth, 'how that should so surely be. This I know, that with the good limbs and good heart that God hath given me, ay, and with a good cause to boot—I am little afraid of any quarrel which Cleveland can fix upon me.'

'Then, if not for your own sake, for Minna's sake,' said Brenda—'for my father's—for mine—for all our sakes, avoid any strife with him, but be contented to watch him, and, if possible, to discover who he is, and what are his intentions towards us. He has talked of going to Orkney, to inquire after the consort with whom he sailed; but day after day, and week after week, passes, and he goes not; and while he keeps my father company over the bottle, and tells Minna romantic stories of foreign people, and distant wars, in wild and unknown regions, the time glides on, and the stranger, of whom we know nothing except that he is one, becomes gradually closer and more inseparably intimate in our society.—And now, farewell. Norna hopes to make your peace with my father, and entreats you not to leave Burgh-Westra to-morrow, however cold he and my sister may appear towards you. I too,' she said, stretching her hand towards him, 'must wear a face of cold friendship as towards an unwelcome visitor, but at heart we are still Brenda and Mordaunt. And now separate quickly, for we must not be seen together.'

She stretched her hand to him, but withdrew it in some slight confusion, laughing and blushing, when, by a natural impulse, he was about to press it to his lips. He endeavoured for a moment to detain her, for the interview had for him a degree of fascination, which, as often as he had before been alone with Brenda, he had never experienced. But she extricated herself from him, and again signing an adieu, and pointing out to him a path different from that which she was herself about to take, tripped towards the house, and was soon hidden from his view by the acclivity.

Mordaunt stood gazing after her in a state of mind to which, as yet, he had been a stranger. The dubious neutral ground between love and friendship may be long and safely trodden, until he who stands upon it is suddenly called upon to recognise the authority of the one or the other power; and then it most frequently happens that the party who for years supposed himself only to be a friend, finds himself at once transformed into a lover. That such a change in Mordaunt's feelings should take place from this date, although he himself was unable exactly to distinguish its nature, was to be expected. He found himself at once received, with the most unsuspicious frankness, into the confidence of a beautiful and fascinating young woman, by whom he had, so short a time before, imagined himself despised and disliked; and, if anything could make a change, in itself so surprising and so pleasing, yet more intoxicating, it was the guileless and open-hearted simplicity of Brenda, that cast an enchantment over everything which she did or said. The scene, too, might have had its effect, though there was little occasion for its aid. But a fair face looks yet fairer under the light of the moon, and a sweet voice sounds yet sweeter among the whispering sounds of a summer night. Mordaunt, therefore, who had by this time returned to the house, was disposed to listen with unusual patience and complacency to the enthusiastic declamation pronounced upon moonlight by Claud Halcro, whose ecstasies had been awakened on the subject by a short turn in the open air, undertaken to qualify the vapours of the good liquor, which he had not spared during the festival.

'The sun, my boy,' he said, 'is every wretched labourer's day-lantern—it comes glaring yonder out of the east, to summon up a whole world to labour and to misery; whereas the merry moon lights all of us to mirth and to love.'

'And to madness, or she is much belied,' said Mordaunt, by way of saying something.

'Let it be so,' answered Halcro, 'so she does not turn us melancholy-mad.—My dear young friend, the folks of this painstaking world are far too anxious about possessing all their wits, or having them, as they say, about them. At least I know I have been often called half-witted, and I am sure I have gone through the world as well as if I had double the quantity. But stop—where was I? O, touching and concerning the moon—why, man, she is the very soul of love and poetry. I question if there was ever a true lover in existence who had not got at least as far as "O thou," in a sonnet in her praise.'

'The moon,' said the factor, who was now beginning to speak very thick, 'ripens corn, at least the old folk said so—and she fills nuts also, whilk is of less matter—*sparge nuces, pueri*.'

'A fine! a fine!' said the Udaller, who was now in his altitudes: 'the factor speaks Greek—by the bones of my holy namesake, Saint Magnus, he shall drink off the yawl full of punch unless he gives us a song on the spot!'

'Too much water drowned the miller,' answered Triptolemus. 'My brain has more need of draining than of being drenched with more liquor.'

'Sing, then,' said the despotic landlord, 'for no one shall speak any other language here, save honest Norse, jolly Dutch or Danske, or broad Scots, at the least of it. So, Eric Scambester, produce the yawl, and fill it to the brim, as a charge for demurrage.'

Ere the vessel could reach the agriculturist, he, seeing it under way, and steering towards him by short tacks (for Scambester himself was by this time not over steady in his course), made a desperate effort, and began to chant, or rather to croak forth, a Yorkshire harvest-home ballad, which his father used to sing when he was a little mellow, and which went to the tune of 'Hey Dobbin, away with the waggon.' The rueful aspect of the singer, and the desperately discordant tones of his voice, formed so delightful a contrast with the jollity of the words and tune, that honest Triptolemus afforded the same sort of amusement which a reveller might give, by appearing on a festival-day in the holiday coat of his grandfather. The jest concluded the evening, for even the mighty and strong-headed Magnus himself had confessed the influence of the sleepy god. The guests went off as they

best might, each to his separate crib and resting-place, and in a short time the mansion, which was of late so noisy, was hushed into perfect silence.

CHAPTER XVII.

They man their boats, and all the young men arm
With whatsoever might the monsters harm;
Pikes, halberds, spits, and darts, that wound afar,
The tools of peace and implements of war.
Now was the time for vigorous lads to show
What love or honour could incite them to:—
A goodly theatre, where rocks are round
With reverend age and lovely lasses crown'd.
BATTLE OF THE SUMMER ISLANDS.

THE morning which succeeds such a feast as that of Magnus Troil, usually lacks a little of the zest which seasoned the revels of the preceding day, as the fashionable reader may have observed at a public breakfast during the race-week in a country town; for, in what is called the best society, these lingering moments are usually spent by the company, each apart in their own dressing-rooms. At Burgh-Westra, it will readily be believed, no such space for retirement was afforded; and the lasses, with their paler cheeks, the elder dames, with many a wink and yawn, were compelled to meet with their male companions (headaches and all) just three hours after they had parted from each other.

Eric Scambester had done all that man could do to supply the full means of diverting the *ennui* of the morning meal. The board groaned with rounds of hung beef, made after the fashion of Zetland—with pasties—with baked meats—with fish, dressed and cured in every possible manner; nay, with the foreign delicacies of tea, coffee, and chocolate: for, as we have already had occasion to remark, the situation of these islands made them early acquainted with various articles of foreign luxury, which were, as yet, but little known in Scotland, where, at a much later period than that we write of, one pound of green tea was dressed like cabbage, and another converted into a vegetable sauce for salt beef, by the ignorance of the good housewives to whom they had been sent as rare presents.

Besides these preparations, the table exhibited whatever mighty potions were resorted to by *bons vivans*, under the facetious name of a 'hair of the dog that bit you.' There was the potent Irish usquebaugh—right Nantz—genuine Schiedam—aquavitæ from Caithness—and golden wasser from Hamburg; there was rum of formidable antiquity, and cordials from the Leeward Islands. After these details, it were needless to mention the stout home-brewed ale, the German mum, and schwarz-bier,—and still more would it be beneath our dignity to dwell upon the innumerable sorts of pottage and flummery, together with the bland and various preparations of milk for those who preferred thinner potations.

No wonder that the sight of so much good cheer awakened the appetite and raised the spirits of the fatigued revellers. The young men began immediately to seek out their partners of the preceding evening, and to renew the small talk which had driven the night so merrily away; while Magnus, with his stout old Norse kindred, encouraged, by precept and example, those of elder days and graver mood to a substantial flirtation with the good things before them. Still, however, there was a long period to be filled up before dinner; for the most protracted breakfast cannot well last above an hour; and it was to be feared that Claud Halcro meditated the occupation of this vacant morning with a formidable recitation of his own verses, besides telling, at its full length, the whole history of his introduction to glorious John Dryden. But fortune relieved the guests of Burgh-Westra from this threatened infliction, by sending them means of amusement peculiarly suited to their taste and habits.

Most of the guests were using their toothpicks, some were beginning to talk of what was to be done next, when, with haste in his step, fire in his eye, and a harpoon in his hand, Eric Scambester came to announce to the company, that there was a whale on shore, or nearly so, at the throat of the voe. Then you might have seen such a joyous, boisterous, and universal bustle, as only the love of sport, so deeply implanted in our nature, can possibly inspire. A set of country squires, about to beat for the first woodcocks of the season, were a comparison as petty, in respect to the glee, as in regard to the importance of the object; the battue, upon a strong cover in Ettrick Forest, for the destruction of the foxes; the insurrection of the sportsmen of the Lennox, when one of the duke's deer gets out from Inch-Mirran; nay, the joyous rally of the fox-chase itself, with all its blithe accompaniments of hound and horn, fall infinitely short of the animation with which the gallant sons of Thule set off to encounter the monster whom the sea had sent for their amusement at so opportune a conjuncture.

The multifarious stores of Burgh-Westra were rummaged hastily for all sorts of arms which could be used on such an occasion. Harpoons, swords, pikes, and halberds fell to the lot of some; others contented themselves with hay-forks, spits, and whatever else could be found, that was at once long and sharp. Thus hastily equipped, one division, under the command of Captain Cleveland, hastened to man the boats which lay in the little haven, while the rest of the party hurried by land to the scene of action.

Poor Triptolemus was interrupted in a plan which he too had formed against the patience of the Zetlanders, and which was to have consisted in a lecture upon the agriculture and the capabilities of the country, by this sudden hubbub, which put an end at once to Halcro's poetry and to his no less formidable prose. It may be easily imagined that he took very little interest in the sport which was so suddenly substituted for his lucubrations, and he would not even have deigned to have looked upon the active scene which was about to take place, had he not been stimulated thereunto by the exhortations of Mistress Baby. 'Pit yoursel' forward, man,' said that provident person, 'pit yoursel' forward—wha kens where a blessing may light? —they say that a' men share and share equals-aquals in the creature's ulzie, and a pint o't wad be worth siller to light the cruise in the lang

dark nights that they speak of. Pit yoursel' forward, man—there's a graip to ye—faint heart never wan fair lady—wha kens but what, when it's fresh, it may eat weel eneueh, and spare butter?'

What zeal was added to Triptolemus's motions by the prospect of eating fresh train-oil instead of butter, we know not; but, as better might not be, he brandished the rural implement (a stable-fork) with which he was armed, and went down to wage battle with the whale.

The situation in which the enemy's ill-fate had placed him was particularly favourable to the enterprise of the islanders. A tide of unusual height had carried the animal over a large bar of sand, into the voe or creek in which he was now lying. So soon as he found the water ebbing, he became sensible of his danger, and had made desperate efforts to get over the shallow water where the waves broke on the bar; but hitherto he had rather injured than mended his condition, having got himself partly aground, and lying, therefore, particularly exposed to the meditated attack. At this moment the enemy came down upon him. The front ranks consisted of the young and hardy, armed in the miscellaneous manner we have described; while, to witness and animate their efforts, the young women, and the elderly persons of both sexes, took their place among the rocks which overhung the scene of action.

As the boats had to double a little headland ere they opened the mouth of the voe, those who came by land to the shores of the inlet had time to make the necessary reconnoissances upon the force and situation of the enemy, on whom they were about to commence a simultaneous attack by land and sea.

This duty the stout-hearted and experienced general—for so the Udaller might be termed—would entrust to no eyes but his own; and indeed, his external apppearance and his sage conduct rendered him alike qualified for the command which he enjoyed. His gold-laced hat was exchanged for a bearskin cap, his suit of blue broadcloth, with its scarlet lining, and loops, and frogs of bullion, had given place to a red flannel jacket, with buttons of black horn, over which he wore a sealskin shirt curiously seamed and plaited on the bosom, such as are used by the Esquimaux, and sometimes by the Greenland whale-fishers. Sea-boots of a formidable size completed his dress; and in his hand he held a large whaling-knife, which he brandished, as if impatient to employ it in the operation of *flinching* the huge animal which lay before them,—that is, the act of separating its flesh from its bones. Upon closer examination, however, he was obliged to confess that the sport to which he had conducted his friends, however much it corresponded with the magnificent scale of his hospitality, was likely to be attended with its own peculiar dangers and difficulties.

The animal, upwards of sixty feet in length, was lying perfectly still, in a deep part of the voe into which it had weltered, and where it seemed to await the return of tide, of which it was probably assured by instinct. A council of experienced harpooners was instantly called, and it was agreed that an effort should be made to noose the tail of this torpid leviathan, by casting a cable around it, to be made fast by anchors to the shore, and thus to secure against his escape, in case the tide should make before they were able to despatch him. Three boats were destined to this delicate piece of service, one of which the Udaller himself proposed to command, while Cleveland and Mertoun were to direct the two others. This being decided, they sat down on the strand, waiting with impatience until the naval part of the force should arrive in the voe. It was during this interval that Triptolemus Yellowley, after measuring with his eyes the extraordinary size of the whale, observed that in his poor mind, 'a wain with six owsen, or with sixty owsen either, if they were the owsen of the country, could not drag siccan a huge creature from the water, where it was now lying, to the sea-beach.'

Trifling as this remark may seem to the reader, it was connected with a subject which always fired the blood of the old Udaller, who, glancing upon Triptolemus a quick and stern look, asked him what the devil it signified, supposing a hundred oxen could not drag the whale upon the beach? Mr. Yellowley, though not much liking the tone with which the question was put, felt that his dignity and his profit compelled him to answer as follows:—'Nay, sir—you know yoursel', Master Magnus Troil, and every one knows that knows anything, that whales of siccan size as may not be masterfully dragged on shore by the instrumentality of one wain with six owsen, are the right and property of the Admiral, who is at this time the same noble lord who is, moreover, Chamberlain of these isles.'

'And I tell you, Master Triptolemus Yellowley,' said the Udaller, 'as I would tell your master if he were here, that every man who risks his life to bring that fish ashore, shall have an equal share and partition, according to our ancient and loveable Norse custom and wont; nay, if there is so much as a woman looking on, that will but touch the cable, she will be partner with us; ay, and more than all that, if she will but say there is a reason for it, we will assign a portion to the babe that is unborn.'

The strict principle of equity which dictated this last arrangement occasioned laughter among the men, and some slight confusion among the women. The factor, however, thought it shame to be so easily daunted. '*Suum cuique tribuito*,' said he; 'I will stand for my lord's right and my own.'

'Will you?' replied Magnus; 'then, by the Martyr's bones, you shall have no law of partition but that of God and Saint Olave, which we had before either factor, or treasurer, or chamberlain was heard of!—All shall share that lend a hand, and never a one else. So you, Master Factor, shall be busy as well as other folk, and think yourself lucky to share [illegible] and tune, Jump into that boat' (for [illegible]rded the same sort time pulled round the [illegible]veller might give, by lads, make way for t[illegible]-day in the holiday coat —he shall be the firs[illegible] The jest concluded the shall strike the fish [illegible] mighty and strong-headed

The loud auth[illegible] confessed the influence of of absolute comm[illegible] The guests went off as they

whole manner, together with the conscious want of favourers and backers amongst the rest of the company, rendered it difficult for Triptolemus to evade compliance, although he was thus about to be placed in a situation equally novel and perilous. He was still, however, hesitating, and attempting an explanation, with a voice in which anger was qualified by fear, and both thinly disguised under an attempt to be jocular, and to represent the whole as a jest, when he heard the voice of Baby maundering in his ear,—'Wad he lose his share of the ulzie, and the lang Zetland winter coming on, when the lightest day in December is not sô clear as a moonless night in the Mearns?'

This domestic instigation, in addition to those of fear of the Udaller, and shame to seem less courageous than others, so inflamed the agriculturist's spirits, that he shook his graip aloft, and entered the boat with the air of Neptune himself, carrying on high his trident.

The three boats destined for this perilous service now approached the dark mass, which lay like an islet in the deepest part of the voe, and suffered them to approach without showing any sign of animation. Silently, and with such precaution as the extreme delicacy of the operation required, the intrepid adventurers, after the failure of their first attempt, and the expenditure of considerable time, succeeded in casting a cable around the body of the torpid monster, and in carrying the ends of it ashore, when an hundred hands were instantly employed in securing them. But ere this was accomplished, the tide began to make fast, and the Udaller informed his assistants, that either the fish must be killed, or at least greatly wounded, ere the depth of water on the bar was sufficient to float him; or that he was not unlikely to escape from their joint prowess.

'Wherefore,' said he, 'we must set to work, and the factor shall have the honour to make the first throw.'

The valiant Triptolemus caught the word; and it is necessary to say that the patience of the whale, in suffering himself to be noosed without resistance, had abated his terrors, and very much lowered the creature in his opinion. He protested the fish had no more wit, and scarcely more activity, than a black snail; and, influenced by this undue contempt of the adversary, he waited neither for a further signal, nor a better weapon, nor a more suitable position, but, rising in his energy, hurled his graip with all his force against the unfortunate monster. The boats had not yet retreated from him to the distance necessary to insure safety, when this injudicious commencement of the war took place.

Magnus Troil, who had only jested with the factor, and had reserved the launching the first spear against the whale to some much more skilful hand, had just time to exclaim, 'Mind yourselves, lads, or we are all swamped!' when preparations of ... at once from inactivity by thinner potations. ...r's missile, blew, with a

No wonder that the s...on of a steam-engine, cheer awakened the app... the air, and at the spirits of the fatigued revelle... waves with its tail began immediately to seek o... in which Magnus the preceding evening, and to brine which the talk which had driven the

animal spouted aloft; and the adventurous Triptolemus, who had a full share of the immersion, was so much astonished and terrified by the consequences of his own valorous deed, that he tumbled backwards amongst the feet of the people, who, too busy to attend to him, were actively engaged in getting the boat into shoal water, out of the whale's reach. Here he lay for some minutes, trampled on by the feet of the boatmen, until they lay on their oars to bale, when the Udaller ordered them to pull to shore, and land this spare hand, who had commenced the fishing so inauspiciously.

While this was doing, the other boats had also pulled off to safer distance, and now, from these as well as from the shore, the unfortunate native of the deep was overwhelmed by all kinds of missiles,—harpoons and spears flew against him on all sides—guns were fired, and each various means of annoyance plied which could excite him to exhaust his strength in useless rage. When the animal found that he was locked in by shallows on all sides, and became sensible, at the same time, of the strain of the cable on his body, the convulsive efforts which he made to escape, accompanied with sounds resembling deep and loud groans, would have moved the compassion of all but a practised whale-fisher. The repeated showers which he spouted into the air began now to be mingled with blood, and the waves which surrounded him assumed the same crimson appearance. Meantime the attempts of the assailants were redoubled; but Mordaunt Mertoun and Cleveland, in particular, exerted themselves to the uttermost, contending who should display most courage in approaching the monster, so tremendous in its agonies, and should inflict the most deep and deadly wounds upon its huge bulk.

The contest seemed at last pretty well over; for, although the animal continued from time to time to make frantic exertions for liberty, yet its strength appeared so much exhausted, that, even with the assistance of the tide, which had now risen considerably, it was thought it could scarcely extricate itself.

Magnus gave the signal to venture nearer to the whale, calling out at the same time, 'Close in, lads, she is not half so mad now—The factor may look for a winter's oil for the two lamps at Harfra—Pull close in, lads.'

Ere his orders could be obeyed, the other two boats had anticipated his purpose; and Mordaunt Mertoun, eager to distinguish himself above Cleveland, had, with the whole strength he possessed, plunged a half-pike into the body of the animal. But the leviathan, like a nation whose resources appear totally exhausted by previous losses and calamities, collected his whole remaining force for an effort, which proved at once desperate and successful. The wound last received had probably reached through his external defences of blubber, and attained some very sensitive part of the system; for he roared aloud, as he sent to the sky a mingled sheet of brine and blood, and, snapping the strong cable like a twig, overset Mertoun's boat with a blow of his tail, shot himself, by a mighty effort, over the bar, upon which the tide had now risen con-

siderably, and made out to sea, carrying with him a whole grove of the implements which had been planted in his body, and leaving behind him, on the waters, a dark red trace of his course.

'There goes to sea your cruise of oil, Master Yellowley,' said Magnus, 'and you must consume mutton suet, or go to bed in the dark.'

'*Operam et oleum perdidi*,' muttered Triptolemus; 'but if they catch me whale-fishing again, I will consent that the fish shall swallow me as he did Jonah.'

'But where is Mordaunt Mertoun all this while?' exclaimed Claud Halcro; and it was instantly perceived that the youth, who had been stunned when his boat was stove, was unable to swim to shore as the other sailors did, and now floated senseless upon the waves.

We have noticed the strange and inhuman prejudice which rendered the Zetlanders of that period unwilling to assist those whom they saw in the act of drowning, though that is the calamity to which the islanders are most frequently exposed. Three men, however, soared above this superstition. The first was Claud Halcro, who threw himself from a small rock headlong into the waves, forgetting, as he himself afterwards stated, that he could not swim, and, if possessed of the harp of Arion, had no dolphins in attendance. The first plunge which the poet made in deep water reminding him of these deficiencies, he was fain to cling to the rock from which he had dived, and was at length glad to regain the shore, at the expense of a ducking.

Magnus Troil, whose honest heart forgot his late coolness towards Mordaunt, when he saw the youth's danger, would instantly have brought him more effectual assistance, but Eric Scambester held him fast.

'Hout, sir—hout,' exclaimed that faithful attendant—'Captain Cleveland has a grip of Master Mordaunt—just let the twa strangers help ilk other, and stand by the upshot. The light of the country is not to be quenched for the like of them. Bide still, sir, I say—Bredness Voe is not a bowl of punch, that a man can be fished out of like a toast with a long spoon.'

This sage remonstrance would have been altogether lost upon Magnus, had he not observed that Cleveland had in fact jumped out of the boat and swam to Mertoun's assistance, and was keeping him afloat till the boat came to the aid of both. As soon as the immediate danger which called so loudly for assistance was thus ended, the honest Udaller's desire to render aid terminated also; and, recollecting the cause of offence which he had, or thought he had, against Mordaunt Mertoun, he shook off his butler's hold, and, turning round scornfully from the beach, called Eric an old fool for supposing that he cared whether the young fellow sank or swam.

Still, however, amid his assumed indifference, Magnus could not help peeping over the heads of the circle, which, surrounding Mordaunt as soon as he was brought on shore, were charitably employed in endeavouring to recall him to life; and he was not able to attain the appearance of absolute unconcern, until the young man sat up on the beach, and showed plainly that the accident had been attended with no material consequences. It was then first that, cursing the assistants for not giving the lad a glass of brandy, he walked sullenly away as if totally unconcerned in his fate.

The women, always accurate in observing the tell-tale emotions of each other, failed not to remark that, when the sisters of Burgh-Westra saw Mordaunt immersed in the waves, Minna grew as pale as death, while Brenda uttered successive shrieks of terror. But though there were some nods, winks, and hints that auld acquaintance were not easily forgot, it was, on the whole, candidly admitted that less than such marks of interest could scarce have been expected, when they saw the companion of their early youth in the act of perishing before their eyes.

Whatever interest Mordaunt's condition excited while it seemed perilous, began to abate as he recovered himself; and when his senses were fully restored, only Claud Halcro, with two or three others, were standing by him. About ten paces off stood Cleveland—his hair and clothes dropping water, and his features wearing so peculiar an expression, as immediately to arrest the attention of Mordaunt. There was a suppressed smile on his cheek, and a look of pride in his eye, that implied liberation from a painful restraint, and something resembling gratified scorn. Claud Halcro hastened to intimate to Mordaunt that he owed his life to Cleveland; and the youth, rising from the ground, and losing all other feelings in those of gratitude, stepped forward with his hand stretched out, to offer his warmest thanks to his preserver. But he stopped short in surprise, as Cleveland, retreating a pace or two, folded his arms on his breast, and declined to accept his proffered hand. He drew back in turn, and gazed with astonishment at the ungracious manner, and almost insulting look, with which Cleveland, who had formerly rather expressed a frank cordiality, or at least openness of bearing, now, after having thus rendered him a most important service, chose to receive his thanks.

'It is enough,' said Cleveland, observing his surprise, 'and it is unnecessary to say more about it. I have paid back my debt, and we are now equal.'

'You are more than equal with me, Captain Cleveland,' answered Mertoun, 'because you endangered your life to do for me what I did for you without the slightest risk;—besides,' he added, trying to give the discourse a more pleasant turn, 'I have your rifle-gun to boot.'

'Cowards only count danger for any point of the game,' said Cleveland. 'Danger has been my consort for life, and sailed with me on a thousand worse voyages;—and for rifles, I have enough of my own, and you may see, when you will, which can use them best.'

There was something in the tone with which this was said, that struck Mordaunt strongly; it was miching malicho, as Hamlet says, and meant mischief. Cleveland saw his surprise, came close up to him, and spoke in a low tone of voice:—'Hark ye, my young brother,—there

is a custom amongst us gentlemen of fortune, that when we follow the same chase, and take the wind out of each other's sails, we think sixty yards of the sea-beach, and a brace of rifles, are no bad way of making our odds even.'

'I do not understand you, Captain Cleveland,' said Mordaunt.

'I do not suppose you do,—I did not suppose you would,' said the captain; and, turning on his heel, with a smile that resembled a sneer, Mordaunt saw him mingle with the guests, and very soon beheld him at the side of Minna, who was talking to him with animated features, that seemed to thank him for his gallant and generous conduct.

'If it were not for Brenda,' thought Mordaunt, 'I almost wish he had left me in the voe, for no one seems to care whether I am alive or dead. Two rifles and sixty yards of sea-beach—is that what he points at? It may come, but not on the day he has saved my life with risk of his own.'

While he was thus musing, Eric Scambester was whispering to Halcro, 'If these two lads do not do each other a mischief, there is no faith in freits. Master Mordaunt saves Cleveland,—well. Cleveland, in requital, has turned all the sunshine of Burgh-Westra to his own side of the house; and think what it is to lose favour in such a house as this, where the punch-kettle is never allowed to cool! Well, now that Cleveland in his turn has been such a fool as to fish Mordaunt out of the voe, see if he does not give him sour sillocks for stock-fish.'

'Pshaw, pshaw!' replied the poet, 'that is all old women's fancies, my friend Eric; for what says glorious Dryden—sainted John,—

> The yellow gall, that in your bosom floats,
> Engenders all these melancholy thoughts.'

'Saint John, or Saint James either, may be mistaken in the matter,' said Eric; 'for I think neither of them lived in Zetland. I only say, that if there is faith in old saws, these two lads will do each other a mischief; and if they do, I trust it will light on Mordaunt Mertoun.'

'And why, Eric Scambester,' said Halcro hastily and angrily, 'should you wish ill to that poor young man, that is worth fifty of the other?'

'Let every one roose the ford as he finds it,' replied Eric; 'Master Mordaunt is all for wan water, like his old dog-fish of a father; now Captain Cleveland, d'ye see, takes his glass, like an honest fellow and a gentleman.'

'Rightly reasoned, and in thine own division,' said Halcro; and, breaking off their conversation, took his way back to Burgh-Westra, to which the guests of Magnus were now returning, discussing as they went, with much animation, the various incidents of their attack upon the whale, and not a little scandalized that it should have baffled all their exertions.

'I hope Captain Donderdrecht of the Eintracht of Rotterdam will never hear of it,' said Magnus; 'he would swear, donner and blitzen, we were only fit to fish flounders.' *

* The contest about the whale will remind the poetical reader of Waller's Battle of the Summer Islands.

CHAPTER XVIII.

> And helter-skelter have I rode to thee,
> And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys,
> And golden times, and happy news of price.
>
> ANCIENT PISTOL.

FORTUNE, who seems at times to bear a conscience, owed the hospitable Udaller some amends, and accordingly repaid to Burgh-Westra the disappointment occasioned by the unsuccessful whale-fishing, by sending thither, on the evening of the day in which that incident happened, no less a person than the yagger, or travelling merchant, as he styled himself, Bryce Snailsfoot, who arrived in great pomp, himself on one pony, and his pack of goods, swelled to nearly double its usual size, forming the burden of another, which was led by a bare-headed, bare-legged boy.

As Bryce announced himself the bearer of important news, he was introduced to the dining-apartment, where (for that primitive age was no respecter of persons) he was permitted to sit down at a side table, and amply supplied with provisions and good liquor; while the attentive hospitality of Magnus permitted no questions to be put to him, until, his hunger and thirst appeased, he announced, with the sense of importance attached to distant travels, that he had just yesterday arrived at Lerwick from Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, and would have been here yesterday, but it blew hard off the Fitful Head.

'We had no wind here,' said Magnus.

'There is somebody has not been sleeping, then,' said the pedlar, 'and her name begins with N; but Heaven is above all.'

'But the news from Orkney, Bryce, instead of croaking about a capful of wind?'

'Such news,' replied Bryce, 'as has not been heard this thirty years—not since Cromwell's time.'

'There is not another Revolution, is there?' said Halcro; 'King James has not come back as blithe as King Charlie did, has he?'

'It's news,' replied the pedlar, 'that are worth twenty kings, and kingdoms to boot of them; for what good did the evolutions ever do us? and I daresay we have seen a dozen, great and sma'.'

'Are any Indiamen come north about?' said Magnus Troil.

'Ye are nearer the mark, Fowd,' said the yagger; 'but it is nae Indiaman, but a gallant armed vessel, chokeful of merchandise, that they part with so easy that a decent man like mysel' can afford to give the country the best pennyworths you ever saw; and that you will say when I open that pack, for I count to carry it back another sort lighter than when I brought it here.'

'Ay, ay, Bryce,' said the Udaller, 'you must have had good bargains if you sell cheap; but what ship was it?'

'Cannot justly say—I spoke to nobody but the captain, who was a discreet man; but she had been down on the Spanish Main, for she has silks and satins, and tobacco, I warrant you, and wine, and no lack of sugar, and bonnie wallies

baith of silver and gowd, and a bonnie dredging of gold dust into the bargain.'

'What was she like?' said Cleveland, who seemed to give much attention.

'A stout ship,' said the itinerant merchant, 'schooner-rigged, sails like a dolphin, they say, carries twelve guns, and is pierced for twenty.'

'Did you hear the captain's name?' said Cleveland, speaking rather lower than his usual tone.

'I just ca'd him the captain,' replied Bryce Snailsfoot; 'for I make it a rule never to ask questions of them I deal with in the way of trade; for there is many an honest captain, begging your pardon, Captain Cleveland, that does not care to have his name tacked to his title; and as long as we ken what bargains we are making, what signifies it wha we are making them wi', ye ken?'

'Bryce Snailsfoot is a cautious man,' said the Udaller, laughing; 'he knows a fool may ask more questions than a wise man cares to answer.'

'I have dealt with the fair traders in my day,' replied Snailsfoot, 'and I ken nae use in blurting braid out with a man's name at every moment; but I will uphold this gentleman to be a gallant commander—ay, and a kind one too; for every one of his crew is as brave in apparel as himself nearly—the very foremast-men have their silken scarfs; I have seen many a lady wear a warse, and think hersel' nae sma' drink—and for siller buttons, and buckles, and the lave of sic vanities, there is nae end of them.'

'Idiots!' muttered Cleveland between his teeth; and then added, 'I suppose they are often ashore to show all their bravery to the lasses of Kirkwall?'

'Ne'er a bit of that are they. The captain will scarce let them stir ashore without the boatswain go in the boat—as rough a tarpaulin as ever swabbed a deck—and you may as weel catch a cat without her claws as him without his cutlass and his double brace of pistols about him; every man stands as much in awe of him as of the commander himsél'.'

'That must be Hawkins, or the devil,' said Cleveland.

'Aweel, Captain,' replied the yagger, 'be he the tane or the tither, or a wee bit o' baith, mind it is you that gave him these names, and not me.'

'Why, Captain Cleveland,' said the Udaller, 'this may prove the very consort you spoke of.'

'They must have had some good luck, then,' said Cleveland, 'to put them in better plight than when I left them.—Did they speak of having lost their consort, pedlar?'

'In troth did they,' said Bryce; 'that is, they said something about a partner that had gone down to Davy Jones in these seas.'

'And did you tell them what you knew of her?' said the Udaller.

'And wha the deevil wad hae been the fule then,' said the pedlar, 'that I suld say sae? When they ken'd what came of the ship, the next question wad have been about the cargo—and ye wad not have had me bring down an armed vessel on the coast, to harry the poor folk about a wheen rags of duds that the sea flung upon their shores?'

'Besides what might have been found in your own pack, you scoundrel!' said Magnus Troil; an observation which produced a loud laugh. The Udaller could not help joining in the hilarity which applauded his jest; but, instantly composing his countenance, he said, in an unusually grave tone, 'You may laugh, my friends; but this is a matter which brings both a curse and a shame on the country; and till we learn to regard the rights of them that suffer by the winds and waves, we shall deserve to be oppressed and hag-ridden, as we have been and are, by the superior strength of the strangers who rule us.'

The company hung their heads at the rebuke of Magnus Troil. Perhaps some, even of the better class, might be conscience-struck on their own account; and all of them were sensible that the appetite for plunder, on the part of the tenants and inferiors, was not at all times restrained with sufficient strictness. But Cleveland made answer gaily, 'If these honest fellows be my comrades, I will answer for them that they will never trouble the country about a parcel of chests, hammocks, and such trumpery, that the Roost may have washed ashore out of my poor sloop. What signifies to them whether the trash went to Bryce Snailsfoot, or to the bottom, or to the devil! So unbuckle thy pack, Bryce, and show the ladies thy cargo, and perhaps we may see something that will please them.'

'It cannot be his consort,' said Brenda, in a whisper to her sister; 'he would have shown more joy at their appearance.'

'It must be the vessel,' answered Minna; 'I saw his eye glisten at the thought of being again united to the partner of his dangers.'

'Perhaps it glistened,' said her sister, still apart, 'at the thought of leaving Zetland; it is difficult to guess the thought of the heart from the glance of the eye.'

'Judge not at least unkindly of a friend's thought,' said Minna; 'and then, Brenda, if you are mistaken, the fault rests not with you.'

During this dialogue, Bryce Snailsfoot was busied in uncoiling the carefully arranged cordage of his pack, which amounted to six good yards of dressed sealskin, curiously complicated and secured by all manner of knots and buckles. He was considerably interrupted in the task by the Udaller and others, who pressed him with questions respecting the stranger vessel.

'Were the officers often ashore? and how were they received by the people of Kirkwall?' said Magnus Troil.

'Excellently well,' answered Bryce Snailsfoot; 'and the captain and one or two of his men had been at some of the vanities and dances which went forward in the town; but there had been some word about customs, or king's duties, or the like, and some of the higher folk, that took upon them as magistrates, or the like, had had words with the captain, and he refused to satisfy them; and then it is like he was more coldly looked on, and he spoke of carrying the ship round to Stromness, or the Langhope, for she lay under the guns of the battery at Kirkwall. But he' (Bryce) 'thought she wad bide at Kirkwall till the summer fair was over, for all that.'

'The Orkney gentry,' said Magnus Troil, 'are

always in a hurry to draw the Scotch collar tighter round their own necks. Is it not enough that we must pay *scat* and *wattle*,* which were all the public dues under our old Norse government; but must they come over us with king's dues and customs besides? It is the part of an honest man to resist these things. I have done so all my life, and will do so to the end of it.'

There was a loud jubilee and shout of applause among the guests, who were (some of them at least) better pleased with Magnus Troil's latitudinarian principles with respect to the public revenue (which were extremely natural to those living in so secluded a situation, and subjected to many additional exactions), than they had been with the rigour of his judgment on the subject of wrecked goods. But Minna's inexperienced feelings carried her further than her father, while she whispered to Brenda, not unheard by Cleveland, that the tame spirit of the Orcadians had missed every chance which late incidents had given them to emancipate these islands from the Scottish yoke.

'Why,' she said, 'should we not, under so many changes as late times have introduced, have seized the opportunity to shake off an allegiance which is not justly due from us, and to return to the protection of Denmark, our parent country? Why should we yet hesitate to do this, but that the gentry of Orkney have mixed families and friendship so much with our invaders, that they have become dead to the throb of the heroic Norse blood, which they derived from their ancestors?'

The latter part of this patriotic speech happened to reach the astonished ears of our friend Triptolemus, who, having a sincere devotion for the Protestant succession, and the Revolution as established, was surprised into the ejaculation, 'As the old cock crows the young cock learns—hen I should say, mistress, and I crave your pardon if I say anything amiss in either gender. But it is a happy country where the father declares against the king's customs, and the daughter against the king's crown; and, in my judgment, it can end in naething but trees and tows.'

'Trees are scarce among us,' said Magnus; 'and for ropes, we need them for our rigging, and cannot spare them to be shirt collars.'

'And whoever,' said the captain, 'takes umbrage at what this young lady says, had better keep his ears and tongue for a safer employment than such an adventure.'

'Ay, ay,' said Triptolemus, 'it helps the matter much to speak truths, whilk are as unwelcome to a proud stomach, as wet clover to a cow's, in a land where lads are ready to draw the whittle if a lassie but looks awry. But what manners are to be expected in a country where folk call a pleugh-sock a markal?'

'Hark ye, Master Yellowley,' said the captain, smiling, 'I hope my manners are not among those abuses which you come hither to reform; any experiment on them may be dangerous.'

'As well as difficult," said Triptolemus dryly; 'but fear nothing, Captain Cleveland, from my remonstrances. My labours regard the men and things of the earth, and not the men and things of the sea,—you are not of my element.'

'Let us be friends, then, old clod-compeller,' said the captain.

'Clod-compeller!' said the agriculturist, bethinking himself of the lore of his earlier days; 'clod-compeller *pro* cloud-compeller, Νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς — *Græcum est*; — in which voyage came you by that phrase?'

'I have travelled books as well as seas in my day,' said the captain; 'but my last voyages have been of a sort to make me forget my early cruises through classic knowledge.—But come here, Bryce—hast cast off the lashing?—Come all hands, and let us see if he has aught in his cargo that is worth looking upon.'

With a proud, and, at the same time, a wily smile, did the crafty pedlar display a collection of wares far superior to those which usually filled his packages, and in particular some stuffs and embroideries, of such beauty and curiosity, fringed, flowered, and worked, with such art and magnificence, upon foreign and arabesque patterns, that the sight might have dazzled a far more brilliant company than the simple race of Thule. All beheld and admired, while Mistress Baby Yellowley, holding up her hands, protested it was a sin even to look upon such extravagance, and worse than murder so much as to ask the price of them.

Others, however, were more courageous; and the prices demanded by the merchant, if they were not, as he himself declared, something just more than nothing—short only of an absolute free gift of his wares, were nevertheless so moderate as to show that he himself must have made an easy acquisition of the goods, judging by the rate at which he offered to part with them. Accordingly, the cheapness of the articles created a rapid sale; for in Zetland, as well as elsewhere, wise folk buy more from the prudential desire to secure a good bargain, than from any real occasion for the purchase. The Lady Glowrowrum bought seven petticoats and twelve stomachers on this sole principle, and other matrons present rivalled her in this sagacious species of economy. The Udaller was also a considerable purchaser; but the principal customer for whatever could please the eye of beauty, was the gallant Captain Cleveland, who rummaged the yagger's stores in selecting presents for the ladies of the party, in which Minna and Brenda Troil were especially remembered.

'I fear,' said Magnus Troil, 'that the young women are to consider these pretty presents as keepsakes, and that all this liberality is only a sure sign we are soon to lose you?'

This question seemed to embarrass him to whom it was put.

'I scarce know,' he said, with some hesitation, 'whether this vessel is my consort or no—I must take a trip to Kirkwall to make sure of that matter, and then I hope to return to Dunrossness to bid you all farewell.'

'In that case,' said the Udaller, after a moment's pause, 'I think I may carry you thither. I should be at the Kirkwall fair, to settle with the merchants I have consigned my fish to, and I

* [*Scat* was a land tax paid by the udallers for support of the Crown, and still paid in Orkney and Zetland to the Earl of Zetland as Crown donatory; *wattle*, an assessment for the salary of the Fowd.]

have often promised Minna and Brenda that they should see the fair. Perhaps also your consort, or these strangers, whoever they be, may have some merchandise that will suit me. I love to see my rigging-loft well stocked with goods, almost as much as to see it full of dancers. We will go to Orkney in my own brig, and I can offer you a hammock, if you will.'

The offer seemed so acceptable to Cleveland, that, after pouring himself forth in thanks, he seemed determined to mark his joy by exhausting Bryce Snailsfoot's treasures in liberality to the company. The contents of a purse of gold were transferred to the yagger, with a facility and indifference on the part of its former owner which argued either the greatest profusion, or consciousness of superior and inexhaustible wealth; so that Baby whispered to her brother, that 'if he could afford to fling away money at this rate, the lad had made a better voyage in a broken ship, than all the skippers of Dundee had made in their haill anes for a twelvemonth past.'

But the angry feeling in which she made this remark was much mollified, when Cleveland, whose object it seemed that evening to be, to buy golden opinions of all sorts of men, approached her with a garment somewhat resembling in shape a Scottish plaid, but woven of a sort of wool so soft, that it felt to the touch as if it were composed of eider-down. 'This,' he said, 'was a part of a Spanish lady's dress called a *mantilla;* as it would exactly fit the size of Mistress Baby Yellowley, and was very well suited for the fogs of the climate of Zetland, he entreated her to wear it for his sake.' The lady, with as much condescending sweetness as her countenance was able to express, not only consented to receive this mark of gallantry, but permitted the donor to arrange the mantilla upon her projecting and bony shoulder-blades, where, said Claud Halcro, 'it hung, for all the world, as if it had been stretched betwixt a couple of cloak-pins.'

While the captain was performing this piece of courtesy, much to the entertainment of the company, which, it may be presumed, was his principal object from the beginning, Mordaunt Mertoun made purchase of a small golden chaplet, with the private intention of presenting it to Brenda, when he should find an opportunity. The price was fixed, and the article laid aside. Claud Halcro also showed some desire of possessing a silver box of antique shape, for depositing tobacco, which he was in the habit of using in considerable quantity. But the bard seldom had current coin in promptitude, and, indeed, in his wandering way of life, had little occasion for any; and Bryce, on the other hand, his having been hitherto a ready-money trade, protested that his very moderate profits upon such rare and choice articles would not allow of his affording credit to the purchaser. Mordaunt gathered the import of this conversation from the mode in which they whispered together, while the bard seemed to advance a wishful finger towards the box in question, and the cautious pedlar detained it with the weight of his whole hand, as if he had been afraid it would literally make itself wings, and fly into Claud Halcro's pocket. Mordaunt Mertoun at this moment, desirous to gratify an old acquaintance, laid the price of the box on the table, and said he would not permit Master Halcro to purchase that box, as he had settled in his own mind to make him a present of it.

'I cannot think of robbing you, my dear young friend,' said the poet; 'but the truth is, that that same box does remind me strangely of glorious John's, out of which I had the honour to take a pinch at the Wits' Coffeehouse, for which I think more highly of my right-hand finger and thumb than any other part of my body; only you must allow me to pay you back the price when my Urkaster stock-fish come to market.'

'Settle that as you like betwixt you,' said the yagger, taking up Mordaunt's money; 'the box is bought and sold.'

'And how dare you sell over again,' said Captain Cleveland, suddenly interfering, 'what you already have sold to me?'

All were surprised at this interjection, which was hastily made, as Cleveland, having turned from Mistress Baby, had become suddenly, and, as it seemed, not without emotion, aware what articles Bryce Snailsfoot was now disposing of. To this short and fierce question, the yagger, afraid to contradict a customer of his description, answered only by stammering, that the 'Lord knew he meant nae offence.'

'How, sir! no offence!' said the seaman, 'and dispose of my property!' extending his hand at the same time to the box and chaplet; 'restore the young gentleman's money, and learn to keep your course on the meridian of honesty.'

The yagger, confused and reluctant, pulled out his leathern pouch to repay to Mordaunt the money he had just deposited in it; but the youth was not to be so satisfied.

'The articles,' he said, 'were bought and sold—these were your own words, Bryce Snailsfoot, in Master Halcro's hearing; and I will suffer neither you nor any other to deprive me of my property.'

'*Your* property, young man?' said Cleveland; 'it is mine—I spoke to Bryce respecting them an instant before I turned from the table.'

'I—I—I had not just heard distinctly,' said Bryce, evidently unwilling to offend either party.

'Come, come,' said the Udaller, 'we will have no quarrelling about baubles; we shall be summoned presently to the rigging-loft,'—so he used to call the apartment used as a ball-room,—'and we must all go in good humour. The things shall remain with Bryce for to-night, and to-morrow I will myself settle whom they shall belong to.'

The laws of the Udaller in his own house were absolute as those of the Medes. The two young men, regarding each other with looks of sullen displeasure, drew off in different directions.

It is seldom that the second day of a prolonged festival equals the first. The spirits, as well as the limbs, are jaded, and unequal to the renewed expenditure of animation and exertion; and the dance at Burgh-Westra was sustained with much less mirth than on the preceding evening. It was yet an hour from midnight, when even the reluctant Magnus Troil, after regretting the degeneracy of the times, and wishing he could transfuse into the modern Hjaltlanders some of the vigour which still animated his own frame, found himself compelled to give the signal for general retreat.

Just as this took place, Halcro, leading Mordaunt Mertoun a little aside, said he had a message to him from Captain Cleveland.

'A message!' said Mordaunt, his heart beating somewhat thick as he spoke—'A challenge, I suppose?'

'A challenge!' repeated Halcro; 'who ever heard of a challenge in our quiet islands? Do you think that I look like a carrier of challenges, and to you of all men living? I am none of those fighting fools, as glorious John calls them; and it was not quite a message I had to deliver—only thus far this Captain Cleveland, I find, hath set his heart upon having these articles you looked at.'

'He shall not have them, I swear to you,' replied Mordaunt Mertoun.

'Nay, but hear me,' said Halcro; 'it seems that by the marks or arms that are upon them, he knows that they were formerly his property. Now, were you to give me the box, as you promised, I fairly tell you, I should give the man back his own.'

'And Brenda might do the like,' thought Mordaunt to himself, and instantly replied aloud, 'I have thought better of it, my friend. Captain Cleveland shall have the toys he sets such store by, but it is on one sole condition.'

'Nay, you will spoil all with your conditions,' said Halcro; 'for, as glorious John says, conditions are but'——

'Hear me, I say, with patience. - My condition is, that he keeps the toys in exchange for the rifle-gun I accepted from him, which will leave no obligation between us on either side.'

'I see where you would be this is Sebastian and Dorax all over. Well, you may let the yagger know he is to deliver the things to Cleveland—I think he is mad to have them—and I will let Cleveland know the conditions annexed, otherwise honest Bryce might come by two payments instead of one; and I believe his conscience would not choke upon it.'

With these words, Halcro went to seek out Cleveland; while Mordaunt, observing Snailsfoot, who, as a sort of privileged person, had thrust himself into the crowd at the bottom of the dancing-room, went up to him, and gave him directions to deliver the disputed articles to Cleveland as soon as he had an opportunity.

'Ye are in the right, Maister Mordaunt,' said the yagger; 'ye are a prudent and a sensible lad—a calm answer turneth away wrath - and mysel', I sall be willing to please you in ony trifling matters in my sma' way; for, between the Udaller of Burgh-Westra and Captain Cleveland, a man is, as it were, atween the deil and the deep sea; and it was like that the Udaller in the end would have taken your part in the dispute, for he is a man that loves justice.'

'Which apparently you care very little about, Master Snailsfoot,' said Mordaunt, 'otherwise there could have been no dispute whatsoever, the right being so clearly on my side, if you had pleased to bear witness according to the dictates of truth.'

'Maister Mordaunt,' said the yagger, 'I must own there was, as it were, a colouring or shadow of justice on your side; but then the justice that I meddle with is only justice in the way of trade, to have an ellwand of due length, if it be not something worn out with leaning on it in my lang and painful journeys, and to buy and sell by just weight and measure; twenty-four merks to the lispund; but I have nothing to do, to do justice betwixt man and man, like a Fowd* or a law-right man, at a lawting lang syne.'

'No one asked you to do so, but only to give evidence according to your conscience,' replied Mordaunt, not greatly pleased either with the part the yagger had acted during the dispute, or the construction which he seemed to put on his own motives for yielding up the point.

But Bryce Snailsfoot wanted not his answer; 'My conscience,' he said, 'Maister Mordaunt, is as tender as ony man's in my degree; but she is something of a timorsome nature, cannot abide angry folk, and can never speak above her breath when there is aught of a fray going forward. Indeed, she hath at all times a small and low voice.'

'Which you are not much in the habit of listening to,' said Mordaunt.

'There is that on your ain breast that proves the contrary,' said Bryce resolutely.

'In my breast?' said Mordaunt, somewhat angrily—'what know I of you?'

'I said *on* your breast, Maister Mordaunt, and not *in* it. I am sure nae eye that looks on that waistcoat upon your gallant brisket, but will say that the merchant who sold such a piece for four dollars had justice and conscience, and a kind heart to a customer to the boot of a' that; sae ye shouldna be sae thrawart wi' me for having spared the breath of my mouth in a fool's quarrel.'

'I thrawart!' said Mordaunt; 'pooh, you silly man! I have no quarrel with you.'

'I am glad of it,' said the travelling merchant; 'I will quarrel with no man, with my will—least of all with an old customer; and if you will walk by my advice, you will quarrel nane with Captain Cleveland. He is like one of yon cutters and slashers that have come into Kirkwall, that think as little of slicing a man as we do of flinching a whale - it's their trade to fight, and they live by it; and they have the advantage of the like of you, that only take it up at your own hand, and in the way of pastime, when you hae nothing better to do.'

The company had now almost all dispersed; and Mordaunt, laughing at the yagger's caution, bade him good-night, and went to his own place of repose, which had been assigned to him by Eric Scambester (who acted the part of chamberlain as well as butler), in a small room or rather closet, in one of the out-houses, furnished for the occasion with the hammock of a sailor.

CHAPTER XIX.

I pass like night from land to land,
I have strange power of speech;
So soon as e'er his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me,
To him my tale I teach.

COLERIDGE'S RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

THE daughters of Magnus Troil shared the same bed, in a chamber which had been that of

* [Sheriff or judge. See Glossary.]

their parents before the death of their mother. Magnus, who suffered grievously under that dispensation of Providence, had become disgusted with the apartment. The nuptial chamber was abandoned to the pledges of his bereaved affection, of whom the eldest was at that period only four years old, or thereabouts; and, having been their nursery in infancy, continued, though now tricked and adorned according to the best fashion of the islands and the taste of the lovely sisters themselves, to be their sleeping-room, or, in the old Norse dialect, their bower.

It had been for many years the scene of the most intimate confidence, if that could be called confidence where, in truth, there was nothing to be confided—where neither sister had a secret—and where every thought that had birth in the bosom of the one was, without either hesitation or doubt, confided to the other as spontaneously as it had arisen. But since Cleveland abode in the mansion of Burgh-Westra, each of the lovely sisters had entertained thoughts which are not lightly or easily communicated, unless she who listens to them has previously assured herself that the confidence will be kindly received. Minna had noticed, what other and less interested observers had been unable to perceive, that Cleveland, namely, held a lower rank in Brenda's opinion than in her own; and Brenda, on her side, thought that Minna had hastily and unjustly joined in the prejudices which had been excited against Mordaunt Mertoun in the mind of their father. Each was sensible that she was no longer the same to her sister; and this conviction was a painful addition to other painful apprehensions which they supposed they had to struggle with. Their manner towards each other was, in outward appearances, and in all the little cares by which affection can be expressed, even more assiduously kind than before, as if both, conscious that their internal reserve was a breach of their sisterly union, strove to atone for it by double assiduity in those external marks of affection, which, at other times, when there was nothing to hide, might be omitted without inferring any consequences.

On the night referred to, in particular, the sisters felt more especially the decay of the confidence which used to exist betwixt them. The proposed voyage to Kirkwall, and that at the time of the fair, when persons of every degree in these islands repair thither, either for business or amusement, was likely to be an important incident in lives usually so simple and uniform as theirs; and, a few months ago, Minna and Brenda would have been awake half the night, anticipating, in their talk with each other, all that was likely to happen on so momentous an occasion. But now the subject was just mentioned, and suffered to drop, as if the topic was likely to produce a difference betwixt them, or to call forth a more open display of their several opinions than either was willing to make to the other.

Yet such was their natural openness and gentleness of disposition, that each sister imputed to herself the fault that there was aught like estrangement existing between them; and when, having finished their devotions and betaken themselves to their common couch, they folded each other in their arms, and exchanged a sisterly kiss and a sisterly good-night, they seemed mutually to ask pardon and to exchange forgiveness, although neither said a word of offence either offered or received; and both were soon plunged in that light and yet profound repose which is only enjoyed when sleep sinks down on the eyes of youth and innocence.

On the night to which the story relates, both sisters were visited by dreams, which, though varied by the moods and habits of the sleepers, bore yet a strange general resemblance to each other.

Minna dreamed that she was in one of the most lonely recesses of the beach called Swartaster, where the incessant operation of the waves, indenting a calcareous rock, has formed a deep *halier*, which, in the language of the island, means a subterranean cavern, into which the tide ebbs and flows. Many of these run to an extraordinary and unascertained depth under ground, and are the secure retreat of cormorants and seals, which it is neither easy nor safe to pursue to their extreme recesses. Amongst these this halier of Swartaster was accounted peculiarly inaccessible, and shunned both by fowlers and by seamen, on account of sharp angles and turnings in the cave itself, as well as the sunken rocks, which rendered it very dangerous for skiffs or boats to advance far into it, especially if there was the usual swell of an island tide. From the dark-browed mouth of this cavern, it seemed to Minna in her dream that she beheld a mermaid issue, not in the classical dress of a Nereid, as in Claud Halcro's masque of the preceding evening, but with comb and glass in hand, according to popular belief, and lashing the waves with that long scaly train, which, in the traditions of the country, forms so frightful a contrast with the fair face, long tresses, and displayed bosom of a human and earthly female of surpassing beauty. She seemed to beckon to Minna, while her wild notes rang sadly in her ears, and denounced, in prophetic sounds, calamity and woe.

The vision of Brenda was of a different description, yet equally melancholy. She sat, as she thought, in her favourite bower, surrounded by her father and a party of his most beloved friends, amongst whom Mordaunt Mertoun was not forgotten. She was required to sing; and she strove to entertain them with a lively ditty, in which she was accounted eminently successful, and which she sung with such simple, yet natural humour, as seldom failed to produce shouts of laughter and applause, while all who could, or who could not sing, were irresistibly compelled to lend their voices to the chorus. But on this occasion it seemed as if her own voice refused all its usual duty, and as if, while she felt herself unable to express the words of the well-known air, it assumed, in her own despite, the deep tones and wild and melancholy notes of Norna of Fitful Head, for the purpose of chanting some wild Runic rhyme, resembling those sung by the heathen priests of old, when the victim (too often human) was bound to the fatal altar of Odin or of Thor.

At length the two sisters at once started from sleep, and, uttering a low scream of fear, clasped themselves in each other's arms. For their fancy had not altogether played them false; the sounds which had suggested their dreams were real, and

sung within their own apartment. They knew the voice well, indeed, and yet, knowing to whom it belonged, their surprise and fear were scarce the less when they saw the well-known Norna of Fitful Head seated by the chimney of the apartment, which during the summer season contained an iron lamp well trimmed, and in winter a fire of wood or of turf.

She was wrapped in her long and ample garment of wadmaal, and moved her body slowly to and fro over the pale flame of the lamp, as she sung lines to the following purport, in a slow, sad, almost an unearthly accent:—

For leagues along the watery way,
  Through gulf and stream my course has been;
The billows know my Runic lay,
  And smooth their crests to silent green.

The billows know my Runic lay,—
  The gulf grows smooth, the stream is still;
But human hearts, more wild than they,
  Know but the rule of wayward will.

One hour is mine, in all the year,
  To tell my woes—and one alone;
When gleams this magic lamp, 'tis here,—
  When dies the mystic light, 'tis gone.

Daughters of northern Magnus, hail!
  The lamp is lit, the flame is clear,
To you I come to tell my tale,
  Awake, arise, my tale to hear!

Norna was well known to the daughters of Troil, but it was not without emotion, although varied by their respective dispositions, that they beheld her so unexpectedly, and at such an hour. Their opinions with respect to the supernatural attributes to which she pretended were extremely different.

Minna, with an unusual intensity of imagination, although superior in talent to her sister, was more apt to listen to, and delight in, every tale of wonder, and was at all times more willing to admit impressions which gave her fancy scope and exercise, without minutely examining their reality. Brenda, on the other hand, had, in her gaiety, a slight propensity to satire, and was often tempted to laugh at the very circumstances upon which Minna founded her imaginative dreams; and, like all who love the ludicrous, she did not readily suffer herself to be imposed upon, or overawed, by pompous pretensions of any kind whatever. But, as her nerves were weaker and more irritable than those of her sister, she often paid involuntary homage, by her fears, to ideas which her reason disowned; and hence Claud Halcro used to say, in reference to many of the traditionary superstitions around Burgh-Westra, that Minna believed them without trembling, and that Brenda trembled without believing them. In our own more enlightened days, there are few whose undoubting mind and native courage have not felt Minna's high-wrought tone of enthusiasm, and perhaps still fewer who have not, at one time or other, felt, like Brenda, their nerves confess the influence of terrors which their reason disowned and despised.

Under the power of such different feelings, Minna, when the first moment of surprise was over, prepared to spring from her bed, and go to meet Norna, who, she doubted not, had come on some errand fraught with fate; while Brenda, who only beheld in her a woman partially deranged in her understanding, and who yet, from the extravagance of her claims, regarded her as an undefined object of awe, or rather terror, detained her sister by an eager and terrified grasp, while she whispered in her ear an anxious entreaty that she would call for assistance. But the soul of Minna was too highly wrought up by the crisis at which her fate seemed to have arrived, to permit her to follow the dictates of her sister's fears, and, extricating herself from Brenda's hold, she hastily threw on a loose nightgown, and, stepping boldly across the apartment, while her heart throbbed rather with high excitement than with fear, she thus addressed her singular visitor:—

'Norna, if your mission regards us, as your words seem to express, there is one of us, at least, who will receive its import with reverence, but without fear.'

'Norna, dear Norna,' said the tremulous voice of Brenda,—who, feeling no safety in the bed after Minna quitted it, had followed her, as fugitives crowd into the rear of an advancing army, because they dare not remain behind, and who now stood half concealed by her sister, and holding fast by the skirts of her gown—'Norna, dear Norna,' said she, 'whatever you are to say, let it be to-morrow. I will call Euphane Fea, the housekeeper, and she will find you a bed for the night.'

'No bed for me!' said their nocturnal visitor; 'no closing of the eyes for me! They have watched as shelf and stack appeared and disappeared betwixt Burgh-Westra and Orkney—they have seen the Man of Hoy sink into the sea, and the Peak of Hengcliff arise from it, and yet they have not tasted of slumber; nor must they slumber now till my task is ended. Sit down, then, Minna, and thou, silly trembler, sit down, while I trim my lamp—Don your clothes, for the tale is long, and ere 'tis done ye will shiver with worse than cold.'

'For Heaven's sake, then, put it off till daylight, dear Norna!' said Brenda; 'the dawn cannot be far distant; and if you are to tell us of anything frightful, let it be by daylight, and not by the dim glimmer of that blue lamp.'

'Patience, fool!' said their uninvited guest. 'Not by daylight should Norna tell a tale that might blot the sun out of heaven, and blight the hopes of the hundred boats that will leave this shore ere noon, to commence their deep-sea fishing,—ay, and of the hundred families that will await their return. The demon, whom the sounds will not fail to awaken, must shake his dark wings over a shipless and a boatless sea, as he rushes from his mountain to drink the accents of horror he loves so well to listen to.'

'Have pity on Brenda's fears, good Norna,' said the elder sister, 'and at least postpone this frightful communication to another place and ir.'

Maiden, no!' replied Norna sternly; 'it must be told while that lamp yet burns. Mine no daylight tale—by that lamp it must be told, which is framed out of the gibbet-irons of the cruel Lord of Wodensvoe, who murdered his brother; and has for its nourishment—but be

that nameless—enough that its food never came either from the fish or from the fruit!—See, it waxes dim and dimmer, nor must my tale last longer than its flame endureth. Sit ye down there, while I sit here opposite to you, and place the lamp betwixt us; for within the sphere of its light the demon dares not venture.'

The sisters obeyed, Minna casting a slow, awe-struck, yet determined look all around, as if to see the Being, who, according to the doubtful words of Norna, hovered in their neighbourhood; while Brenda's fears were mingled with some share both of anger and of impatience. Norna paid no attention to either, but began her story in the following words:—

'Ye know, my daughters, that your blood is allied to mine, but in what degree ye know not; for there was early hostility betwixt your grandsire and him who had the misfortune to call me daughter—Let me term him by his Christian name of Erland, for that which marks our relation I dare not bestow. Your grandsire Olave was the brother of Erland. But when the wide udal possessions of their father, Rolfe Troil, the most rich and well estated of any who descended from the old Norse stock, were divided betwixt the brothers, the Fowd gave to Erland his father's lands in Orkney, and reserved for Olave those of Hjaltland. Discord arose between the brethren; for Erland held that he was wronged; and when the Lawting,* with the Raddmen and Lawright-men, confirmed the division, he went in wrath to Orkney, cursing Hjaltland and its inhabitants—cursing his brother and his blood.

'But the love of the rock and of the mountain still wrought on Erland's mind, and he fixed his dwelling not on the soft hills of Ophir, or the green plains of Gramesey, but in the wild and mountainous isle of Hoy, whose summit rises to the sky like the cliffs of Foulah and of Feroe.† He knew—that unhappy Erland—whatever of legendary lore Scald and Bard had left behind them; and to teach me that knowledge, which was to cost us both so dear, was the chief occupation of his old age. I learned to visit each lonely barrow—each lofty cairn—to tell its appropriate tale, and to soothe with rhymes in his praise the spirit of the stern warrior who dwelt within. I knew where the sacrifices were made of yore to Thor and to Odin—on what stones the blood of the victims flowed—where stood the dark-browed priest—where the crested chiefs who consulted the will of the idol—where the more distant crowd of inferior worshippers, who looked on in awe or in terror. The places most shunned by the timid peasants had no terrors for me; I dared walk in the fairy circle, and sleep by the magic spring.

'But, for my misfortune, I was chiefly fond to linger about the Dwarfie Stone, as it is called, a relic of antiquity, which strangers look on with curiosity, and the natives with awe. It is a huge fragment of a rock, which lies in a broken and rude valley, full of stones and precipices, in the recesses of the Ward Hill of Hoy. The inside of the rock has two couches, hewn by no earthly hand, and having a small passage between them. The doorway is now open to the weather; but beside it lies a large stone, which, adapted to grooves, still visible in the entrance, once had served to open and to close this extraordinary dwelling, which Trolld, a dwarf famous in the northern sagas, is said to have framed for his own favourite residence. The lonely shepherd avoids the place, for at sunrise, high noon, or sunset, the misshapen form of the necromantic owner may sometimes still be seen sitting by the Dwarfie Stone.‡ I feared not the apparition, for, Minna, my heart was as bold, and my hand as innocent, as yours. In my childish courage, I was even but too presumptuous, and the thirst after things unattainable led me, like our primitive mother, to desire increase of knowledge even by prohibited means. I longed to possess the power of the Voluspæ and divining women of our ancient race; to wield, like them, command over the elements; and to summon the ghosts of deceased heroes from their caverns, that they might recite their daring deeds, and impart to me their hidden treasures. Often when watching by the Dwarfie Stone, with mine eyes fixed on the Ward Hill, which rises above that gloomy valley, I have distinguished, among the dark rocks, that wonderful carbuncle,§ which gleams ruddy as a furnace to them who view it from beneath, but has ever become invisible to him whose daring foot has scaled the precipices from which it darts its splendour. My vain and youthful bosom burned to investigate these and an hundred other mysteries, which the sagas that I perused, or learned from Erland, rather indicated than explained; and, in my daring mood, I called on the lord of the Dwarfie Stone to aid me in attaining knowledge inaccessible to mere mortals.'

'And the evil spirit heard your summons?' said Minna, her blood curdling as she listened.

'Hush,' said Norna, lowering her voice, 'vex him not with reproach—he is with us—he hears us even now.'

Brenda started from her seat—'I will to Euphane Fea's chamber,' she said, 'and leave you, Minna and Norna, to finish your stories of hobgoblins and of dwarfs at your own leisure; I care not for them at any time, but I will not endure them at midnight, and by this pale lamplight.'

She was accordingly in the act of leaving the room, when her sister detained her.

'Is this the courage,' she said, 'of her that disbelieves whatever the history of our fathers tells us of supernatural prodigy? What Norna has to tell concerns the fate, perhaps, of our father and his house;—if I can listen to it, trusting that God and my innocence will protect me from all that is malignant, you, Brenda,

* The Lawting was the Comitia, or Supreme Court of the country, being retained both in Orkney and Zetland, and presenting, in their constitution, the rude origin of a parliament.

† And from which hill of Hoy, at midsummer, the sun may be seen, it is said, at midnight. So says the geographer Bleau (1653), although, according to Dr. Wallace, it cannot be the true body of the sun which is visible, but only its image refracted through some watery cloud upon the horizon.

‡ Note Q. The Dwarfie Stone.

§ Note R. Carbuncle on the Ward Hill.

who believe not in such influence, have surely no cause to tremble. Credit me, that for the guiltless there is no fear.'

'There may be no danger,' said Brenda, unable to suppress her natural turn for humour, 'but, as the old jest-book says, there is much fear. However, Minna, I will stay with you;—the rather,' she added, in a whisper, 'that I am loath to leave you alone with this frightful woman, and that I have a dark staircase and long passage betwixt and Euphane Fea, else I would have her here ere I were five minutes older.'

'Call no one hither, maiden, upon peril of thy life,' said Norna, 'and interrupt not my tale again; for it cannot and must not be told after that charmed light has ceased to burn.'

'And I thank Heaven,' said Brenda to herself, 'that the oil burns low in the cruise! I am sorely tempted to lend it a puff, but then Norna would be alone with us in the dark, and that would be worse.'

So saying, she submitted to her fate, and sat down, determined to listen with all the equanimity which she could command to th remaining part of Norna's tale, which went on as follows:—

'It happened on a hot summer day, and just about the hour of noon,' continued Norna, 'as I sat by the Dwarfie Stone, with my eyes fixed on the Ward Hill, whence the mysterious and ever-burning carbuncle shed its rays more brightly than usual, and repined in my heart at the restricted bounds of human knowledge, that at length I could not help exclaiming, in the words of an ancient saga,—

"Dwellers of the mountain, rise,
Trolld the powerful, Haims the wise!
Ye who taught weak woman's tongue
Words that sway the wise and strong,—
Ye who taught weak woman's hand
How to wield the magic wand,
And wake the gales on Foulah's steep,
Or lull wild Sumburgh's waves to sleep!
Still are ye yet?—Not yours the power
Ye knew in Odin's mightier hour.
What are ye now but empty names,
Powerful Trolld, sagacious Haims,
That, lightly spoken, lightly heard,
Float on the air like thistle's beard?"

'I had scarce uttered these words,' proceeded Norna, 'ere the sky, which had been till then unusually clear, grew so suddenly dark around me, that it seemed more like midnight than noon. A single flash of lightning showed me at once the desolate landscape of heath, morass, mountain, and precipice which lay around; a single clap of thunder wakened all the echoes of the Ward Hill, which continued so long to repeat the sound, that it seemed some rock, rent by the thunderbolt from the summit, was rolling over cliff and precipice into the valley. Immediately after fell a burst of rain so violent, that I was fain to shun its pelting, by creeping into the interior of the mysterious stone.

'I seated myself on the larger stone couch, which is cut at the farther end of the cavity, and, with my eyes fixed on the smaller bed, wearied myself with conjectures respecting the origin and purpose of my singular place of refuge. Had it been really the work of that powerful Trolld, to whom the poetry of the Scalds referred it? Or was it the tomb of some Scandinavian chief, interred with his arms and his wealth, perhaps also with his immolated wife, that what he loved best in life might not in death be divided from him? Or was it the abode of penance, chosen by some devoted anchorite of later days? Or the idle work of some wandering mechanic, whom chance, and whim, and leisure, had thrust upon such an undertaking? I tell you the thoughts that then floated through my brain, that you may know that what ensued was not the vision of a prejudiced or prepossessed imagination, but an apparition, as certain as it was awful.

'Sleep had gradually crept on me, amidst my lucubrations, when I was startled from my slumbers by a second clap of thunder; and, when I awoke, I saw, through the dim light which the upper aperture admitted, the unshapely and indistinct form of Trolld the dwarf, seated opposite to me on the lesser couch, which his square and misshapen bulk seemed absolutely to fill up. I was startled, but not affrighted; for the blood of the ancient race of Lochlin was warm in my veins. He spoke; and his words were of Norse, so old, that few, save my father or I myself, could have comprehended their import,—such language as was spoken in these islands ere Olave planted the cross on the ruins of heathenism. His meaning was dark also and obscure, like that which the pagan priests were wont to deliver, in the name of their idols, to the tribes that assembled at the *Helgafels*.* This was the import,—

"A thousand winters dark have flown,
Since o'er the threshold of my stone
A votaress pass'd, my power to own
Visitor bold
Of the mansion of Trolld,
Maiden haughty of heart,
Who hast hither presumed,—
Ungifted, undoom'd,
Thou shalt not depart.
The power thou dost covet
O'er tempest and wave,
Shall be thine, thou proud maiden,
By beach and by cave,—
By stack† and by skerry,‡ by noup§ and by voe,‖
By air¶ and by wick,** and by helyer†† and gio,‡‡
And by every wild shore which the northern winds know,
And the northern tides lave.
But though this shall be given thee, thou desperately brave,
I doom thee that never the gift thou shalt have,
Till thou reave thy life's giver
Of the gift which he gave."

'I answered him in nearly the same strain; for the spirit of the ancient Scalds of our race was upon me, and, far from fearing the phantom, with whom I sat cooped within so narrow a space, I felt the impulse of that high courage which thrust the ancient champions and Druidesses upon contests with the invisible world, when they thought that the earth no longer contained

* Or consecrated mountain, used by the Scandinavian priests for the purposes of their idol-worship.

† *Stack.* A precipitous rock rising out of the sea.

‡ *Skerry.* A flat insulated rock, not subject to the overflowing of the sea.

§ *Noup.* A round-headed eminence.

‖ *Voe.* A creek or inlet of the sea.

¶ *Air.* An open sea-beach.

** *Wick.* An open bay.

†† *Helyer.* A cavern into which the tide flows.

‡‡ *Gio.* A deep ravine which admits the sea.

enemies worthy to be subdued by them. Therefore did I answer him thus :—

"Dark are thy words, and severe,
Thou dweller in the stone;
But trembling and fear
To her are unknown,
Who hath sought thee here
In thy dwelling lone.
Come what comes soever,
The worst I can endure;
Life is but a short fever,
And Death is the cure."

'The demon scowled at me, as if at once incensed and overawed; and then, coiling himself up in a thick and sulphureous vapour, he disappeared from his place. I did not, till that moment, feel the influence of fright, but then it seized me. I rushed into the open air, where the tempest had passed away, and all was pure and serene. After a moment's breathless pause, I hasted home, musing by the way on the words of the phantom, which I could not, as often happens, recall so distinctly to memory at the time as I have been since able to do.

'It may seem strange that such an apparition should, in time, have glided from my mind, like a vision of the night—but so it was. I brought myself to believe it the work of fancy—I thought I had lived too much in solitude, and had given way too much to the feelings inspired by my favourite studies. I abandoned them for a time, and I mixed with the youth of my age. I was upon a visit at Kirkwall when I learned to know your father, whom business had brought thither. He easily found access to the relation with whom I lived, who was anxious to compose, if possible, the feud which divided our families. Your father, maidens, has been rather hardened than changed by years—he had the same manly form, the same old Norse frankness of manner and of heart, the same upright courage and honesty of disposition, with more of the gentle ingenuousness of youth, an eager desire to please, a willingness to be pleased, and a vivacity of spirits which survives not our early years. But though he was thus worthy of love, and though Erland wrote to me, authorising his attachment, there was another—a stranger, Minna, a fatal stranger—full of arts unknown to us, and graces which to the plain manners of your father were unknown. Yes, he walked, indeed, among us like a being of another and of a superior race.—Ye look on me as if it were strange that I should have had attractions for such a lover; but I present nothing that can remind you that Norna of the Fitful Head was once admired and loved as Ulla Troil—the change betwixt the animated body and the corpse after decease, is scarce more awful and absolute than I have sustained, while I yet linger on earth. Look on me, maidens—look on me by this glimmering light—Can ye believe that these haggard and weather-wasted features—these eyes, which have been almost converted to stone, by looking upon sights of terror—these locks that, mingled with grey, now stream out, the shattered pennons of a sinking vessel,—that these, and she to whom they belong, could once be the objects of fond affection?—But the waning lamp sinks fast, and let it sink while I tell my infamy.—We loved in secret, we met in secret, till I gave the last proof of fatal and of guilty passion!—And now beam out, thou magic glimmer—shine out a little space, thou flame so powerful even in thy feebleness—bid him who hovers near us keep his dark pinions aloof from the circle thou dost illuminate—live but a little till the worst be told, and then sink when thou wilt into darkness, as black as my guilt and sorrow!'

While she spoke thus, she drew together the remaining nutriment of the lamp, and trimmed its decaying flame; then again, with a hollow voice, and in broken sentences, pursued her narrative.

'I must waste little time in words. My love was discovered, but not my guilt. Erland came to Pomona in anger, and transported me to our solitary dwelling in Hoy. He commanded me to see my lover no more, and to receive Magnus, in whom he was willing to forgive the offences of his father, as my future husband. Alas! I no longer deserved his attachment—my only wish was to escape from my father's dwelling, to conceal my shame in my lover's arms. Let me do him justice—he was faithful—too, too faithful—his perfidy would have bereft me of my senses; but the fatal consequences of his fidelity have done me a tenfold injury.'

She paused, and then resumed, with the wild tone of insanity, 'It has made me the powerful and the despairing Sovereign of the Seas and Winds!'

She paused a second time after this wild exclamation, and resumed her narrative in a more composed manner.

'My lover came in secret to Hoy, to concert measures for my flight, and I agreed to meet him, that we might fix the time when his vessel should come into the Sound. I left the house at midnight.'

Here she appeared to gasp with agony, and went on with her tale by broken and interrupted sentences. 'I left the house at midnight—I had to pass my father's door, and I perceived it was open—I thought he watched us, and, that the sound of my steps might not break his slumbers, I closed the fatal door—a light and trivial action—but, God in heaven! what were the consequences!—At morn the room was full of suffocating vapour—my father was dead—dead through my act—dead through my disobedience—dead through my infamy! All that follows is mist and darkness—a choking, suffocating, stifling mist envelopes all that I said or did, all that was said and done, until I became assured that my doom was accomplished, and walked forth the calm and terrible being you now behold me—the Queen of the Elements—the sharer in the power of those beings to whom man and his passions give such sport as the tortures of the dog-fish afford the fisherman, when he pierces his eyes with thorns, and turns him once more into his native element, to traverse the waves in blindness and agony.* No, maidens, she whom you see before you is impassive to the follies of which your minds are the sport. I am she that have made the offering—I am she that bereaved the giver of the gift of life which he gave me—the

* This cruelty is practised by some fishers, out of a vindictive hatred to these ravenous fishes.

dark saying has been interpreted by my deed, and I am taken from humanity, to be something pre-eminently powerful, pre-eminently wretched!'

As she spoke thus, the light, which had been long quivering, leaped high for an instant, and seemed about to expire, when Norna, interrupting herself, said hastily, 'No more now—he comes—he comes—Enough that ye know me, and the right I have to advise and command you.—Approach now, proud Spirit! if thou wilt.'

So saying, she extinguished the lamp, and passed out of the apartment with her usual loftiness of step, as Minna could observe from its measured cadence.

CHAPTER XX.

> Is all the counsel that we two have shared—
> The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
> When we have chid the hasty-footed time
> For parting us—Oh, and is all forgot?
>
> MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

THE attention of Minna was powerfully arrested by this tale of terror, which accorded with and explained many broken hints respecting Norna which she had heard from her father and other near relations, and she was for a time so lost in surprise, not unmingled with horror, that she did not even attempt to speak to her sister Brenda. When at length she called her by her name, she received no answer, and, on touching her hand, she found it cold as ice. Alarmed to the uttermost, she threw open the lattice and the window-shutters, and admitted at once the free air and the pale glimmer of the hyperborean summer night. She then became sensible that her sister was in a swoon. All thoughts concerning Norna, her frightful tale, and her mysterious connection with the invisible world, at once vanished from Minna's thoughts, and she hastily ran to the apartment of the old housekeeper, to summon her aid, without reflecting for a moment what sights she might encounter in the long dark passages which she had to traverse.

The old woman hastened to Brenda's assistance, and instantly applied such remedies as her experience suggested; but the poor girl's nervous system had been so much agitated by the horrible tale she had just heard, that, when recovered from her swoon, her utmost endeavours to compose her mind could not prevent her falling into a hysterical fit of some duration. This also was subdued by the experience of old Euphane Fea, who was well versed in all the simple pharmacy used by the natives of Zetland, and who, after administering a composing draught, distilled from simples and wild flowers, at length saw her patient resigned to sleep. Minna stretched herself beside her sister, kissed her cheek, and courted slumber in her turn; but the more she invoked it, the farther it seemed to fly from her eyelids; and if at times she was disposed to sink into repose, the voice of the involuntary parricide seemed again to sound in her ears, and startled her into consciousness.

The early morning hour at which they were accustomed to rise, found the state of the sisters different from what might have been expected. A sound sleep had restored the spirit of Brenda's lightsome eye and the rose on her laughing cheek; the transient indisposition of the preceding night having left as little trouble on her look, as the fantastic terrors of Norna's tale had been able to impress on her imagination. The looks of Minna, on the contrary, were melancholy, downcast, and apparently exhausted by watching and anxiety. They said at first little to each other, as if afraid of touching a subject so fraught with emotion as the scene of the preceding night. It was not until they had performed together their devotions, as usual, that Brenda, while lacing Minna's bodice (for they rendered the services of the toilet to each other reciprocally), became aware of the paleness of her sister's looks; and having ascertained, by a glance at the mirror, that her own did not wear the same dejection, she kissed Minna's cheek, and said affectionately, 'Claud Halcro was right, my dearest sister, when his poetical folly gave us these names of Night and Day.'

'And wherefore should you say so now?' said Minna.

'Because we each are bravest in the season that we take our name from; I was frightened well-nigh to death, by hearing those things last night, which you endured with courageous firmness; and now, when it is broad light, I can think of them with composure, while you look as pale as a spirit who is surprised by sunrise.'

'You are lucky, Brenda,' said her sister gravely, 'who can so soon forget such a tale of wonder and of horror.'

'The horror,' said Brenda, 'is never to be forgotten, unless one could hope that the unfortunate woman's excited imagination, which shows itself so active in conjuring up apparitions, may have fixed on her an imaginary crime.'

'You believe nothing, then,' said Minna, 'of her interview at the Dwarfie Stone, that wondrous place, of which so many tales are told, and which, for so many centuries, has been reverenced as the work of a demon, and as his abode?'

'I believe,' said Brenda, 'that our unhappy relative is no impostor,—and therefore I believe that she was at the Dwarfie Stone during a thunderstorm, that she sought shelter in it, and that, during a swoon, or during sleep, perhaps, some dream visited her, concerned with the popular traditions with which she was so conversant; but I cannot easily believe more.'

'And yet the event,' said Minna, 'corresponded to the dark intimations of the vision.'

'Pardon me,' said Brenda, 'I rather think the dream would never have been put into shape, or perhaps remembered at all, but for the event. She told us herself she had nearly forgot the vision till after her father's dreadful death,—and who shall warrant how much of what she then supposed herself to remember, was not the creation of her own fancy, disordered, as it naturally was, by the horrid accident? Had she really seen and conversed with a necromantic dwarf, she was likely to remember the conversation long enough—at least, I am sure I should.'

'Brenda,' replied Minna, 'you have heard the good minister of the Cross-Kirk say, that human wisdom was worse than folly, when it was applied to mysteries beyond its comprehension; and that, if we believed no more than we could understand,

we should resist the evidence of our senses, which presented us, at every turn, circumstances as certain as they were unintelligible.'

'You are too learned yourself, sister,' answered Brenda, 'to need the assistance of the good minister of Cross-Kirk; but I think his doctrine only related to the mysteries of our religion, which it is our duty to receive without investigation or doubt—but in things occurring in common life, as God has bestowed reason upon us, we cannot act wrong in employing it. But you, my dear Minna, have a warmer fancy than mine, and are willing to receive all those wonderful stories for truth, because you love to think of sorcerers, and dwarfs, and water-spirits, and would like much to have a little trow, or fairy, as the Scotch call them, with a green coat, and a pair of wings as brilliant as the hues of the starling's neck, specially to attend on you.'

'It would spare you at least the trouble of lacing my bodice,' said Minna, 'and of lacing it wrong, too; for in the heat of your argument you have missed two eyelet-holes.'

'That error shall be presently mended,' said Brenda; 'and then, as one of our friends might say, I will haul tight and belay—but you draw your breath so deeply, that it will be a difficult matter.'

'I only sighed,' said Minna, in some confusion, 'to think how soon you can trifle with and ridicule the misfortunes of this extraordinary woman.'

'I do not ridicule them, God knows!' replied Brenda, somewhat angrily; 'it is you, Minna, who turn all I say in truth and kindness, to something harsh or wicked. I look on Norna as a woman of very extraordinary abilities, which are very often reconciled with a strong cast of insanity; and I consider her as better skilled in the signs of the weather than any woman in Zetland. But that she has any power over the elements, I no more believe, than I do in the nursery stories of King Erick, who could make the wind blow from the point he set his cap to.'

Minna, somewhat nettled with the obstinate incredulity of her sister, replied sharply, 'And yet, Brenda, this woman—half-mad woman, and the veriest impostor—is the person by whom you choose to be advised in the matter next your own heart at this moment!'

'I do not know what you mean,' said Brenda, colouring deeply, and shifting to get away from her sister. But, as she was now undergoing the ceremony of being laced in her turn, her sister had the means of holding her fast by the silken string with which she was fastening the bodice, and, tapping her on the neck, which expressed, by its sudden writhe, and sudden change to a scarlet hue, as much pettish confusion as she had desire to provoke, she added, more mildly, 'Is it not strange, Brenda, that, used as we have been by the stranger Mordaunt Mertoun, whose assurance has brought him uninvited to a house where his presence is so unacceptable, you should still look on or think of him with favour? Surely that you do so should be a proof to you, that there are such things as spells in the country, and that you yourself labour under them. It is not for nought that Mordaunt wears a chain of elfin gold—look to it, Brenda, and be wise in time.'

'I have nothing to do with Mordaunt Mertoun,' answered Brenda hastily, 'nor do I know or care what he or any other young man wears about his neck. I could see all the gold chains of all the bailies of Edinburgh, that Lady Glowrowrum speaks so much of, without falling in fancy with one of the wearers.' And having thus complied with the female rule of pleading not guilty in general to such an indictment, she immediately resumed, in a different tone, 'But to say the truth, Minna, I think you, and all of you, have judged far too hastily about this young friend of ours, who has been so long our most intimate companion. Mind, Mordaunt Mertoun is no more to me than he is to you—who best know how little difference he made betwixt us; and that, chain or no chain, he lived with us like a brother with two sisters; and yet you can turn him off at once, because a wandering seaman, of whom we know nothing, and a peddling yagger, whom we well know to be a thief, a cheat, and a liar, speak words and carry tales in his disfavour! I do not believe he ever said he could have his choice of either of us, and only waited to see which was to have Burgh-Westra and Bredness Voe—I do not believe he ever spoke such a word, or harboured such a thought, as that of making a choice between us.'

'Perhaps,' said Minna coldly, 'you may have had reason to know that his choice was already determined?'

'I will not endure this,' said Brenda, giving way to her natural vivacity, and springing from between her sister's hands; then turning round and facing her, while her glowing cheek was rivalled in the deepness of its crimson by as much of her neck and bosom as the upper part of the half-laced bodice permitted to be visible,—'Even from you, Minna,' she said, 'I will not endure this! You know that all my life I have spoken the truth, and that I love the truth; and I tell you that Mordaunt Mertoun never in his life made distinction betwixt you and me until'——

Here some feeling of consciousness stopped her short, and her sister replied, with a smile, 'Until *when*, Brenda? Methinks your love of truth seems choked with the sentence you were bringing out.'

'Until you ceased to do him the justice he deserves,' said Brenda firmly, 'since I must speak out. I have little doubt that he will not long throw away his friendship on you, who hold it so lightly.'

'Be it so,' said Minna; 'you are secure from my rivalry, either in his love or friendship. But bethink you better, Brenda—this is no scandal of Cleveland's—Cleveland is incapable of slander—no falsehood of Bryce Snailsfoot—not one of our friends or acquaintance but says it has been the common talk of the island, that the daughters of Magnus Troil were patiently awaiting the choice of the nameless and birthless stranger, Mordaunt Mertoun.—Is it fitting that this should be said of us, the descendants of a Norwegian yarl, and the daughters of the first Udaller in Zetland? or would it be modest or maidenly to submit to it unresented, were we the meanest lasses that ever lifted a milk-pail?'

'The tongues of fools are no reproach,' replied

Brenda warmly; 'I will never quit my own thoughts of an innocent friend for the gossip of the island, which can put the worst meaning on the most innocent actions.'

'Hear but what our friends say,' repeated Minna; 'hear but the Lady Glowrowrum; hear but Maddie and Clara Groatsetter.'

'If I were to hear Lady Glowrowrum,' said Brenda steadily, 'I should listen to the worst tongue in Zetland; and as for Maddie and Clara Groatsetter, they were both blithe enough to get Mordaunt to sit betwixt them at dinner the day before yesterday, as you might have observed yourself, but that your ear was better engaged.'

'Your eyes, at least, have been but indifferently engaged, Brenda,' retorted the elder sister, 'since they were fixed on a young man, whom all the world but yourself believes to have talked of us with the most insolent presumption; and even if he be innocently charged, Lady Glowrowrum says it is unmaidenly and bold of you even to look in the direction where he sits, knowing it must confirm such reports.'

'I will look which way I please,' said Brenda, growing still warmer; 'Lady Glowrowrum shall neither rule my thoughts, nor my words, nor my eyes. I hold Mordaunt Mertoun to be innocent,—I will look at him as such,—I will speak of him as such; and if I did not speak to him also, and behave to him as usual, it is in obedience to my father, and not for what Lady Glowrowrum and all her nieces, had she twenty instead of two, could think, wink, nod, or tattle about the matter that concerns them not.'

'Alas, Brenda!' answered Minna, with calmness, 'this vivacity is more than is required for the defence of the character of a mere friend!—Beware—He who ruined Norna's peace for ever, was a stranger, admitted to her affections against the will of her family.'

'He was a stranger,' replied Brenda, with emphasis, 'not only in birth, but in manners. She had not been bred up with him from her youth,—she had not known the gentleness, the frankness of his disposition, by an intimacy of many years. He was indeed a stranger, in character, temper, birth, manners, and morals,—some wandering adventurer, perhaps, whom chance or tempest had thrown upon the islands, and who knew how to mask a false heart with a frank brow. My good sister, take home your own warning. There are other strangers at Burgh-Westra besides this poor Mordaunt Mertoun.'

Minna seemed for a moment overwhelmed with the rapidity with which her sister retorted her suspicion and her caution. But her natural loftiness of disposition enabled her to reply with assumed composure.

'Were I to treat you, Brenda, with the want of confidence you show towards me, I might reply that Cleveland is no more to me than Mordaunt was; or than young Swaraster, or Lawrence Ericson, or any other favourite guest of my father's, now is. But I scorn to deceive you, or to disguise my thoughts—I love Clement Cleveland.'

'Do not say so, my dearest sister,' said Brenda, abandoning at once the air of acrimony with which the conversation had been latterly conducted, and throwing her arms round her sister's neck, with looks and with a tone of the most earnest affection,—'do not say so, I implore you! I will renounce Mordaunt Mertoun,—I will swear never to speak to him again; but do not repeat that you love this Cleveland!'

'And why should I not repeat,' said Minna, disengaging herself gently from her sister's grasp, 'a sentiment in which I glory? The boldness, the strength and energy of his character, to which command is natural, and fear unknown,—these very properties, which alarm you for my happiness, are the qualities which insure it. Remember, Brenda, that when your foot loved the calm smooth sea-beach of the summer sea, mine ever delighted in the summit of the precipice, when the waves were in fury.'

'And it is even that which I dread,' said Brenda; 'it is even that adventurous disposition which now is urging you to the brink of a precipice more dangerous than ever was washed by a spring-tide. This man,—do not frown, I will say no slander of him,—but is he not, even in your own partial judgment, stern and overbearing? accustomed, as you say, to command; but, for that very reason, commanding where he has no right to do so, and leading whom it would most become him to follow? rushing on danger, rather for its own sake, than for any other object? And can you think of being yoked with a spirit so unsettled and stormy, whose life has hitherto been led in scenes of death and peril, and who, even while sitting by your side, cannot disguise his impatience again to engage in them? A lover, methinks, should love his mistress better than his own life; but yours, my dear Minna, loves her less than the pleasure of inflicting death on others.'

'And it is even for that I love him,' said Minna. 'I am a daughter of the old dames of Norway, who could send their lovers to battle with a smile, and slay them, with their own hands, if they returned with dishonour. My lover must scorn the mockeries by which our degraded race strive for distinction, or must practise them only in sport, and in earnest of nobler dangers. No whale-striking, bird-nesting favourite for me; my lover must be a sea-king, or what else modern times may give that draws near to that lofty character.'

'Alas, my sister!' said Brenda, 'it is now that I must in earnest begin to believe the force of spells and charms. You remember the Spanish story which you took from me long since, because I said, in your admiration of the chivalry of the olden times of Scandinavia, you rivalled the extravagance of the hero. Ah, Minna! your colour shows that your conscience checks you, and reminds you of the book I mean;—is it more wise, think you, to mistake a windmill for a giant, or the commander of a paltry corsair for a Kiempe, or a Viking?'

Minna did indeed colour with anger at this insinuation, of which, perhaps, she felt in some degree the truth.

'You have a right,' she said, 'to insult me, because you are possessed of my secret.'

Brenda's soft heart could not resist this charge of unkindness; she adjured her sister to pardon her, and the natural gentleness of Minna's feelings could not resist her entreaties.

'We are unhappy,' she said, as she dried her sister's tears, 'that we cannot see with the same eyes—let us not make each other more so by mutual insult and unkindness. You have my secret. It will not, perhaps, long be one, for my father shall have the confidence to which he is entitled, so soon as certain circumstances will permit me to offer it. Meantime, I repeat, you have my secret, and I more than suspect that I have yours in exchange, though you refuse to own it.'

'How, Minna!' said Brenda; 'would you have me acknowledge for any one such feelings as you allude to, ere he has said the least word that could justify such a confession?'

'Surely not; but a hidden fire may be distinguished by heat as well as flame.'

'You understand these signs, Minna,' said Brenda, hanging down her head, and in vain endeavouring to suppress the temptation to repartee which her sister's remark offered; 'but I can only say, that if ever I love at all, it shall not be until I have been asked to do so once or twice at least, which has not yet chanced to me. But do not let us renew our quarrel, and rather let us think why Norna should have told us that horrible tale, and to what she expects it should lead.'

'It must have been as a caution,' replied Minna—'a caution which our situation, and, I will not deny it, which mine in particular, might seem to her to call for;—but I am alike strong in my own innocence, and in the honour of Cleveland.'

Brenda would fain have replied, that she did not confide so absolutely in the latter security as in the first;—but she was prudent, and, forbearing to awake the former painful discussion, only replied, 'It is strange that Norna should have said nothing more of her lover. Surely he could not desert her in the extremity of misery to which he had reduced her?'

'There may be agonies of distress,' said Minna, after a pause, 'in which the mind is so much jarred, that it ceases to be responsive even to the feelings which have most engrossed it;—her sorrow for her lover may have been swallowed up in horror and despair.'

'Or he may have fled from the islands, in fear of our father's vengeance,' said Brenda.

'If for fear, or faintness of heart,' said Minna, looking upwards, 'he was capable of flying from the ruin which he had occasioned, I trust he has long ere this sustained the punishment which Heaven reserves for the most base and dastardly of traitors and of cowards. Come, sister, we are ere this expected at the breakfast board.'

And they went thither, arm in arm, with much more of confidence than had lately subsisted between them; the little quarrel which had taken place having served the purpose of a *bourasque*, or sudden squall, which dispels mists and vapours, and leaves fair weather behind it.

On their way to the breakfast apartment, they agreed that it was unnecessary, and might be imprudent, to communicate to their father the circumstance of the nocturnal visit, or to let him observe that they now knew more than formerly of the melancholy history of Norna.

CHAPTER XXI.

> But lost to me, for ever lost those joys,
> Which reason scatters, and which time destroys.
> No more the midnight fairy-train I view,
> All in the merry moonlight tippling dew.
> Even the last lingering fiction of the brain,
> The churchyard ghost, is now at rest again.
>
> THE LIBRARY.

THE moral bard,* from whom we borrow the motto of this chapter, has touched a theme with which most readers have some feelings that vibrate unconsciously. Superstition, when not arrayed in her full horrors, but laying a gentle hand only on her suppliant's head, had charms which we fail not to regret, even in those stages of society from which her influence is well-nigh banished by the light of reason and general education. At least, in more ignorant periods, her system of ideal terrors had something in them interesting to minds which had few means of excitement. This is more especially true of those lighter modifications of superstitious feelings and practices which mingle in the amusements of the ruder ages, and are, like the auguries of Hallow-e'en in Scotland, considered partly as matter of merriment, partly as sad and prophetic earnest. And, with similar feelings, people even of tolerable education have, in our times, sought the cell of a fortune-teller, upon a frolic, as it is termed, and yet not always in a disposition absolutely sceptical towards the responses they receive.

When the sisters of Burgh-Westra arrived in the apartment destined for a breakfast as ample as that which we have described on the preceding morning, and had undergone a jocular rebuke from the Udaller for thei; šnte attendance, they found the company, now that whom had already breakfasted, engaged that I lancient Norwegian custom, of the chlaunt Mhich we have just described. bet·

It seems to have ɔorrowed from those poems of the Scald conschich champions and heroines are so ofte ɔhedesented as seeking to know their destiny inksome sorceress or prophetess, who, as in the egend called by Gray the Descent of Odin,† akens by the force of Runic rhyme the unwto ɥg revealer of the doom of fate, and compels la ɥn her answers, often of dubious import, but 'lchich were then believed to express away his friw of the events of futurity.

An old y.' ɔhane Fea, the housekeeper we have alo,' said Mntioned, was installed in the recess of a either indow, studiously darkened by bear-skins a better other miscellaneous drapery, so as to give it's something the appearance of a Laplander's hut, and accommodated, like a confessional chair, with an aperture, which permitted the person within to hear with ease whatever questions should be put, though not to see the querist. Here seated, the Voluspa, or sibyl, was to listen to the rhythmical inquiries which should be made to her, and r[illegible] extemporaneous answer. The [illegible]s of the first U[illegible]revent her from seeiould it be modest or maidenly to consulted, and presented, were we the meanest

————————; lifted a milk-pail?'

[illegible] of fools are no reproach,' replied

ence which the answer given under such circumstances bore to the situation of the person by whom the question was asked, often furnished food for laughter, and sometimes, as it happened, for more serious reflection. The sibyl was usually chosen from her possessing the talent of improvisation in the Norse poetry; no unusual accomplishment, where the minds of many were stored with old verses, and where the rules of metrical composition are uncommonly simple. The questions were also put in verse; but as this power of extemporaneous composition, though common, could not be supposed universal, the medium of an interpreter might be used by any querist, which interpreter, holding the consulter of the oracle by the hand, and standing by the place from which the oracles were issued, had the task of rendering into verse the subject of inquiry.

On the present occasion, Claud Halcro was summoned by the universal voice to perform the part of interpreter; and, after shaking his head, and muttering some apology for decay of memory and poetical powers, contradicted at once by his own conscious smile of confidence and by the general shout of the company, the light-hearted old man came forward to play his part in the proposed entertainment.

But just as it was about to commence, the arrangement of parts was singularly altered. Norna of the Fitful Head, whom every one excepting the two sisters believed to be at the distance of many miles, suddenly and without greeting, entered the apartment, walked majestically up to the bearskin tabernacle, and signed to the female who was there seated to abdicate her sanctuary. The old woman came forth, shaking her head, and looking like one overwhelmed with fear; nor, indeed, were there many in the company who saw with absolute composure the sudden appearance of a person so well known and so generally dreaded as Norna.

She paused a moment at the entrance of the tent; and, as she raised the skin which formed the entrance, she looked up to the north, as if imploring from that quarter a train of inspiration; then signing to the surprised guests that they might approach in succession the shrine in which she was about to install herself, she entered the tent, and was shrouded from their sight.

But this was a different sport from what the company had meditated, and to most of them seemed to present so much more of earnest than of game, that there was no alacrity shown to consult the oracle. The character and pretensions of Norna seemed, to almost all present, too serious for the part which she had assumed; the men whispered to each other, and the women, according to Claud Halcro, realized the description of glorious John Dryden,—

> With horror shuddering, on a heap they ran.

The pause was interrupted by the loud manly voice of the Udaller. 'Why does the game stand still, my maste[illegible]y th[illegible]u afraid because my kinswom[illegible] ? It is kindly [illegible] 'Do not say so, my dearest siste[illegible] in the isles abandoning at once the air of [illegible]lk our sport which the conversation had been [illegible] ducted, and throwing her arms ro[illegible]ompany, and

Magnus Troil added, 'It shall never be said that my kinswoman sat in her bower unhalsed,* as if she were some of the old mountain-giantesses, and all from faint heart. I will speak first myself; but the rhyme comes worse from my tongue than when I was a score of years younger.—Claud Halcro, you must stand by me.'

Hand in hand they approached the shrine of the supposed sibyl, and, after a moment's consultation together, Halcro thus expressed the query of his friend and patron. Now, the Udaller, like many persons of consequence in Zetland, who, as Sir Robert Sibbald † has testified for them, had begun thus early to apply both to commerce and navigation, was concerned to some extent in the whale fishery of the season, and the bard had been directed to put into his halting verse an inquiry concerning its success.

CLAUD HALCRO.

> Mother darksome, Mother dread,
> Dweller on the Fitful-Head,
> Thou canst see what deeds are done
> Under the never-setting sun.
> Look through sleet, and look through frost,
> Look to Greenland's caves and coast,—
> By the iceberg is a sail
> Chasing of the swarthy whale:
> Mother doubtful, Mother dread,
> Tell us, has the good ship sped?

The jest seemed to turn to earnest, as all, bending their heads around, listened to the voice of Norna, who, without a moment's hesitation, answered from the recesses of the tent in which she was enclosed:—

NORNA.

> The thought of the aged is ever on gear,
> On his fishing, his furrow, his flock, and his steer;
> But thrive may his fishing, flock, furrow, and herd,
> While the aged for anguish shall tear his grey beard.

There was a momentary pause, during which Triptolemus had time to whisper, 'If ten witches and as many warlocks were to swear it, I will never believe that a decent man will either fash his beard or himself about anything, so long as stock and crop goes as it should do.'

But the voice from within the tent resumed its low monotonous tone of recitation, and, interrupting further commentary, proceeded as follows:—

NORNA.

> The ship, well laden as bark need be,
> Lies deep in the furrow of the Iceland sea;—
> The breeze from Zetland blows fair and soft,
> And gaily the garland ‡ is fluttering aloft:
> Seven good fishes have spouted their last,
> And their jaw-bones are hanging to yard and mast; §
> Two are for Lerwick, and two for Kirkwall,—
> And three for Burgh-Westra, the choicest of all.'

'Now the powers above look down and pro-

* [Unsaluted.]

† [The *Description of the Isles of Orkney and Zetland* was published by Sir Robert Sibbald, M.D., Edinburgh, 1711, folio.]

‡ The garland is an artificial coronet, composed of ribbons by those young women who take an interest in a whaling vessel or her crew; it is always displayed from the rigging, [illegible] the masts of the vessel.

tect us!' said Bryce Snailsfoot; 'for it is mair than woman's wit that has spaed out that ferly. I saw them at North Ronaldsha that had seen the good bark, the Olave of Lerwick, that our worthy patron has such a great share in that she may be called his own in a manner, and they had broomed* the ship, and, as sure as there are stars in heaven, she answered them for seven fish, exact as Norna has telled us in her rhyme.'

'Umph—seven fish exactly? and you heard it at North Ronaldsha?' said Captain Cleveland, 'and I suppose told it as a good piece of news when you came hither?'

'It never crossed my tongue, captain,' answered the pedlar; 'I have kend mony chapmen, travelling merchants, and such like, neglect their goods to carry clashes and clavers up and down, from one country side to another; but that is no trade of mine. I dinna believe I have mentioned the Olave's having made up her cargo to three folks since I crossed to Dunrossness.'

'But if one of those three had spoken the news over again, and it is two to one that such a thing happened, the old lady prophesies upon velvet.'

Such was the speech of Cleveland, addressed to Magnus Troil, and heard without any applause. The Udaller's respect for his country extended to its superstitions, and so did the interest which he took in his unfortunate kinswoman. If he never rendered a precise assent to her high supernatural pretensions, he was not at least desirous of hearing them disputed by others.

'Norna,' he said, 'his cousin' (an emphasis on the word), held no communication with Bryce Snailsfoot, or his acquaintances. He did not pretend to explain how she came by her information; but he had always remarked that Scotsmen, and indeed strangers in general, when they came to Zetland, were ready to find reasons for things which remained sufficiently obscure to those whose ancestors had dwelt there for ages.

Captain Cleveland took the hint, and bowed, without attempting to defend his own scepticism.

'And now forward, my brave hearts,' said the Udaller; 'and may all have as good tidings as I have! Three whales cannot but yield—let me think how many hogsheads'——

There was an obvious reluctance on the part of the guests to be the next in consulting the oracle of the tent.

'Gude news are welcome to some folks, if they came frae the deil himsel,' said Mistress Baby Yellowley, addressing the Lady Glowrowrum,—for a similarity of disposition in some respects had made a sort of intimacy betwixt them,—'but I think, my leddy, that this has ower muckle of rank witchcraft in it, to have the countenance of douce Christian folks like you and me, my leddy.'

'There may be something in what you say, my dame,' replied the good Lady Glowrowrum; 'but we Hjaltlanders are no just like other folks; and this woman, if she be a witch, being the Fowd's friend and near kinswoman, it will be ill taen if we haena our fortunes spaed like a' the rest of them; and sae my nieces may e'en step forward in their turn, and nae harm dune. They will hae time to repent, ye ken, in the course of nature, if there be onything wrang in it, Mistress Yellowley.'

While others remained under similar uncertainty and apprehension, Halcro, who saw by the knitting of the old Udaller's brows, and by a certain impatient shuffle of his right foot, like the motion of a man who with difficulty refrains from stamping, that his patience began to wax rather thin, gallantly declared that he himself would, in his own person, and not as a procurator for others, put the next query to the Pythoness. He paused a minute—collected his rhymes, and thus addressed her:—

CLAUD HALCRO

Mother doubtful, Mother dread,
Dweller of the Fitful Head,
Thou hast conn'd full many a rhyme,
That lives upon the surge of time:
Tell me, shall my lays be sung,
Like Hacon's of the golden tongue,
Long after Halcro's dead and gone?
Or shall Hjaltland's minstrel own
One note to rival glorious John?

The voice of the sibyl immediately replied from her sanctuary:

NORNA

The infant loves the rattle's noise;
Age, double childhood, hath its toys;
But different far the descant rings,
As strikes a different hand the strings.
The eagle mounts the polar sky—
The Imber-goose, unskill'd to fly,
Must be content to glide along,
Where seal and sea-dog list his song.

Halcro bit his lip, shrugged his shoulders, and then, instantly recovering his good humour, and the ready though slovenly power of extemporaneous composition with which long habit had invested him, he gallantly rejoined:—

CLAUD HALCRO

Be mine the Imber-goose to play,
And haunt lone cave and silent bay;—
The archer's aim so shall I shun—
So shall I 'scape the levell'd gun—
Content my verses' tuneless jingle,
With Thule's sounding tides to mingle,
While, to the ear of wondering wight,
Upon the distant headland's height,
Soften'd by murmur of the sea,
The rude sounds seem like harmony!

As the little bard stepped back, with an alert gait and satisfied air, general applause followed the spirited manner in which he had acquiesced in the doom which levelled him with an Imber-goose. But his resigned and courageous submission did not even yet encourage any other person to consult the redoubted Norna.

'The coward fools!' said the Udaller. 'Are you too afraid, Captain Cleveland, to speak to an old woman? Ask her anything—ask her whether the twelve-gun sloop at Kirkwall be your consort or no.'

Cleveland looked at Minna, and probably conceiving that she watched with anxiety his answer to her father's question, he collected himself, after a moment's hesitation.

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* There is established among whalers a sort of telegraphic signal, in which a certain number of motions, made with a broom, express to any other vessel the number of fish which they have caught.

'I never was afraid of man or woman.—Master Halcro, you have heard the question which our host desires me to ask—put it in my name, and in your own way—I pretend to as little skill in poetry as I do in witchcraft.'

Halcro did not wait to be invited twice, but, grasping Captain Cleveland's hand in his, according to the form which the game prescribed, he put the query which the Udaller had dictated to the stranger in the following words:—

CLAUD HALCRO.

Mother doubtful, Mother dread,
Dweller of the Fitful-Head,
A gallant bark from far abroad,
Saint Magnus hath her in his road,
With guns and firelocks not a few—
A silken and a scarlet crew,
Deep stored with precious merchandise,
Of gold and goods of rare device:
What interest hath our comrade bold
In bark and crew, in goods and gold?

There was a pause of unusual duration ere the oracle would return any answer; and when she replied, it was in a lower, though an equally decided tone, with that which she had hitherto employed:—

NORNA.

Gold is ruddy, fair, and free,
Blood is crimson, and dark to see;
I look'd out on Saint Magnus Bay,
And I see a falcon that struck her prey,—
A gobbet of flesh in her beak she bore,
And talons and singles are dripping with gore:
Let him that asks after them look on his hand,
And if there is blood on't, he's one of their band.

Cleveland smiled scornfully, and held out his hand,—'Few men have been on the Spanish Main as often as I have, without having had to do with the *Guarda Costas* once and again; but there never was aught like a stain on my hand that a wet towel would not wipe away.'

The Udaller added his voice potential—'There is never peace with Spaniards beyond the Line,—I have heard Captain Tragendeck and honest old Commodore Rummelaer say so a hundred times, and they have both been down in the Bay of Honduras and all thereabouts.—I hate all Spaniards, since they came here and reft the Fair Isle men of their vivers in 1588.* I have heard my grandfather speak of it; and there is an old Dutch history somewhere about the house, that shows what work they made in the Low Countries long since. There is neither mercy nor faith in them.'

'True—true, my old friend,' said Cleveland; 'they are as jealous of their Indian possessions as an old man of his young bride; and if they can catch you at disadvantage, the mines for your life is the word,—and so we fight them with our colours nailed to the mast.'

'That is the way,' shouted the Udaller; 'the old British jack should never down. When I think of the wooden walls, I almost think myself an Englishman, only it would be becoming too like my Scottish neighbours;—but come, no offence to any here, gentlemen—all are friends, and all are welcome.—Come, Brenda, go on with the play—do you speak next, you have Norse rhymes enough, we all know.'

'But none that suit the game we play at, father,' said Brenda, drawing back.

'Nonsense!' said her father, pushing her onward, while Halcro seized on her reluctant hand; 'never let mistimed modesty mar honest mirth—Speak for Brenda, Halcro—it is your trade to interpret maidens' thoughts.'

The poet bowed to the beautiful young woman, with the devotion of a poet and the gallantry of a traveller, and having, in a whisper, reminded her that she was in no way responsible for the nonsense he was about to speak, he paused, looked upward, simpered as if he had caught a sudden idea, and at length set off in the following verses:—

CLAUD HALCRO.

Mother doubtful, Mother dread,
Dweller of the Fitful-Head,
Well thou know'st it is thy task
To tell what Beauty will not ask;—
Then steep thy words in wine and milk,
And weave a doom of gold and silk,—
For we would know, shall Brenda prove
In love, and happy in her love?

The prophetess replied almost immediately from behind her curtain:—

NORNA.

Untouch'd by love, the maiden's breast
Is like the snow on Rona's crest,
High seated in the middle sky,
In bright and barren purity;
But by the sunbeam gently kiss'd,
Scarce by the gazing eye 'tis miss'd,
Ere down the lonely valley stealing,
Fresh grass and growth its course revealing,
It cheers the flock, revives the flower,
And decks some happy shepherd's bower.

'A comfortable doctrine, and most justly spoken,' said the Udaller, seizing the blushing Brenda, as she was endeavouring to escape—'Never think shame for the matter, my girl. To be the mistress of some honest man's house, and the means of maintaining some old Norse name, making neighbours happy, the poor easy, and relieving strangers, is the most creditable lot a young woman can look to, and I heartily wish it to all here.—Come, who speaks next?—good husbands are going—Maddie Groatsetter—my pretty Clara, come and have your share.'

The Lady Glowrowrum shook her head, and 'could not,' she said, 'altogether approve'——

'Enough said—enough said,' replied Magnus; 'no compulsion; but the play shall go on till we are tired of it. Here, Minna—I have got you at command. Stand forth, my girl—there are plenty of things to be ashamed of besides old-fashioned and innocent pleasantry.—Come, I will speak for you myself—though I am not sure I can remember rhyme enough for it.'

There was a slight colour which passed rapidly over Minna's face, but she instantly regained her composure, and stood erect by her father, as one superior to any little jest to which her situation might give rise.

* The admiral of the Spanish Armada was wrecked on the Fair Isle, halfway betwixt the Orkney and Zetland archipelago. The Duke of Medina Sidonia landed, with some of his people, and pillaged the islanders of their winter stores. These strangers are remembered as having remained on the island by force, and on bad terms with the inhabitants, till spring returned, when they effected their escape. See Note S.

Her father, after some rubbing of his brow, and other mechanical efforts to assist his memory, at length recovered verse sufficient to put the following query, though in less gallant strains than those of Halcro:—

MAGNUS TROIL.

Mother, speak, and do not tarry,
Here's a maiden fain would marry.
Shall she marry, ay or not?
If she marry, what's her lot?

A deep sigh was uttered within the tabernacle of the soothsayer, as if she compassionated the subject of the doom which she was obliged to pronounce. She then, as usual, returned her response:—

NORNA.

Untouch'd by love, the maiden's breast
Is like the snow on Rona's crest,
So pure, so free from earthly dye,
It seems, whilst leaning on the sky,
Part of the heaven to which 'tis nigh;
But passion, like the wild March rain,
May soil the wreath with many a stain.
We gaze—the lovely vision's gone—
A torrent fills the bed of stone,
That, hurrying to destruction's shock,
Leaps headlong from the lofty rock.

The Udaller heard this reply with high resentment. 'By the bones of the Martyr,' he said, his brave visage becoming suddenly ruddy, 'this is an abuse of courtesy! and were it any but yourself that had classed my daughter's name and the word destruction together, they had better have left the word unspoken. But come forth of the tent, thou old galdragon,'* he added, with a smile—'I should have known that thou canst not long joy in anything that smacks of mirth, God help thee!' His summons received no answer; and, after waiting a moment, he again addressed her—'Nay, never be sullen with me, kinswoman, though I did speak a hasty word—thou knowest I bear malice to no one, least of all to thee—so come forth, and let us shake hands.—Thou mightst have foretold the wreck of my ship and boats, or a bad herring-fishery, and I should have said never a word; but Minna or Brenda, you know, are things which touch me nearer. But come out, shake hands, and there let there be an end on't.'

Norna returned no answer whatever to his repeated invocations, and the company began to look upon each other with some surprise, when the Udaller, raising the skin which covered the entrance of the tent, discovered that the interior was empty. The wonder was now general, and not unmixed with fear; for it seemed impossible that Norna could have, in any manner, escaped from the tabernacle in which she was enclosed, without having been discovered by the company. Gone, however, she was, and the Udaller, after a moment's consideration, dropped the skin-curtain again over the entrance of the tent.

'My friends,' he said, with a cheerful countenance, 'we have long known my kinswoman, and that her ways are not like those of the ordinary folks of this world. But she means well by Hjaltland, and hath the love of a sister for me, and for my house; and no guest of mine needs either to fear evil, or to take offence, at her hand. I have little doubt she will be with us at dinner-time.'

'Now, Heaven forbid!' said Mistress Baby Yellowley—'for, my gude Leddy Glowrowrum, to tell your leddyship the truth, I likena cummers that can come and gae like a glance of the sun, or the whisk of a whirlwind.'

'Speak lower, speak lower,' said the Lady Glowrowrum, 'and be thankful that yon carlin hasna ta'en the house side away wi' her. The like of her have played warse pranks, and so has she hersel', unless she is the sairer lied on.'

Similar murmurs ran through the rest of the company, until the Udaller uplifted his stentorian and imperative voice to put them to silence, and invited, or rather commanded, the attendance of his guests to behold the boats set off for the haaf or deep sea-fishing.

'The wind has been high since sunrise,' he said, 'and had kept the boats in the bay; but now it was favourable, and they would sail immediately.'

This sudden alteration of the weather occasioned sundry nods and winks amongst the guests, who were not indisposed to connect it with Norna's sudden disappearance; but, without giving vent to observations which could not but be disagreeable to their host, they followed his stately step to the shore, as the herd of deer follows the leading stag, with all manner of respectful observance.†

CHAPTER XXII.*

There was a laughing devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled—and Mercy sigh'd farewell.
THE CORSAIR, *Canto I. Stan. IX.*

THE ling or white fishery is the principal employment of the natives of Zetland, and was formerly that upon which the gentry chiefly depended for their income, and the poor for their subsistence. The fishing season is, therefore, like the harvest of an agricultural country, the busiest and most important, as well as the most animating, period of the year.

The fishermen of each district assemble at particular stations, with their boats and crews, and erect upon the shore small huts, composed of shingle, and covered with turf, for their temporary lodging, and skeos, or drying-houses for the fish; so that the lonely beach at once assumes the appearance of an Indian town. The banks to which they repair for the haaf fishing are often many miles distant from the station where the fish is dried; so that they are always twenty or thirty hours absent, frequently longer; and under unfavourable circumstances of wind and tide, they remain at sea, with a very small stock of provisions, and in a boat of a construction which seems extremely slender, for two or three days, and are sometimes heard of no more. The departure of the fishers, therefore, on this occupation, has in it a character of danger and

* *Galdra Kinna*—The Norse for a sorceress.

† Note T Fortune-telling rhymes.

of suffering, which renders it dignified, and the anxiety of the females who remain on the beach, watching the departure of the lessening boat, or anxiously looking out for its return, gives pathos to the scene.*

The scene, therefore, was in busy and anxious animation, when the Udaller and his friends appeared on the beach. The various crews of about thirty boats, amounting each to from three to five or six men, were taking leave of their wives and female relatives, and jumping on board their long Norway skiffs, where their lines and tackle lay ready stowed. Magnus was not an idle spectator of the scene; he went from one place to another, inquiring into the state of their provisions for the voyage, and their preparations for the fishing—now and then, with a rough Dutch or Norse oath, abusing them for blockheads, for going to sea with their boats indifferently found, but always ending by ordering from his own stores a gallon of gin, a lispund of meal, or some similar essential addition to their sea-stores. The hardy sailors, on receiving such favours, expressed their thanks in the brief gruff manner which their landlord best approved; but the women were more clamorous in their gratitude, which Magnus was often obliged to silence by cursing all female tongues from Eve's downwards.

At length all were on board and ready, the sails were hoisted, the signal for departure given, the rowers began to pull, and all started from the shore, in strong emulation to get first to the fishing ground, and to have their lines set before the rest; an exploit to which no little consequence was attached by the boat's crew who should be happy enough to perform it.

While they were yet within hearing of the shore, they chanted an ancient Norse ditty, appropriate to the occasion, of which Claud Halcro had executed the following literal translation:—

Farewell, merry maidens, to song and to laugh,
For the brave lads of Westra are bound to the Haaf;
And we must have labour, and hunger, and pain,
Ere we dance with the maids of Dunrossness again.

For now, in our trim boats of Noroway deal,
We must dance on the waves, with the porpuss and seal;
The breeze it shall pipe, so it pipe not too high,
And the gull be our songstress whene'er she flits by.

Sing on, my brave bird, while we follow, like thee,
By bank, shoal, and quicksand, the swarms of the sea,
And when twenty score fishes are straining our line,
Sing louder, brave bird, for their spoils shall be thine.

We'll sing while we bait, and we'll sing when we haul,
For the deeps of the Haaf have enough for us all
There is torsk for the gentle, and skate for the carle,
And there's wealth for bold Magnus, the son of the earl.

Huzza! my brave comrades, give way for the Haaf,
We shall sooner come back to the dance and the laugh;
For life without mirth is a lamp without oil·
Then, mirth and long life to the bold Magnus Troil!

The rude words of the song were soon drowned in the ripple of the waves, but the tune continued long to mingle with the sound of wind and sea, and the boats were like so many black specks on the surface of the ocean, diminishing by degrees as they bore far and farther seaward; while the ear could distinguish touches of the human voice, almost drowned amid that of the elements.

The fishermen's wives looked their last after the parting sails, and were now departing slowly, with downcast and anxious looks, towards the huts in which they were to make arrangements for preparing and drying the fish, with which they hoped to see their husbands and friends return deeply laden. Here and there an old sibyl displayed the superior importance of her experience, by predicting, from the appearance of the atmosphere, that the wind would be fair or foul, while others recommended a vow to the Kirk of Saint Ninians, for the safety of their men and boats (an ancient Catholic superstition, not yet wholly abolished); and others, but in a low and timorous tone, regretted to their companions, that Norna of Fitful Head had been suffered to depart in discontent that morning from Burgh-Westra, 'and, of all days in the year, that they suld have contrived to give her displeasure on the first day of the white-fishing!'

The gentry, guests of Magnus Troil, having whiled away as much time as could be so disposed of, in viewing the little armament set sail, and in conversing with the poor women who had seen their friends embark in it, began now to separate into various groups and parties, which strolled in different directions, as fancy led them, to enjoy what may be called the clair-obscure of a Zetland summer day, which, though without the brilliant sunshine that cheers other countries during the fine season, has a mild and pleasing character of its own, that softens while it saddens landscapes, which, in their own lonely, bare, and monotonous tone, have something in them stern as well as barren.

In one of the loneliest recesses of the coast, where a deep indenture of the rocks gave the tide access to the cavern, or, as it is called, the *Helyer* of Swartaster, Minna Troil was walking with Captain Cleveland. They had probably chosen that walk, as being little liable to interruption from others; for, as the force of the tide rendered the place unfit either for fishing or sailing, so it was not the ordinary resort of walkers, on account of its being the supposed habitation of a Mermaid, a race which Norwegian superstition invests with magical as well as mischievous qualities. Here, therefore, Minna wandered with her lover.

A small spot of milk-white sand, that stretched beneath one of the precipices which walled in the creek on either side, afforded them space for a dry, firm, and pleasant walk of about a hundred yards, terminated at one extremity by a dark stretch of the bay, which, scarce touched by the wind, seemed almost as smooth as glass, and which was seen from between two lofty rocks, the jaws of the creek, or indenture, that approached each other above, as if they wished to meet over the dark tide that separated them. The other end of their promenade was closed by a lofty and almost unscalable precipice, the abode of hundreds of sea-fowl of different kinds,

* Note U. Zetland fishermen.

in the bottom of which the huge helyer, or sea-cave, itself yawned, as if for the purpose of swallowing up the advancing tide, which it seemed to receive into an abyss of immeasurable depth and extent. The entrance to this dismal cavern consisted not in a single arch, as usual, but was divided into two, by a huge pillar of natural rock, which, rising out of the sea, and extending to the top of the cavern, seemed to lend its support to the roof, and thus formed a double portal to the helyer, on which the fishermen and peasants had bestowed the rude name of the Devil's Nostrils. In this wild scene, lonely and undisturbed but by the clang of the sea-fowl, Cleveland had already met with Minna Troil more than once; for with her it was a favourite walk, as the objects which it presented agreed peculiarly with the love of the wild, the melancholy, and the wonderful. But now the conversation in which she was earnestly engaged was such as entirely to withdraw her attention, as well as that of her companion, from the scenery around them.

'You cannot deny it,' she said: 'you have given way to feelings respecting this young man, which indicate prejudice and violence—the prejudice unmerited, as far as you are concerned at least, and the violence equally imprudent and unjustifiable.'

'I should have thought,' replied Cleveland, 'that the service I rendered him yesterday might have freed me from such a charge. I do not talk of my own risk, for I have lived in danger, and love it; it is not every one, however, would have ventured so near the furious animal to save one with whom they had no connection.'

'It is not every one, indeed, who could have saved him,' answered Minna gravely; 'but every one who has courage and generosity would have attempted it. The giddy-brained Claud Halcro would have done as much as you, had his strength been equal to his courage—my father would have done as much, though having such just cause of resentment against the young man, for his vain and braggart abuse of our hospitality. Do not, therefore, boast of your exploit too much, my good friend, lest you should make me think that it required too great an effort. I know you love not Mordaunt Mertoun, though you exposed your own life to save his.'

'Will you allow nothing, then,' said Cleveland, 'for the long misery I was made to endure, from the common and prevailing report that this beardless bird-hunter stood betwixt me and what I on earth coveted most—the affections of Minna Troil?'

He spoke in a tone at once impassioned and insinuating, and his whole language and manner seemed to express a grace and elegance, which formed the most striking contrast with the speech and gesture of the unpolished seaman, which he usually affected or exhibited. But his apology was unsatisfactory to Minna.

'You have known,' she said, 'perhaps too soon, and too well, how little you had to fear—if you indeed feared—that Mertoun, or any other, had interest with Minna Troil. Nay, truce to thanks and protestations; I would accept it as the best proof of gratitude, that you would be reconciled with this youth, or at least avoid every quarrel with him.'

'That we should be friends, Minna, is impossible,' replied Cleveland; 'even the love I bear you, the most powerful emotion that my heart ever knew, cannot work that miracle.'

'And why, I pray you?' said Minna; 'there have been no evil offices between you, but rather an exchange of mutual services; why can you not be friends?—I have many reasons to wish it.'

'And can you, then, forget the slights which he has cast upon Brenda, and on yourself, and on your father's house?'

'I can forgive them all,' said Minna; 'can you not say so much, who have in truth received no offence?'

Cleveland looked down, and paused for an instant; then raised his head, and replied, 'I might easily deceive you, Minna, and promise you what my soul tells me is an impossibility; but I am forced to use too much deceit with others, and with you I will use none. I cannot be friend to this young man:—there is a natural dislike—an instinctive aversion—something like a principle of repulsion in our mutual nature, which makes us odious to each other. Ask himself—he will tell you he has the same antipathy against me. The obligation he conferred on me was a bridle to my resentment; but I was so galled by the restraint, that I could have gnawed the curb till my lips were bloody.'

'You have worn what you are wont to call your iron mask so long, that your features,' replied Minna, 'retain the impressions of its rigidity even when it is removed.'

'You do me injustice, Minna,' replied her lover, 'and you are angry with me because I deal with you plainly and honestly. Plainly and honestly, however, will I say, that I cannot be Mertoun's friend, but it shall be his own fault, not mine, if I am ever his enemy. I seek not to injure him; but do not ask me to love him. And of this remain satisfied, that it would be vain even if I could do so; for as sure as I attempted any advances towards his confidence, so sure would I be to awaken his disgust and suspicion. Leave us to the exercise of our natural feelings, which, as they will unquestionably keep us as far separate as possible, are most likely to prevent any possible interference with each other.—Does this satisfy you?'

'It must,' said Minna, 'since you tell me there is no remedy.—And now tell me why you looked so grave when you heard of your consort's arrival—for that it is she I have no doubt—in the port of Kirkwall?'

'I fear,' replied Cleveland, 'the consequences of that vessel's arrival with her crew, as comprehending the ruin of my fondest hopes. I had made some progress in your father's favour, and, with time, might have made more, when hither come Hawkins and the rest to blight my prospects for ever. I told you on what terms we parted. I then commanded a vessel braver and better found than their own, with a crew who, at my slightest nod, would have faced fiends armed with their own fiery element; but I now stand alone, a single man, destitute of all means to overawe or to restrain them; and they

will soon show so plainly the ungovernable licence of their habits and dispositions, that ruin to themselves and to me will in all probability be the consequence.'

'Do not fear it,' said Minna; 'my father can never be so unjust as to hold you liable for the offences of others.'

'But what will Magnus Troil say to my own demerits, fair Minna?' said Cleveland, smiling.

'My father is a Zetlander, or rather a Norwegian,' said Minna, 'one of an oppressed race, who will not care whether you fought against the Spaniards, who are the tyrants of the New World, or against the Dutch and English, who have succeeded to their usurped dominions. His own ancestors supported and exercised the freedom of the seas in those gallant barks, whose pennons were the dread of all Europe.'

'I fear, nevertheless,' said Cleveland, 'that the descendant of an ancient sea-king will scarce acknowledge a fitting acquaintance in a modern rover. I have not disguised from you that I have reason to dread the English laws; and Magnus, though a great enemy to taxes, imposts, scat, wattle, and so forth, has no idea of latitude upon points of a more general character;—he would willingly reeve a rope to the yard-arm for the benefit of an unfortunate buccanier.'

'Do not suppose so,' said Minna; 'he himself suffers too much oppression from the tyrannical laws of our proud neighbours of Scotland. I trust he will soon be able to rise in resistance against them. The enemy—such I will call them—are now divided amongst themselves, and every vessel from their coast brings intelligence of fresh commotions—the Highlands against the Lowlands—the Williamites against the Jacobites—the Whigs against the Tories—and, to sum the whole, the kingdom of England against that of Scotland. What is there, as Claud Halcro well hinted, to prevent our availing ourselves of the quarrels of these robbers, to assert the independence of which we are deprived?'

'To hoist the raven standard on the Castle of Scalloway,' said Cleveland, in imitation of her tone and manner, 'and proclaim your father Earl Magnus the First!'

'Earl Magnus the Seventh, if it please you,' replied Minna; 'for six of his ancestors have worn, or were entitled to wear, the coronet before him. You laugh at my ardour—but what *is* there to prevent all this?'

'Nothing *will* prevent it,' replied Cleveland, 'because it will never be attempted—Anything *might* prevent it, that is equal in strength to the long-boat of a British man-of-war.'

'You treat us with scorn, sir,' replied Minna; 'yet yourself should know what a few resolved men may perform.'

'But they must be armed, Minna,' replied Cleveland, 'and willing to place their lives upon each desperate adventure.—Think not of such visions. Denmark has been cut down into a second-rate kingdom, incapable of exchanging a single broadside with England; Norway is a starving wilderness; and in these islands, the love of independence has been suppressed by a long term of subjection, or shows itself but in a few muttered growls over the bowl and bottle.—And, were your men as willing warriors as their ancestors, what could the unarmed crews of a few fishing-boats do against the British navy? Think no more of it, sweet Minna—it is a dream, and I must term it so, though it makes your eye so bright, and your step so noble.'

'It is indeed a dream!' said Minna, looking down, 'and it ill becomes a daughter of Hjaltland to look or to move like a freewoman—Our eye should be on the ground, and our step slow and reluctant, as that of one who obeys a task-master.'

'There are lands,' said Cleveland, 'in which the eye may look bright upon groves of the palm and the cocoa, and where the foot may move light as a galley under sail, over fields carpeted with flowers, and savannahs surrounded by aromatic thickets, and where subjection is unknown, except that of the brave to the bravest, and of all to the most beautiful.'

Minna paused a moment ere she replied, and then answered, 'No, Cleveland. My own rude country has charms for me, even desolate as you think it, and depressed as it surely is, which no other land on earth can offer to me. I endeavour in vain to represent to myself those visions of trees, and of groves, which my eye never saw; but my imagination can conceive no sight in nature more sublime than these waves, when agitated by a storm, or more beautiful, than when they come, as they now do, rolling in calm tranquillity to the shore. Not the fairest scene in a foreign land,—not the brightest sunbeam that ever shone upon the richest landscape, would win my thoughts for a moment from that lofty rock, misty hill, and wide-rolling ocean. Hjaltland is the land of my deceased ancestors, and of my living father; and in Hjaltland will I live and die.'

'Then in Hjaltland,' answered Cleveland, 'will I too live and die. I will not go to Kirkwall,—I will not make my existence known to my comrades, from whom it were else hard for me to escape. Your father loves me, Minna; who knows whether long attention, anxious care, might not bring him to receive me into his family? Who would regard the length of a voyage that was certain to terminate in happiness.'

'Dream not of such an issue,' said Minna; 'it is impossible. While you live in my father's house—while you receive his assistance, and share his table—you will find him the generous friend, and the hearty host; but touch him on what concerns his name and family, and the frank-hearted Udaller will start up before you the haughty and proud descendant of a Norwegian Yarl. See you,—a moment's suspicion has fallen on Mordaunt Mertoun, and he has banished from his favour the youth whom he so lately loved as a son. No one must ally with his house that is not of untainted northern descent.'

'And mine may be so, for aught that is known to me upon the subject,' said Cleveland.

'How!' said Minna; 'have you any reason to believe yourself of Norse descent?'

'I have told you before,' replied Cleveland, 'that my family is totally unknown to me. I spent my earliest days upon a solitary plantation in the little island of Tortuga, under the

charge of my father, then a different person from what he afterwards became. We were plundered by the Spaniards, and reduced to such extremity of poverty, that my father, in desperation, and in thirst of revenge, took up arms, and, having become a chief of a little band, who were in the same circumstances, became a buccanier, as it is called, and cruised against Spain, with various vicissitudes of good and bad fortune, until, while he interfered to check some violence of his companions, he fell by their hands —no uncommon fate among the captains of these rovers. But whence my father came, or what was the place of his birth, I know not, fair Minna, nor have I ever had a curious thought on the subject.'

'He was a Briton, at least, your unfortunate father?' said Minna.

'I have no doubt of it,' said Cleveland; 'his name, which I have rendered too formidable to be openly spoken, is an English one; and his acquaintance with the English language, and even with English literature, together with the pains which he took, in better days, to teach me both, plainly spoke him to be an Englishman. If the rude bearing which I display towards others is not the genuine character of my mind and manners, it is to my father, Minna, that I owe any share of better thoughts and principles, which may render me worthy, in some small degree, of your notice and approbation. And yet it sometimes seems to me that I have two different characters; for I cannot bring myself to believe that I, who now walk this lone beach with the lovely Minna Troil, and am permitted to speak to her of the passion which I have cherished, have ever been the daring leader of the bold band whose name was as terrible as a tornado.'

'You had not been permitted,' said Minna, 'to use that bold language towards the daughter of Magnus Troil, had you *not* been the brave and undaunted leader, who, with so small means, has made his name so formidable. My heart is like that of a maiden of the ancient days, and is to be won, not by fair words, but by gallant deeds.'

'Alas! that heart,' said Cleveland; 'and what is it that I may do—what is it that man can do, to win in it the interest which I desire?'

'Rejoin your friends—pursue your fortunes—leave the rest to destiny,' said Minna. 'Should you return, the leader of a gallant fleet, who can tell what may befall?'

'And what shall assure me that, when I return—if return I ever shall—I may not find Minna Troil a bride or a spouse? No, Minna, I will not trust to destiny the only object worth attaining, which my stormy voyage in life has yet offered me.'

'Hear me,' said Minna. 'I will bind myself to you, if you dare accept such an engagement, by the promise of Odin,* the most sacred of our northern rites which are yet practised among us, that I will never favour another, until you resign the pretensions which I have given to you.—Will that satisfy you? for more I cannot—more I will not give.'

'Then with that,' said Cleveland, after a moment's pause, 'I must perforce be satisfied;—but remember, it is yourself that throw me back upon a mode of life which the laws of Britain denounce as criminal, and which the violent passions of the daring men by whom it is pursued have rendered infamous.'

'But I,' said Minna, 'am superior to such prejudices. In warring with England, I see their laws in no other light than as if you were engaged with an enemy, who, in fulness of pride and power, has declared he will give his antagonist no quarter. A brave man will not fight the worse for this;—and, for the manners of your comrades, so that they do not infect your own why should their evil report attach to you?'

Cleveland gazed on her as she spoke, with a degree of wondering admiration, in which, at the same time, there lurked a smile at her simplicity.

'I could not,' he said, 'have believed that such high courage could have been found united with such ignorance of the world, as the world is now wielded. For my manners, they who best know me will readily allow that I have done my best, at the risk of my popularity, and of my life itself, to mitigate the ferocity of my mates; but how can you teach humanity to men burning with vengeance against the world by whom they are proscribed, or teach them temperance and moderation in enjoying the pleasures which chance throws in their way, to vary a life which would be otherwise one constant scene of peril and hardship?—But this promise, Minna—this promise, which is all I am to receive in guerdon for my faithful attachment—let me at least lose no time in claiming that.'

'It must not be rendered here, but in Kirkwall.—We must invoke, to witness the engagement, the Spirit which presides over the ancient Circle of Stennis. But perhaps you fear to name the ancient Father of the Slain, too, the Severe, the Terrible?'

Cleveland smiled.

'Do me the justice to think, lovely Minna, that I am little subject to fear real causes of terror; and for those which are visionary, I have no sympathy whatever.'

'You believe not in them, then,' said Minna, 'and are so far better suited to be Brenda's lover than mine.'

'I will believe,' replied Cleveland, 'in whatever you believe. The whole inhabitants of that Valhalla, about which you converse so much with that fiddling, rhyming fool, Claud Halcro—all these shall become living and existing things to my credulity. But, Minna, do not ask me to fear any of them.'

'Fear! no—not to *fear* them, surely,' replied the maiden; 'for, not before Thor or Odin, when they approached in the fulness of their terrors, did the heroes of my dauntless race yield one foot in retreat. Nor do I own them as deities—a better faith prevents so foul an error. But, in our own conception, they are powerful spirits for good or evil. And when you boast not to fear them, bethink you that you defy an enemy of a kind you have never yet encountered.'

'Not in these northern latitudes,' said the lover, with a smile, 'where hitherto I have seen but angels; but I have faced, in my time, the

* Note V. Promise of Odin.

demons of the equinoctial line, which we rovers suppose to be as powerful and as malignant as those of the north.'

'Have you, then, witnessed those wonders that are beyond the visible world?' said Minna, with some degree of awe.

Cleveland composed his countenance, and replied,—'A short while before my father's death, I came, though then very young, into the command of a sloop, manned with thirty as desperate fellows as ever handled a musket. We cruised for a long while with bad success, taking nothing but wretched small craft, which were destined to catch turtle, or otherwise loaded with coarse and worthless trumpery. I had much ado to prevent my comrades from avenging upon the crews of those baubling shallops the disappointment which they had occasioned to us. At length we grew desperate, and made a descent on a village, where we were told we should intercept the mules of a certain Spanish governor laden with treasure. We succeeded in carrying the place; but while I endeavoured to save the inhabitants from the fury of my followers, the muleteers, with their precious cargo, escaped into the neighbouring woods. This filled up the measure of my unpopularity. My people, who had been long discontented, became openly mutinous. I was deposed from my command, in solemn council, and condemned, as having too little luck and too much humanity for the profession I had undertaken, to be marooned,* as the phrase goes, on one of those little sandy, bushy islets, which are called in the West Indies, keys, and which are frequented only by turtle and by sea-fowl. Many of them are supposed to be haunted—some by the demons worshipped by the old inhabitants—some by caciques and others, whom the Spaniards had put to death by torture, to compel them to discover their hidden treasures, and others by the various spectres in which sailors of all nations have implicit faith.† My place of banishment, called Coffin Key, about two leagues and a half to the south-east of Bermudas, was so infamous as the resort of these supernatural inhabitants, that I believe the wealth of Mexico would not have persuaded the bravest of the scoundrels who put me ashore there, to have spent an hour on the islet alone, even in broad daylight; and when they rowed off, they pulled for the sloop like men that dared not cast their eyes behind them. And there they left me, to subsist as I might, on a speck of unproductive sand, surrounded by the boundless Atlantic, and haunted, as they supposed, by malignant demons.'

'And what was the consequence?' said Minna eagerly.

'I supported life,' said the adventurer, 'at the expense of such sea-fowl, aptly called boobies, as were silly enough to let me approach so near as to knock them down with a stick; and by means of turtle-eggs, when these complaisant birds became better acquainted with the mischievous disposition of the human species, and more shy, of course, of my advances.'

'And the demons of whom you spoke?'—continued Minna.

'I had my secret apprehensions upon their account,' said Cleveland. 'In open daylight, or in absolute darkness, I did not greatly apprehend their approach; but in the misty dawn of the morning, or when evening was about to fall, I saw, for the first week of my abode on the key, many a dim and undefined spectre, now resembling a Spaniard, with his capa wrapped around him, and his huge sombrero, as large as an umbrella, upon his head—now a Dutch sailor, with his rough cap and trunk-hose—and now an Indian cacique, with his feathery crown and long lance of cane.'

'Did you not approach and address them?' said Minna.

'I always approached them,' replied the seaman; 'but—I grieve to disappoint your expectations, my fair friend—whenever I drew near them, the phantom changed into a bush, or a piece of driftwood, or a wreath of mist, or some such cause of deception; until at last I was taught by experience to cheat myself no longer with such visions, and continued a solitary inhabitant of Coffin Key, as little alarmed by visionary terrors as I ever was in the great cabin of a stout vessel, with a score of companions around me.'

'You have cheated me into listening to a tale of nothing,' said Minna; 'but how long did you continue on the island?'

'Four weeks of wretched existence,' said Cleveland, 'when I was relieved by the crew of a vessel which came thither a-turtling. Yet my miserable seclusion was not entirely useless to me; for on that spot of barren sand I found, or rather forged, the iron mask, which has since been my chief security against treason, or mutiny of my followers. It was there I formed the resolution to seem no softer hearted, nor better instructed—no more humane, and no more scrupulous, than those with whom fortune had leagued me. I thought over my former story, and saw that seeming more brave, skilful, and enterprising than others, had gained me command and respect, and that seeming more gently nurtured and more civilised than they had made them envy and hate me as a being of another species. I bargained with myself, then, that, since I could not lay aside my superiority of intellect and education, I would do my best to disguise, and to sink in the rude seaman, all appearance of better feeling and better accomplishments. I foresaw then what has since happened, that, under the appearance of daring obduracy, I should acquire such a habitual command over my followers, that I might use it for the insurance of discipline, and for relieving the distresses of the wretches who fell under our power. I saw, in short, that, to attain authority, I must assume the external semblance, at least, of those over whom it was to be exercised. The tidings of my father's fate, while it excited me to wrath and to revenge, confirmed

* To *maroon* a seaman, signified to abandon him on a desolate coast or island—a piece of cruelty often practised by pirates and buccaniers.

† An elder brother, now no more, who was educated in the navy, and had been a midshipman in Rodney's squadron in the West Indies, used to astonish the Author's boyhood with tales of those haunted islets. On one of them, called, I believe, Coffin Key, the seamen positively refused to pass the night, and came off every evening while they were engaged in completing the watering of the vessel, returning the following sunrise.

the resolution I had adopted. He also had fallen a victim to his superiority of mind, morals, and manners, above those whom he commanded. They were wont to call him the gentleman; and, unquestionably, they thought he waited some favourable opportunity to reconcile himself, perhaps at their expense, to those existing forms of society his habits seemed best to suit with, and, even therefore, they murdered him. Nature and justice alike called on me for revenge. I was soon at the head of a new body of adventurers, who are so numerous in those islands. I sought not after those by whom I had been myself marooned, but after the wretches who had betrayed my father; and on them I took a revenge so severe, that it was of itself sufficient to stamp me with the character of that inexorable ferocity which I was desirous to be thought to possess, and which, perhaps, was gradually creeping on my natural disposition in actual earnest. My manner, speech, and conduct seemed so totally changed, that those who formerly knew me were disposed to ascribe the alteration to my intercourse with the demons who haunted the sands of Coffin Key; nay, there were some superstitious enough to believe that I had actually formed a league with them.'

'I tremble to hear the rest!' said Minna; 'did you not become the monster of courage and cruelty whose character you assumed?'

'If I have escaped being so, it is to you, Minna,' replied Cleveland, 'that the wonder must be ascribed. It is true, I have always endeavoured to distinguish myself rather by acts of adventurous valour, than by schemes of revenge or of plunder, and that at length I could save lives by a rude jest, and sometimes, by the excess of the measures which I myself proposed, could induce those under me to intercede in favour of prisoners; so that the seeming severity of my character has better served the cause of humanity, than had I appeared directly devoted to it.'

He ceased, and, as Minna replied not a word, both remained silent for a little space, when Cleveland again resumed the discourse:—

'You are silent,' he said, 'Miss Troil, and I have injured myself in your opinion by the frankness with which I have laid my character before you. I may truly say, that my natural disposition has been controlled, but not altered, by the untoward circumstances in which I am placed.'

'I am uncertain,' said Minna, after a moment's consideration, 'whether you had been thus candid had you not known I should soon see your comrades, and discover from their conversation and their manners what you would otherwise gladly have concealed.'

'You do me injustice, Minna, cruel injustice. From the instant that you knew me to be a sailor of fortune, an adventurer, a buccanier, or, if you will have the broad word, a PIRATE, what had you to expect less than what I have told you?'

'You speak too truly,' said Minna—'all this I might have anticipated, and I know not how I should have expected it otherwise. But it seemed to me that a war on the cruel and superstitious Spaniards had in it something ennobling—something that refined the fierce employment to which you have just now given its true and dreaded name. I thought that the independent warriors of the Western Ocean, raised up, as it were, to punish the wrongs of so many murdered and plundered tribes, must have had something of gallant elevation, like that of the sons of the north, whose long galleys avenged on so many coasts the oppressions of degenerate Rome. This I thought, and this I dreamed—I grieve that I am awakened and undeceived. Yet I blame you not for the erring of my own fancy.—Farewell; we must now part.'

'Say, at least,' said Cleveland, 'that you do not hold me in horror for having told you the truth.'

'I must have time for reflection,' said Minna, 'time to weigh what you have said, ere I can fully understand my own feelings. Thus much, however, I can say even now, that he who pursues the wicked purpose of plunder by means of blood and cruelty, and who must veil his remains of natural remorse under an affectation of superior profligacy, is not, and cannot be, the lover whom Minna Troil expected to find in Cleveland; and if she still love him, it must be as a penitent, and not as a hero.'

So saying, she extricated herself from his grasp (for he still endeavoured to detain her), making an imperative sign to him to forbear from following her.—'She is gone,' said Cleveland, looking after her; 'wild and fanciful as she is, I expected not this.—She startled not at the name of my perilous course of life, yet seems totally unprepared for the evil which must necessarily attend it; and so all the merit I have gained by my resemblance to a Norse champion, or king of the sea, is to be lost at once, because a gang of pirates do not prove to be a choir of saints. I would that Rackam, Hawkins, and the rest, had been at the bottom of the Race of Portland—I would the Pentland Firth had swept them to hell rather than to Orkney! I will not, however, quit the chase of this angel for all that these fiends can do. I will—I must to Orkney before the Udaller makes his voyage thither—our meeting might alarm even his blunt understanding, although, thank Heaven, in this wild country, men know the nature of our trade only by hearsay, through our honest friends the Dutch, who take care never to speak very ill of those they make money by.—Well, if fortune would but stand my friend with this beautiful enthusiast, I would pursue her wheel no farther at sea, but set myself down amongst these rocks, as happy as if they were so many groves of bananas and palmettoes.'

With these and such thoughts, half rolling in his bosom, half expressed in indistinct hints and murmurs, the pirate Cleveland returned to the mansion of Burgh-Westra.

..., when
... their terrors,
CHAPT... dauntless race yield one
Nor do I own them as deities
There was sh... prevents so foul an error. But,
For the hour wa... ption, they are powerful spirits
part;
So we call'd for our And when you boast not to
While the jolly old la... you that you defy an enemy
... ver yet encountered.'
...ern latitudes,' said the
We do not dwell upon ... to I have seen
day, which had nothing in them to ... ne, the

reader particularly. The table groaned under the usual plenty, which was disposed of by the guests with the usual appetite—the bowl of punch was filled and emptied with the same celerity as usual—the men quaffed, and the women laughed—Claud Halcro rhymed, punned, and praised John Dryden—the Udaller bumpered and sang choruses—and the evening concluded, as usual, in the rigging-loft, as it was Magnus Troil's pleasure to term the dancing apartment.

It was then and there that Cleveland, approaching Magnus, where he sat betwixt his two daughters, intimated his intention of going to Kirkwall in a small brig, which Bryce Snailsfoot, who had disposed of his goods with unprecedented celerity, had freighted thither to procure a supply.

Magnus heard the sudden proposal of his guest with surprise, not unmingled with displeasure, and demanded sharply of Cleveland how long it was since he had learned to prefer Bryce Snailsfoot's company to his own. Cleveland answered, with his usual bluntness of manner, that time and tide tarried for no one, and that he had his own particular reasons for making his trip to Kirkwall sooner than the Udaller proposed to set sail—that he hoped to meet with him and his daughters at the great fair, which was now closely approaching, and might perhaps find it possible to return to Zetland along with them.

While he spoke this, Brenda kept her eye as much upon her sister as it was possible to do without exciting general observation. She remarked that Minna's pale cheek became yet paler while Cleveland spoke, and that she seemed, by compressing her lips and slightly knitting her brows, to be in the act of repressing the effects of strong interior emotion. But she spoke not; and when Cleveland, having bidden adieu to the Udaller, approached to salute her, as was then the custom, she received his farewell without trusting herself to attempt a reply.

Brenda had her own trial approaching; for Mordaunt Mertoun, once so much loved by her father, was now in the act of making his cold parting from him, without receiving a single look of friendly regard. There was, indeed, sarcasm in the tone with which Magnus wished the youth a good journey, and recommended to him, if he met a bonnie lass by the way, not to dream that she was in love because she chanced to jest with him. Mertoun coloured at what he felt as an insult, though it was but half intelligible to him; but he remembered Brenda, and suppressed every feeling of resentment. He proceeded to take his leave of the sisters. Minna, whose heart was considerably softened towards
... received his farewell with some degree of
the expense of ... nda's grief was so visible, in the
... the moisture which
... noticed even by
... angrily, 'Why,
... though, for he was
... mind! I have no will
... wly leaving the apart-
... s disparaging observation,
while they ... turned round to resent it, But his

* To *maroon* a seaman, signified to ... desolate coast or island—a piece of cruel ... by pirates and buccaniers.

† An elder brother, now no more. ... the navy, and had been a mi... squadron in the West Indies, use... boyhood with tales of those h... them, called, I believe, Coffin ... refused to pass the ... while they ... the ver...

purpose failed him when he saw that Brenda had been obliged to have recourse to her handkerchief to hide her emotion, and the sense that it was excited by his departure obliterated every thought of her father's unkindness. He retired—the other guests followed his example; and many of them, like Cleveland and himself, took their leave over-night, with the intention of commencing their homeward journey on the succeeding morning.

That night, the mutual sorrow of Minna and Brenda, if it could not wholly remove the reserve which had estranged the sisters from each other, at least melted all its frozen and unkindly symptoms. They wept in each other's arms; and though neither spoke, yet each became dearer to the other; because they felt that the grief which called forth these drops had a source common to them both.

It is probable that, though Brenda's tears were most abundant, the grief of Minna was most deeply seated; for, long after the younger had sobbed herself asleep, like a child, upon her sister's bosom, Minna lay awake, watching the dubious twilight, while tear after tear slowly gathered in her eye, and found a current down her cheek, as soon as it became too heavy to be supported by her long black silken eyelashes. As she lay, bewildered among the sorrowful thoughts which supplied these tears, she was surprised to distinguish, beneath the window, the sounds of music. At first she supposed it to be some freak of Claud Halcro, whose fantastic humour sometimes indulged itself in such serenades. But it was not the *gue* of the old minstrel, but the guitar, that she heard; an instrument which none in the island knew how to touch except Cleveland, who had learned, in his intercourse with the South American Spaniards, to play on it with superior execution. Perhaps it was in these climates also that he had learned the song, which, though he now sung it under the window of a maiden of Thule, had certainly never been composed for the native of a climate so northerly and so severe, since it spoke of productions of the earth and skies which are there unknown.

Love wakes and weeps
While Beauty sleeps:
O for music's softest numbers,
To prompt a theme
For Beauty's dream,
Soft as the pillow of her slumbers!

Through groves of palm
Sigh gales of balm,
Fire-flies on the air are wheeling;
While through the gloom
Comes soft perfume,
The distant beds of flowers revealing.

O wake and live,
No dream can give
A shadow'd bliss, the real excelling;
No longer sleep,
From lattice peep,
And list the tale that Love is telling!

The voice of Cleveland was deep, rich, and manly, and accorded well with the Spanish air, to which the words, probably a translation from

the same language, had been adapted. His invocation would not probably have been fruitless, could Minna have arisen without awakening her sister. But that was impossible; for Brenda, who, as we have already mentioned, had wept bitterly before she had sunk into repose, now lay with her face on her sister's neck, and one arm stretched around her, in the attitude of a child which has cried itself asleep in the arms of its nurse. It was impossible for Minna to extricate herself from her grasp without awakening her; and she could not, therefore, execute her hasty purpose of donning her gown, and approaching the window to speak with Cleveland, who, she had no doubt, had resorted to this contrivance to procure an interview. The restraint was sufficiently provoking, for it was more than probable that her lover came to take his last farewell; but that Brenda, inimical as she seemed to be of late towards Cleveland, should awake and witness it, was a thought not to be endured.

There was a short pause, in which Minna endeavoured more than once, with as much gentleness as possible, to unclasp Brenda's arm from her neck; but whenever she attempted it, the slumberer muttered some little pettish sound, like a child disturbed in its sleep, which sufficiently showed that perseverance in the attempt would awaken her fully.

To her great vexation, therefore, Minna was compelled to remain still and silent; when her lover, as if determined upon gaining her ear by music of another strain, sang the following fragment of a sea-ditty :—

> Farewell! farewell! the voice you hear
> Has left its last soft tone with you,—
> Its next must join the seaward cheer,
> And shout among the shouting crew.
>
> The accents which I scarce could form
> Beneath your frown's controlling check,
> Must give the word, above the storm,
> To cut the mast, and clear the wreck.
>
> The timid eye I dared not raise,—
> The hand that shook when press'd to thine,
> Must point the guns upon the chase,—
> Must bid the deadly cutlass shine.
>
> To all I love, or hope, or fear,—
> Honour, or own, a long adieu!
> To all that life has soft and dear,
> Farewell! save memory of you! *

He was again silent; and again she, to whom the serenade was addressed, strove in vain to arise without rousing her sister. It was impossible; and she had nothing before her but the unhappy thought that Cleveland was taking leave in his desolation, without a single glance, or a single word. He, too, whose temper was so fiery, yet who subjected his violent mood with such sedulous attention to her will,—could she but have stolen a moment to say adieu—to caution him against new quarrels with Mertoun—to implore him to detach himself from such comrades as he had described,—could she but have done this, who could say what effect such parting admonitions might have had upon his character—nay, upon the future events of his life?

Tantalized by such thoughts, Minna was about to make another and decisive effort, when she heard voices beneath the window, and thought she could distinguish that they were those of Cleveland and Mertoun, speaking in a sharp tone, which, at the same time, seemed cautiously suppressed, as if the speakers feared being overheard. Alarm now mingled with her former desire to rise from bed, and she accomplished at once the purpose which she had so often attempted in vain. Brenda's arm was unloosed from her sister's neck, without the sleeper receiving more alarm than provoked two or three unintelligible murmurs; while, with equal speed and silence, Minna put on some part of her dress, with the intention to steal to the window. But, ere she could accomplish this, the sound of the voices without was exchanged for that of blows and struggling, which terminated suddenly by a deep groan.

Terrified at this last signal of mischief, Minna sprung to the window and endeavoured to open it, for the persons were so close under the walls of the house that she could not see them, save by putting her head out of the casement. The iron hasp was stiff and rusted, and, as generally happens, the haste with which she laboured to undo it only rendered the task more difficult. When it was accomplished, and Minna had eagerly thrust her body half out at the casement, those who had created the sounds which alarmed her were become invisible, excepting that she saw a shadow cross the moonlight, the substance of which must have been in the act of turning a corner, which concealed it from her sight. The shadow moved slowly, and seemed that of a man who supported another upon his shoulders; an indication which put the climax to Minna's agony of mind. The window was not above eight feet from the ground, and she hesitated not to throw herself from it hastily, and to pursue the object which had incited her terror.

But when she came to the corner of the buildings from which the shadow seemed to have been projected, she discovered nothing which could point out the way that the figure had gone; and, after a moment's consideration, became sensible that all attempts at pursuit would be alike wild and fruitless. Besides all the projections and recesses of the many-angled mansion, and its numerous offices—besides the various cellars, storehouses, stables, and so forth, which defied her solitary search, there was a range of low rocks, stretching down to the haven, and which were, in fact, a continuation of the ridge which formed its pier. These rocks had many indentures, hollows, and caverns, into any one of which the figure to which the shadow belonged might have retired with his fatal burden; for fatal she feared it was most likely to prove.

A moment's reflection, as we have said, convinced Minna of the folly of further pursuit. Her next thought was to alarm the famil... but heart,
what tale had she to tell, and of wh... merry folks must
tale to be told?—On the other ha...
man—if indeed he were wo... ask'd for our way,
he were not mortally w... said, 'Nothing's to pay.'
LILLIPUT, A POEM.
past the reach of as...
idea, she was about to ... upon the festivities of the
was interrupted by th... ing in them to interest the

* I cannot suppress the pride of saying that these lines have been beautifully set to original music, by Mrs. Arkwright, Derbyshire.

was returning apparently from the haven, and singing, in his manner, a scrap of an old Norse ditty, which might run thus in English :—

And you shall deal the funeral dole ;
  Ay, deal it, mother mine,
To weary body, and to heavy soul,
  The white bread and the wine.

And you shall deal my horses of pride ;
  Ay, deal them, mother mine ;
And you shall deal my lands so wide,
  And deal my castles nine.

But deal not vengeance for the deed,
  And deal not for the crime ;
The body to its place, and the soul to Heaven's grace,
  And the rest in God's own time.

The singular adaptation of these rhymes to the situation in which she found herself, seemed to Minna like a warning from Heaven. We are speaking of a land of omens and superstitions, and perhaps will scarce be understood by those whose limited imagination cannot conceive how strongly these operate upon the human mind during a certain progress of society. A line of Virgil, turned up casually, was received in the seventeenth century, and in the court of England,* as an intimation of future events ; and no wonder that a maiden of the distant and wild isles of Zetland should have considered as an injunction from Heaven, verses which happened to convey a sense analogous to her present situation.

'I will be silent,' she muttered—'I will seal my lips—

The body to its place, and the soul to Heaven's grace,
  And the rest in God's own time.'

'Who speaks there?' said Claud Halcro, in some alarm ; for he had not, in his travels in foreign parts, been able by any means to rid himself of his native superstitions. In the condition to which fear and horror had reduced her, Minna was at first unable to reply ; and Halcro fixing his eyes upon the female white figure which he saw indistinctly (for she stood in the shadow of the house, and the morning was thick and misty), began to conjure her in an ancient rhyme which occurred to him as suited for the occasion, and which had in its gibberish a wild and unearthly sound, which may be lost in the ensuing translation:—

Saint Magnus control thee, that martyr of treason ;
Saint Ronan rebuke thee, with rhyme and with reason ;
By the mass of Saint Martin, the might of Saint Mary,
Be thou gone, or thy weird shall be worse if thou tarry !
    If of good, go hence and hallow thee,—
    If of ill, let the earth swallow thee,—
    If thou'rt of air, let the grey mist fold thee,—
    If of earth, let the swart mine hold thee,—
    If a Pixie, seek thy ring,—
    If a Nixie, seek thy spring ;—
    If on middle earth thou'st been
    Slave of sorrow, shame, and sin,
    Hast eat the bread of toil and strife,
    And dree'd the lot which men call life,
Begone to thy stone ! for thy coffin is scant of thee,
The worm, thy play-fellow, wails for the want of thee ;—
Hence, houseless ghost ! let the earth hide thee,
Till Michael shall blow the blast, see that there thou
[illegible] thee !
the Udaller, whence ! take the Cross for a token,
ay, lass, that m[illegible]allowmass !—my spell is spoken.
an old acquaintance,
that he remain one.' muttered Minna, in a tone

Mertoun, who was slow[illegible]giliancæ were resorted to by
ment, half overhead this dis[illegible] as a mode of prying into
and half turned round t[illegible]

so thin and low, that it might have passed for the faint reply of the conjured phantom.

'You !—you !' said Halcro, his tone of alarm changing to one of extreme surprise ; 'by this moonlight, which is waning, and so it is !—Who could have thought to find you, my most lovely Night, wandering abroad in your own element !—But you saw them, I reckon, as well as I?—bold enough in you to follow them, though.'

'Saw whom?—follow whom?' said Minna, hoping to gain some information on the subject of her fears and her anxiety.

'The corpse-lights which danced at the haven,' replied Halcro ; 'they bode no good, I promise you—you wot well what the old rhyme says—

Where corpse light
Dances bright,
Be it day or night,
Be it light or dark,
There shall corpse lie stiff and stark.

I went half as far as the haven to look after them, but they had vanished. I think I saw a boat put off, however,—some one bound for the haaf, I suppose,—I would we had good news of this fishing—there was Norna left us in anger—and then these corpse-lights !—Well, God help the while ! I am an old man, and can but wish that all were well over. But how now, my pretty Minna ? tears in your eyes ? And, now that I see you in the fair moonlight, barefooted too, by Saint Magnus ! Were there no stockings of Zetland wool soft enough for these pretty feet and ankles, that glance so white in the moonbeam ? What, silent !—angry, perhaps,' he added, in a more serious tone, 'at my nonsense ? For shame, silly maiden ! Remember I am old enough to be your father, and have always loved you as my child.'

'I am not angry,' said Minna, constraining herself to speak—'But heard you nothing ?—saw you nothing ?—They must have passed you.'

'They ?' said Claud Halcro ; 'what mean you by they ?—is it the corpse-lights ?—No, they did not pass by me, but I think they have passed by you—and blighted you with their influence, for you are as pale as a spectre.—Come, come, Minna,' he added, opening a side-door of the dwelling, 'these moonlight walks are fitter for old poets than for young maidens—and so lightly clad as you are ! Maiden, you should take care how you give yourself to the breezes of a Zetland night, for they bring more sleet than odours upon their wings. But, maiden, go in ; for, as glorious John says—or, as he does not say—for I cannot remember how his verse chimes—but, as I say myself, in a pretty poem, written when my muse was in her teens,—

Menseful maiden ne'er should rise
Till the first beam tinge the skies ;
Silk-fringed eyelids still should close
Till the sun has kiss'd the rose ;
Maiden's foot we should not view,
Mark'd with tiny print on dew,
Till the opening flowerets spread
Carpet meet for beauty's tread—

Stay, what comes next ?—let me see.'

When the spirit of recitation seized on Claud Halcro, he forgot time and place, and might have kept his companion in the cold air for half-an-hour, giving poetical reasons why she

ought to have been in bed. But she interrupted him by the question, earnestly pronounced, yet in a voice which was scarcely articulate, holding Halcro, at the same time, with a trembling and convulsive grasp, as if to support herself from falling—'Saw you no one in the boat which put to sea but now?'

'Nonsense!' replied Halcro; 'how could I see any one, when light and distance only enabled me to know that it was a boat, and not a grampus?'

'But there must have been some one in the boat?' repeated Minna, scarce conscious of what she said.

'Certainly,' answered the poet; 'boats seldom work to windward of their own accord.—But come, this is all folly; and so, as the queen says, in an old play, which was revived for the stage by rare Will D'Avenant, "To bed—to bed—to bed!"'

They separated, and Minna's limbs conveyed her with difficulty, through several devious passages, to her own chamber, where she stretched herself cautiously beside her still sleeping sister, with a mind harassed with the most agonizing apprehensions. That she had heard Cleveland, she was positive—the tenor of the songs left her no doubt on that subject. If not equally certain that she had heard young Mertoun's voice in hot quarrel with her lover, the impression to that effect was strong on her mind. The groan with which the struggle seemed to terminate—the fearful indication from which it seemed that the conqueror had borne off the lifeless body of his victim—all tended to prove that some fatal event had concluded the contest. And which of the unhappy men had fallen?—which had met a bloody death?—which had achieved a fatal and a bloody victory?—These were questions to which the still small voice of interior conviction answered, that her lover Cleveland, from character, temper, and habits, was most likely to have been the survivor of the fray. She received from the reflection an involuntary consolation, which she almost detested herself for admitting, when she recollected that it was at once darkened with her lover's guilt, and embittered with the destruction of Brenda's happiness for ever.

'Innocent, unhappy sister!' such were her reflections; 'thou that art ten times better than I, because so unpretending—so unassuming in thine excellence! How is it possible that I should cease to feel a pang, which is only transferred from my bosom to thine?'

As these cruel thoughts crossed her mind, she could not refrain from straining her sister so close to her bosom, that, after a heavy sigh, Brenda awoke.

'Sister,' she said, 'is it you?—I dreamed I lay on one of those monuments which Claud Halcro described to us, where the effigy of the inhabitant beneath lies carved in stone upon the sepulchre. I dreamed such a marble form lay by my side, and that it suddenly acquired enough of life and animation to fold me to its cold, moist bosom—and it is yours, Minna, that is indeed so chilly. You are ill, my dearest Minna! for God's sake, let me rise and call Euphane Fea.—What ails you? has Norna been here again?'

'Call no one hither,' said Minna, detaining her; 'nothing ails me for which any one has a remedy—nothing but apprehensions of evil worse than even Norna could prophesy. But God is above all, my dear Brenda; and let us pray to him to turn, as he only can, our evil into good.'

They did jointly repeat their usual prayer for strength and protection from on high, and again composed themselves to sleep, suffering no word, save 'God bless you,' to pass betwixt them when their devotions were finished; thus scrupulously dedicating to Heaven their last waking words, if human frailty prevented them from commanding their last waking thoughts. Brenda slept first, and Minna, strongly resisting the dark and evil presentiments which again began to crowd themselves upon her imagination, was at last so fortunate as to slumber also.

The storm which Halcro had expected began about daybreak,—a squall, heavy with wind and rain, such as is often felt, even during the finest part of the season, in these latitudes. At the whistle of the wind, and the clatter of the rain on the shingle-roofing of the fishers' huts, many a poor woman was awakened, and called on her children to hold up their little hands, and join in prayer for the safety of the dear husband and father, who was even then at the mercy of the disturbed elements. Around the house of Burgh-Westra, chimneys howled and windows clashed. The props and rafters of the higher parts of the building, most of them formed out of wreck-wood, groaned and quivered, as fearing to be again dispersed by the tempest. But the daughters of Magnus Troil continued to sleep as softly and as sweetly as if the hand of Chantrey had formed them out of statuary marble. The squall had passed away, and the sunbeams, dispersing the clouds which drifted to leeward, shone full through the lattice, when Minna first started from the profound sleep into which fatigue and mental exhaustion had lulled her, and, raising herself on her arm, began to recall events, which, after this interval of profound repose, seemed almost to resemble the baseless visions of the night. She almost doubted if what she recalled of horror, previous to her starting from her bed, was not indeed the fiction of a dream, suggested, perhaps, by some external sounds.

'I will see Claud Halcro instantly,' she said; 'he may know something of these strange noises, as he was stirring at the time.'

With that she sprung from bed, but hardly stood upright on the floor, ere her sister exclaimed, 'Gracious Heaven! Minna, what ails your foot—your ankle?'

She looked down, and saw with surprise, which amounted to agony, that both her feet, but particularly one of them, was stained with dark crimson, resembling the colour of dried blood.

Without attempting to answer Brenda, she rushed to the window, and cast a desperate look on the grass beneath, for there she knew she must have contracted the fatal stain. But the rain, which had fallen there in treble quantity, as well from the heavens as from the eaves of the house, had washed away that guilty witness, if indeed such had ever existed. All was fresh and fair, and the blades of grass, overcharged and bent with rain-drops, glittered like diamonds in the bright morning sun.

While Minna stared upon the spangled verdure, with her full dark eyes fixed and enlarged to circles by the intensity of her terror, Brenda was hanging about her, and, with many an eager inquiry, pressed to know whether or how she had hurt herself.

'A piece of glass cut through my shoe,' said Minna, bethinking herself that some excuse was necessary to her sister; 'I scarce felt it at the time.'

'And yet see how it has bled,' said her sister. 'Sweet Minna,' she added, approaching her with a wetted towel, 'let me wipe the blood off—the hurt may be worse than you think of.'

But as she approached, Minna, who saw no other way of preventing discovery that the blood with which she was stained had never flowed in her own veins, harshly and hastily repelled the proffered kindness. Poor Brenda, unconscious of any offence which she had given to her sister, drew back two or three paces on finding her service thus unkindly refused, and stood gazing at Minna with looks in which there was more of surprise and mortified affection than of resentment, but which had yet something also of natural displeasure.

'Sister,' said she, 'I thought we had agreed but last night, that, happen to us what might, we would at least love each other.'

'Much may happen betwixt night and morning,' answered Minna, in words rather wrenched from her by her situation, than flowing forth the voluntary interpreters of her thoughts.

'Much may indeed have happened in a night so stormy,' answered Brenda; 'for see where the very wall around Euphane's plant-a-cruive has been blown down; but neither wind nor rain, nor naught else, can cool our affection, Minna.'

'But that may chance,' replied Minna, 'which may convert it into'—

The rest of the sentence she muttered in a tone so indistinct, that it could not be apprehended; while, at the same time, she washed the blood-stains from her feet and left ankle. Brenda, who still remained looking on at some distance, endeavoured in vain to assume some tone which might re-establish kindness and confidence betwixt them.

'You were right,' she said, 'Minna, to suffer no one to help you to dress so simple a scratch—standing where I do, it is scarce visible.'

'The most cruel wounds,' replied Minna, 'are those which make no outward show—Are you sure you see it at all?'

'O yes!' replied Brenda, framing her answer as she thought would best please her sister; 'I see a very slight scratch; nay, now you draw on the stocking, I can see nothing.'

'You do indeed see nothing,' answered Minna, somewhat wildly; 'but the time will soon come that all—ay, all—will be seen and known.'

So saying, she hastily completed her dress, and led the way to breakfast, where she assumed her place amongst the guests; but with a countenance so pale and haggard, and manners and speech so altered and so bewildered, that it excited the attention of the whole company, and the utmost anxiety on the part of her father, Magnus Troil. Many and various were the conjectures of the guests, concerning a distemperature which seemed rather mental than corporeal. Some hinted that the maiden had been struck with an evil eye, and something they muttered about Norna of the Fitful Head; some talked of the departure of Captain Cleveland, and murmured, 'it was a shame for a young lady to take on so after a landlouper, of whom no one knew anything;' and this contemptuous epithet was in particular bestowed on the captain by Mistress Baby Yellowley, while she was in the act of wrapping round her old skinny neck the very handsome owerlay (as she called it) wherewith the said captain had presented her. The old Lady Glowrowrum had a system of her own, which she hinted to Mistress Yellowley, after thanking God that her own connection with the Burgh-Westra family was by the lass's mother, who was a canny Scotswoman like herself.

'For as to these Troils, you see, Dame Yellowley, for as high as they hold their heads, they say that ken' (winking sagaciously), 'that there is a bee in their bonnet;—that Norna, as they call her, for it's not her right name neither, is at whiles far beside her right mind,—and they that ken the cause say the Fowd was some gait or other linked in with it, for he will never hear an ill word of her. But I was in Scotland then, or I might have ken'd the real cause, as weel as other folk. At ony rate, there is a kind of wildness in the blood. Ye ken very weel daft folk dinna bide to be contradicted; and I'll say that for the Fowd—he likes to be contradicted as ill as ony man in Zetland. But it shall never be said that I said ony ill of the house that I am sae nearly connected wi'. Only ye will mind, dame, it is through the Sinclairs that we are akin, not through the Troils, and the Sinclairs are ken'd far and wide for a wise generation, dame.—But I see there is the stirrup-cup coming round.'

'I wonder,' said Mistress Baby to her brother, as soon as the Lady Glowrowrum turned from her, 'what gars that muckle wife dame, dame, dame, that gait at me? She might ken the blude of the Clinkscales is as gude as ony Glowrowrum's amang them.'

The guests, meanwhile, were fast taking their departure, scarcely noticed by Magnus, who was so much engrossed with Minna's indisposition, that, contrary to his hospitable wont, he suffered them to go away unsaluted. And thus concluded, amidst anxiety and illness, the festival of Saint John, as celebrated on that season at the house of Burgh-Westra; adding another caution to that of the Emperor of Ethiopia,—with how little security man can reckon upon the days which he destines to happiness.

CHAPTER XXIV.

But this sad evil which doth her infest,
Doth course of natural cause far exceed,
And housed is within her hollow brest,
That either seems some cursed witch's deed,
Or evill spright that in her doth such torment breed.
FAERY QUEEN, *Book III. Canto III.*

THE term had now elapsed, by several days, when Mordaunt Mertoun, as he had promised at

his departure, should have returned to his father's abode at Yarlshof, but there were no tidings of his arrival. Such delay might, at another time, have excited little curiosity, and no anxiety; for old Swertha, who took upon her the office of thinking and conjecturing for the little household, would have concluded that he had remained behind the other guests upon some party of sport or pleasure. But she knew that Mordaunt had not been lately in favour with Magnus Troil; she knew that he proposed his stay at Burgh-Westra should be a short one, upon account of his father's health, to whom, notwithstanding the little encouragement which his filial piety received, he paid uniform attention. Swertha knew all this, and she became anxious. She watched the looks of her master, the elder Mertoun; but, wrapped in dark and stern uniformity of composure, his countenance, like the surface of a midnight lake, enabled no one to penetrate into what was beneath. His studies, his solitary meals, his lonely walks, succeeded each other in unvaried rotation, and seemed undisturbed by the least thought about Mordaunt's absence.

At length such reports reached Swertha's ear, from various quarters, that she became totally unable to conceal her anxiety, and resolved, at the risk of provoking her master into fury, or perhaps that of losing her place in his household, to force upon his notice the doubts which afflicted her own mind. Mordaunt's good-humour and goodly person must indeed have made no small impression on the withered and selfish heart of the poor old woman, to induce her to take a course so desperate, and from which her friend the Ranzelman endeavoured in vain to deter her. Still, however, conscious ... on a mis-carriage in the matter would ...land, fror loss of Trinculo's bottle in the horse most li attended not only with dishonour, but w... She ...nite loss, she determined to proceed on ...y cons ...h emprise with as much caution as was c... for a...it with the attempt. ...once

We have already mentioned ...tere it seemed a part of the very *nature* of this reserved and unsociable being, at least since his retreat into the utter solitude of Yarlshof, t...cha... dure no one to start a subject of conv... so r... or to put any question to him, tha... is it pos...t of urgent and pressing ... pang, which is o...as sensible, therefore, th... osom to thine?' ...e discourse favourably ...el thoughts crossed her ... with master, sh... frain from straining her sis...iginate with hi... bosom, that, after a heavy sig... woke.

To ... ed in ... she said, 'is it you?—I dreamed ...ad propa... ne of those monuments which Claud solitary ... ibed to us, where the effigy of the board with ... eath lies carved in stone upon the all her other ... eamed such a marble form lay by guest or com... hat it suddenly acquired enough

The artific... ation to fold me to its cold, moist from his stu... yours, Minna, that is indeed arranged, that ... so ill, my dearest Minna! for the effect of th... ...ll Euphane Fea.— his ground-baits, was fidd... ...ere again?' room, 'whether Mordaunt wa... ...ied from Burgh-Westra?' ... detaining

This question was the cue for Swertha, and she a...red in a voice of sorrowful anxiety, half real, half affected, 'Na, na!—nae sic divot had dunted at their door. It wad be blithe news indeed to ken that young Maister Mordaunt, puir dear bairn, were safe at hame.'

'And if he be not at home, why should you lay a cover for him, you doting fool?' replied Mertoun, in a tone well calculated to stop the old woman's proceedings. But she replied boldly, 'that, indeed, somebody should take thought about Maister Mordaunt; a' that she could do was to have seat and plate ready for him when he came. But she thought the dear bairn had been ower long awa; and if she maun speak out, she had her ain fears when and whether he might ever come hame.'

'*Your* fears!' replied Mertoun, his eyes flashing as they usually did when his hour of ungovernable passion approached; 'do you speak of your idle fears to me, who know that all of your sex, that is not fickleness, and folly, and self-conceit, and self-will, is a bundle of idiotical fears, vapours, and tremors? What are your fears to me, you foolish old hag?'

It is an admirable quality in womankind, that, when a breach of the laws of natural affection comes under their observation, the whole sex is in arms. Let a rumour arise in a street of a parent that has misused a child, or a child that has insulted a parent,—I say nothing of the case of husband and wife, where the interest may be accounted for in sympathy,—and all the women within hearing will take animated and decided part with the sufferer. Swertha notwithstanding her greed and avarice, had her share of the generous feeling which does so much honour to her sex, and was, on this occasion, so much carried on by its impulse, that she confronted her master, and upbraided him with his hard-hearted indifference, with a boldness at which she herself was astonished.

'To be sure it wasna her that suld be fearing for her young maister, Maister Mordaunt, even although he was, as she might weel say, the very sea-calf of her heart; but ony other father, but his honour himsel', wad have had speerings made after the poor lad, and him gane this eight days from Burgh Westra, and naebody ken'd when or where he had gane. There wasna a bairn in the howff but was maining for him; for he made all their bits of boats with his knife; there wadna be a dry eye in the parish if aught worse than weal should befall him—na, no ane, unless it might be his honour's ain.'

Mertoun had been much struck, and even silenced, by the insolent volubility of his insurgent housekeeper; but, at the last sarcasm, he imposed on her silence in her turn with an audible voice, accompanied with one of the most terrific glances which his dark eye and stern features could express. But Swertha, who, as she afterwards acquainted the Ranzelman, was wonderfully supported during the whole scene, would not be controlled by the loud voice and ferocious look of her master, but proceeded in the same tone as before.

'His honour' she said, 'had made an unco wark because a wheen bits of ...diamonds that naebody had use for, had been gathered on the beach by the poor bodies of the towns...

and here was the bravest lad in the country lost, and cast away, as it were, before his een, and nae ane asking what was come o' him.'

'What should come of him but good, you old fool,' answered Mr. Mertoun, 'as far, at least, as there can be good in any of the follies he spends his time in?'

This was spoken rather in a scornful than an angry tone, and Swertha, who had got into the spirit of the dialogue, was resolved not to let it drop, now that the fire of her opponent seemed to slacken.

'O ay, to be sure I am an auld fule,—but if Maister Mordaunt should have settled down in the Roost, as mair than ae boat has been lost in that wearifu' squall the other morning—by good luck it was short as it was sharp, or naething could have lived in it—or if he were drowned in a loch coming hame on foot, or if he were killed by miss of footing on a craig—the hale island ken'd how venturesome he was—who,' said Swertha, 'will be the auld fule then?' And she added a pathetic ejaculation, that 'God would protect the poor motherless bairn! for if he had had a mother, there would have been search made after him before now.'

This last sarcasm affected Mertoun powerfully, —his jaw quivered, his face grew pale, and he muttered to Swertha to go into his study (where she was scarcely ever permitted to enter), and fetch him a bottle which stood there.

'O ho!' quoth Swertha to herself, as she hastened on the commission, 'my master knows where to find a cup of comfort to qualify his water with upon fitting occasions.'

There was indeed a case of such bottles as were usually employed to hold strong waters, but the dust and cobwebs in which they were enveloped showed that they had not been touched for many years. With some difficulty Swertha extracted the cork of one of them, by the help of a fork,—for corkscrew was there none at Yarlshof —and having ascertained by smell, and, in case of any mistake, by a moderate mouthful, that it contained wholesome Barbadoes waters, she carried it into the room, where her master still continued to struggle with his faintness. She then began to pour a small quantity into the nearest cup that she could find, wisely judging that, upon a person so much unaccustomed to the use of spirituous liquors, a little might produce a strong effect. But the patient signed to her impatiently to fill the cup, which might hold more than the third of an English pint measure, up to the very brim, and swallowed it down without hesitation.

'Now the saunts above have a care on us!' said Swertha; 'he will be drunk as weel as mad, and wha is to guide him then, I wonder?'

But Mertoun's breath and colour returned, without the slightest symptom of intoxication; on the contrary, Swertha afterwards reported, that 'although she had always had a firm opinion in favour of a dram, yet she never saw one work such miracles—he spoke mair like a man of the middle world, than she [illegible] him do since she had entered Magnus Troi[illegible]

'Swertha,' he said, 'you are right in this matter, and I was wrong. Go down to the Ranzelman directly, tell him to come and speak with me, without an instant's delay, and bring me special word what boats and people he can command; I will employ them all in the search, and they shall be plentifully rewarded.'

Stimulated by the spur which maketh the old woman proverbially to trot, Swertha posted down to the hamlet, with all the speed of threescore, rejoicing that her sympathetic feelings were likely to achieve their own reward, having given rise to a quest which promised to be so lucrative, and in the profits whereof she was determined to have her share, shouting out as she went, and long before she got within hearing, the names of Neil Ronaldson, Sweyn Erickson, and the other friends and confederates who were interested in her mission. To say the truth, notwithstanding that the good dame really felt a deep interest in Mordaunt Mertoun, and was mentally troubled on account of his absence, perhaps few things would have disappointed her more than if he had at this moment started up in her path safe and sound, and rendered unnecessary, by his appearance, the expense and the bustle of searching after him.

Soon did Swertha accomplish her business in the village, and adjust with the senators of the township her own little share of percentage upon the profits likely to accrue on her mission; and speedily did she return to Yarlshof, with Neil Ronaldson by her side, schooling him to the best of her skill in all the peculiarities of her master.

'Aboon a' things,' she said, 'never make him wait for an answer; and speak loud and distinct as if you were hailing a boat,—for he downa bide to say the same thing twice over; and if he asks about distance, ye may make leagues for miles, for he kens naething about the face of the earth that he lives upon; and if he speak of siller, ye may ask dollars for shillings, for he minds them nae mair than sclate-stanes.'

Thus tutored, Neil Ronaldson was introduced into the presence of Mertoun, but was utterly confounded to find that he could not act upon the system of deception which had been projected. —When he attempted, by some exaggeration of distance and peril, to enhance the hire of the boats and of the men (for the search was to be by sea and land), he found himself at once cut short [illegible] Mertoun, who showed not only the most [illegible]fect knowledge of the country, but of distances, tides, currents, and all belonging to the navigation of those seas, although these were topics with which he had hitherto appeared to be totally unacquainted. The Ranzelman, therefore, trembled when they came to speak of the recompense to be afforded for their exertions in the search; for it was not more unlikely that Mertoun should be as well informed of what was just and proper upon this head as upon others; and Neil remembered the storm of his fury, when, at an early period after he had settled at Yarlshof, he drove Swertha and Sweyn Erickson from his presence. As, however, he stood hesitating betwixt the opposite fears of asking too much or too little, Mertoun stopped his mouth and ended his uncertainty, by promising him a recompense beyond what he dared to have ventured to ask, with an additional gratuity in

case they returned with the pleasing intelligence that his son was safe.

When this great point was settled, Neil Ronaldson, like a man of conscience, began to consider earnestly the various places where search should be made after the young man; and, having undertaken faithfully that the inquiry should be prosecuted at all the houses of the gentry, both in this and the neighbouring islands, he added, that, 'after all, if his honour would not be angry, there was ane not far off, that if anybody dared speer her a question, and if she liked to answer it, could tell more about Maister Mordaunt than anybody else could--Ye will ken wha I mean, Swertha?--Her that was down at the haven this morning.' Thus he concluded, addressing himself with a mysterious look to the housekeeper, which she answered with a nod and a wink.

'How mean you?' said Mertoun; 'speak out short and open --whom do you speak of?'

'It is Norna of the Fitful Head,' said Swertha, 'that the Ranzelman is thinking about; for she has gone up to Saint Ringan's Kirk this morning on business of her own.'

'And what can this person know of my son?' said Mertoun; 'she is, I believe, a wandering madwoman, or impostor.'

'If she wanders,' said Swertha, 'it is for nae lack of means at hame, and that is weel known --plenty of a'thing has she of her ain, forby that the Fowd himsel' would let her want naething.'

'But what is that to my son?' said Mertoun impatiently.

'I dinna ken--she took unco pleasure in Maister Mordaunt from the time she first saw him, and mony a braw thing she gave him at ae time or another, forby the gowd chain that hangs about his bonnie craig--folk say it is of fairy gold--I kenna what gold it is, but Bryce Snailsfoot says that the value will mount to an hundred punds English, and that is nae deaf nuts.'

'Go, Ronaldson,' said Mertoun, 'or else send some one to seek this woman out--if you think there be a chance of her knowing anything of my son.'

'She kens a'thing that happens in thae islands,' said Neil Ronaldson, 'muckle sooner than other folk, and that is Heaven's truth. But as to going to the kirk, or the kirkyard, to speer after her, there is not a man in Zetland will do it for meed or for money--and that's Heaven's truth as weel as the other.'

'Cowardly, superstitious fools!' said Mertoun. --'But give me my cloak, Swertha.--This woman has been at Burgh-Westra--she is related to Troil's family--she may know something of Mordaunt's absence and its cause--I will seek her myself--She is at the Cross-Kirk, you say?'

'No, not at the Cross-Kirk, but at the auld kirk of Saint Ringan's--it's a dowie bit, and far frae being canny; and if your honour,' added Swertha, 'wad walk by my rule, I wad wait until she came back, and no trouble her when on them when they are, gude sain us! doing their ain particular turns.'

Mertoun made no answer, but, throwing his cloak loosely around him (for the day was misty, with passing showers), and leaving the decayed mansion of Yarlshof, he walked at a pace much faster than was usual with him, taking the direction of the ruinous church, which stood, as he well knew, within three or four miles of his dwelling.

The Ranzelman and Swertha stood gazing after him in silence, until he was fairly out of earshot, when, looking seriously on each other, and shaking their sagacious heads in the same boding degree of vibration, they uttered their remarks in the same breath.

'Fools are aye fleet and fain,' said Swertha.

'Fey folk run fast,' added the Ranzelman; 'and the thing that we are born to, we cannot win by.--I have known them that tried to stop folk that were fey. You have heard of Helen Emberson of Camsey, how she stopped all the boles and windows about the house, that her gudeman might not see daylight, and rise to the haaf-fishing, because she feared foul weather; and how the boat he should have sailed in was lost in the Roost; and how she came back, rejoicing in her gudeman's safety--but ne'er may care, for there she found him drowned in his own masking-fat, within the wa's of his ain biggin; and moreover'——

But here Swertha reminded the Ranzelman that he must go down to the haven to get off the fishing-boats; 'For both that my heart is sair for the bonnie lad, and that I am fear'd he cast up of his ain accord before you are at sea; and, as I have often told ye, my master may lead, but he winna drive; and if ye do not his bidding, and get out to sea, the never a bodle of boat-hire will ye see.'

'Weel, weel, good dame,' said the Ranzelman, 'we will launch as fast as we can; and by good luck, neither Clawson's boat nor Peter Grot's is out to the haaf this morning, for a rabbit ran across the path as they were going on board, and they came back like wise men, kenning they wad be called to other wark this day. And a marvel it is to think, Swertha, how few real judicious men are left in this land. There is our great Udaller is weel eneuch when he is fresh, but he makes ower mony voyages in his Ship and his Yawl to be lang sae; and now, they say, his daughter Mistress Minna, is sair out of sorts.--Then there is Norna kens muckle mair than other folk, but wise woman ye cannot call her. Our tacksman here, Maister Mertoun, his wit is sprung in the bowsprit, I doubt--his son is a daft gowk; and I ken few of consequence hereabouts--excepting always myself, and may be you, Swertha--but what may, in some sense or other, be called fules.'

'That may be, Neil Ronaldson,' said the dame; 'but if you do not hasten the faster to the shore, you will lose tide; and, as I said to my master some short time syne, wha will be the fule then?'

CHAPTER XXV.

I do love these ancient ruins—
We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history;
And questionless, here, in this open court
(Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather), some men lie interr'd,
Loved the Church so well, and gave so largely to it,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till doomsday;—but all things have their end—
Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death which we have.

DUCHESS OF MALFY.

THE ruinous church of Saint Ninian had, in its time, enjoyed great celebrity; for that mighty system of Roman superstition, which spread its roots over all Europe, had not failed to extend them even to this remote archipelago, and Zetland had, in the Catholic times, her saints, her shrines, and her relics, which, though little known elsewhere, attracted the homage, and commanded the observance, of the simple inhabitants of Thule. Their devotion to this church of Saint Ninian, or, as he was provincially termed, Saint Ringan, situated, as the edifice was, close to the sea-beach, and serving, in many points, as a landmark to their boats, was particularly obstinate, and was connected with so much superstitious ceremonial and credulity, that the Reformed clergy thought it best, by an order of the Church courts, to prohibit all spiritual service within its walls, as tending to foster the rooted faith of the simple and rude people around in saint-worship, and other erroneous doctrines of the Romish Church.

After the church of Saint Ninian had been thus denounced as a seat of idolatry, and desecrated, of course, the public worship was transferred to another church; and the roof, with its lead and its rafters, having been stripped from the little rude old Gothic building, it was left in the wilderness to the mercy of the elements. The fury of the uncontrolled winds, which howled along an exposed space, resembling that which we have described at Yarlshof, very soon choked up nave and aisle, and, on the north-west side, which was chiefly exposed to the wind, hid the outside walls more than half-way up with the mounds of drifted sand, over which the gable-ends of the building, with the little belfry, which was built above its eastern angle, arose in ragged and shattered nakedness of ruin.

Yet, deserted as it was, the kirk of Saint Ringan still retained some semblance of the ancient homage formerly rendered there. The rude and ignorant fishermen of Dunrossness observed a practice, of which they themselves had well-nigh forgotten the origin, and from which the Protestant clergy in vain endeavoured to deter them. When their boats were in extreme peril, it was common amongst them to propose to vow an *awmous*, as they termed it, that is, an alms, to Saint Ringan; and when the danger was over, they never failed to absolve themselves of their vow, by coming singly and secretly to the old church, and, putting off their shoes and stockings at the entrance of the churchyard, walked thrice around the ruins, observing [illegible] they did so in the course of the [illegible] the circuit was accomplished for the third time, the votary dropped his offering, usually a small silver coin, through the mullions of a lanceolated window, which opened into a side aisle, and then retired, avoiding carefully to look behind him till he was beyond the precincts which had once been hallowed ground; for it was believed that the skeleton of the saint received the offering in his bony hand, and showed his ghastly death's head at the window in which it was thrown.

Indeed, the scene was rendered more appalling to weak and ignorant minds, because the same stormy and eddying winds, which on the one side of the church threatened to bury the ruins with sand, and had, in fact, heaped it up in huge quantities, so as almost to hide the side-wall with its buttresses, seemed in other places bent on uncovering the graves of those who had been laid to their long rest on the south-eastern quarter; and, after an unusually hard gale, the coffins, and sometimes the very corpses, of those who had been interred without the usual ceremonents, were discovered, in a ghastly manner, to the eyes of the living.

It was to this desolated place of worship that the elder Mertoun now proceeded, though without any of those religious or superstitious purposes with which the church of Saint Ringan was usually approached. He was totally without the superstitious fears of the country—nay, from the sequestered and sullen manner in which he lived, withdrawing himself from human society, even when assembled for worship, it was the general opinion that he erred on the more fatal side, and believed rather too little than too much of that which the Church receives and enjoins to Christians.

As he entered the little bay, on the shore and almost on the beach of which the ruins are situated, he could not help pausing for an instant, and becoming sensible that the scene, as calculated to operate on human feelings, had been selected with much judgment as the site of a religious house.—In front lay the sea, into which two headlands, which formed the extremities of the bay, projected their gigantic causeways of dark and sable rocks, on the ledges of which the gulls, scouries, and other sea-fowl, appeared like flakes of snow; while upon the lower ranges of the cliffs stood whole lines of cormorants, drawn up alongside of each other, like soldiers in their battle array, and other living thing was there none to see. The sea, although not in a tempestuous state, was disturbed enough to rush on these capes with a sound like distant thunder, and the billows, which rose in sheets of foam half-way up these sable rocks, formed a contrast of colouring equally striking and awful.

Betwixt the extremities or capes of these projecting headlands there rolled, on the day when Mertoun visited the scene, a deep and dense aggregation of clouds, through which no human eye could penetrate, and which, bounding the vision, and excluding all view of the distant ocean, rendered it no unapt representation of the sea in the Vision of Mirza, whose extent was concealed by vapours, and clouds, and storms. The ground, rising steeply from the sea-beach, permitting no view into the interior of the country, appeared a scene of irretrievable barren-

ness, where scrubby and stunted heath, intermixed with the long bent or coarse grass, which first covers sandy soils, were the only vegetables that could be seen. Upon a natural elevation, which rose above the beach in the very bottom of the bay, and receded a little from the sea, so as to be without reach of the waves, arose the half-buried ruin which we have already described, surrounded by a wasted, half-ruinous, and mouldering wall, which, breached in several places, served still to divide the precincts of the cemetery. The mariners who were driven by accident into this solitary bay, pretended that the church was occasionally observed to be full of lights, and, from that circumstance, were used to prophesy shipwrecks and deaths by sea.

As Mertoun approached near to the chapel, he adopted, insensibly, and perhaps without much premeditation, measures to avoid being himself seen, until he came close under the walls of the burial-ground, which he approached, as it chanced, on that side where the sand was blowing from the graves, in the manner we have described.

Here, looking through one of the gaps in the wall, which time had made, he beheld the person whom he sought occupied in a manner which assorted well with the ideas popularly entertained of her character, but which was otherwise sufficiently extraordinary.

She was employed beside a rude monument, on one side of which was represented the rough outline of a cavalier or knight on horseback, while on the other appeared a shield, with the armorial bearings so defaced as not to be intelligible; which escutcheon was suspended by one angle, contrary to the modern custom, which usually places them straight and upright. At the foot of this pillar were believed to repose, as Mertoun had formerly heard, the bones of Ribolt Troil, one of the remote ancestors of Magnus, and a man renowned for deeds of valorous emprise in the fifteenth century. From the grave of this warrior Norna of the Fitful Head seemed busied in shovelling the sand, an easy task where it was so light and loose; so that it seemed plain that she would shortly complete what the rude winds had begun, and make bare the bones which lay there interred. As she laboured, she muttered her magic song; for without the Runic rhyme no form of northern superstition was ever performed. We have, perhaps, preserved too many examples of these incantations; but we cannot help attempting to translate that which follows:—

Champion, famed for warlike toil,
Art thou silent, Ribolt Troil?
Sand, and dust, and pebbly stones,
Are leaving bare thy giant bones.
Who dared touch the wild-bear's skin
Ye slumber'd on while life was in?
A woman now, or babe, may come
And cast the covering from thy tomb.

Yet be not wrathful, chief, nor blight
Mine eyes or ears with sound or sight!
I come not, with unhallow'd tread,
To wake the slumbers of the dead,
Or lay thy giant relics bare:
But what I seek thou well can'st spare.
Be it to my hand allow'd
To shear a merk's weight from thy shroud,
Yet leave thee sheeted lead enough
To shield thy bones from weather rough.

See, I draw my magic knife—
Never, while thou wert in life,
Laid'st thou still for sloth or fear,
When point and edge were glittering near;
See, the cerements now I sever—
Waken now, or sleep for ever!
Thou wilt not wake? the deed is done!—
The prize I sought is fairly won.

Thanks, Ribolt, thanks,—for this the sea
Shall smooth its ruffled crest for thee,—
And while afar its billows foam,
Subside to peace near Ribolt's tomb.
Thanks, Ribolt, thanks,—for this the might
Of wild winds raging at their height,
When to thy place of slumber nigh,
Shall soften to a lullaby.

She, the dame of doubt and dread,
Norna of the Fitful-Head,
Mighty in her own despite—
Miserable in her might;
In despair and frenzy great,
In her greatness desolate;
Wisest, wickedest who lives,
Well can keep the word she gives!

While Norna chanted the first part of this rhyme, she completed the task of laying bare a part of the leaden coffin of the ancient warrior, and severed from it, with much caution and apparent awe, a portion of the metal. She then reverentially threw back the sand upon the coffin; and by the time she had finished her song, no trace remained that the secrets of the sepulchre had been violated.

Mertoun remained gazing on her from behind the churchyard wall during the whole ceremony, not from any impression of veneration for her or her employment, but because he conceived that to interrupt a madwoman in her act of madness, was not the best way to obtain from her such intelligence as she might have to impart. Meanwhile he had full time to consider her figure, although her face was obscured by her dishevelled hair, and by the hood of her dark mantle, which permitted no more to be visible than a Druidess would probably have exhibited at the celebration of her mystical rites. Mertoun had often heard of Norna before; nay, it is most probable that he might have seen her repeatedly, for she had been in the vicinity of Yarlshof more than once since his residence there. But the absurd stories which were in circulation respecting her, prevented his paying any attention to a person whom he regarded as either an impostor or a madwoman, or a compound of both. Yet, now that his attention was, by circumstances, involuntarily fixed upon her person and deportment, he could not help acknowledging to himself that she was either a complete enthusiast, or rehearsed her part so admirably, that no Pythoness of ancient time could have excelled her. The dignity and solemnity of her gesture,—the sonorous, yet impressive tone of voice with which she addressed the departed spirit whose mortal relics she ventured to disturb, were such as failed not to make an impression upon him, careless and indifferent as he generally appeared to all that went on around him. But no sooner was her singular occupation terminated, than, entering the churchyard with some difficulty, by clambering over the disjointed ruins of the wall, he made Norna aware of his presence. Far from starting, or expressing the least surprise at his appearance in a place so solitary, she said, in a tone that seemed to

intimate that he had been expected, 'So—you have sought me at last?'

'And found you,' replied Mertoun, judging he would best introduce the inquiries he had to make, by assuming a tone which corresponded to her own.

'Yes!' she replied, 'found me you have, and in the place where all men must meet--amid the tabernacles of the dead.'

'Here we must, indeed, meet at last,' replied Mertoun, glancing his eyes on the desolate scene around, where headstones, half-covered with sand, and others, from which the same wind had stripped the soil on which they rested, covered with inscriptions, and sculptured with emblems of mortality, were the most conspicuous objects,—'here, as in the house of death, all men must meet at length; and happy those that come soonest to the quiet heaven.'

'He that dares desire this haven,' said Norna, 'must have steered a steady course in the voyage of life. I dare not hope for such quiet harbour. Darest *thou* expect it? or has the course thou hast kept deserved it?'

'It matters not to my present purpose,' replied Mertoun: 'I have to ask you what tidings you know of my son, Mordaunt Mertoun?'

'A father,' replied the sibyl, 'asks of a stranger what tidings she has of his son! How should I know aught of him? the cormorant says not to the mallard, Where is my brood?'

'Lay aside this useless affectation of mystery,' said Mertoun; 'with the vulgar and ignorant it has its effect, but upon me it is thrown away. The people of Yarlshof have told me that you do know, or may know, something of Mordaunt Mertoun, who has not returned home from the festival of Saint John's, held in the house of your relative, Magnus Troil. Give me such information, if indeed ye have it to give; and it shall be recompensed, if the means of recompense are in my power.'

'The wide round of earth,' replied Norna, 'holds nothing that I would call a recompense for the slightest word that I throw away upon a living ear. But for thy son, if thou wouldst see him in life, repair to the approaching fair of Kirkwall, in Orkney.'

'And wherefore thither?' said Mertoun; 'I know he had no purpose in that direction.'

'We drive on the stream of fate,' answered Norna, 'without oar or rudder. You had no purpose this morning of visiting the kirk of Saint Ringan, yet you are here;—you had no purpose but a minute hence of being at Kirkwall, and yet you will go thither.'

'Not unless the cause is more distinctly explained to me. I am no believer, dame, in those who assert your supernatural powers.'

'You shall believe in them ere we part,' said Norna. 'As yet you know but little of me, nor shall you know more. But I know enough of you, and could convince you with one word that I do so.'

'Convince me, then,' said Mertoun; 'for unless I am so convinced, there is little chance of my following your counsel.'

'Mark, then,' said Norna, 'what I have to say on your son's score, else what I shall say to you on your own will banish every other thought from your memory. You shall go to the approaching fair at Kirkwall; and, on the fifth day of the fair, you shall walk, at the hour of noon, in the outer aisle of the cathedral of Saint Magnus, and there you shall meet a person who will give you tidings of your son.'

'You must speak more distinctly, dame,' returned Mertoun scornfully, 'if you hope that I shall follow your counsel. I have been fooled in my time by women, but never so grossly as you seem willing to gull me.'

'Hearken, then!' said the old woman. 'The word which I speak shall touch the nearest secret of thy life, and thrill thee through nerve and bone.'

So saying, she whispered a word into Mertoun's ear, the effect of which seemed almost magical. He remained fixed and motionless with surprise, as, waving her arm slowly aloft, with an air of superiority and triumph, Norna glided from him, turned round a corner of the ruins, and was soon out of sight.

Mertoun offered not to follow, or to trace her. 'We fly from our fate in vain,' he said, as he began to recover himself; and, turning, he left behind him the desolate ruins with their cemetery. As he looked back from the very last point at which the church was visible, he saw the figure of Norna, muffled in her mantle, standing on the very summit of the ruined tower, and stretching out to the sea-breeze something which resembled a white pennon, or flag. A feeling of horror, similar to that excited by her last words, again thrilled through his bosom, and he hastened onwards with unwonted speed, until he had left the church of Saint Ninian, with its bay of sand, far behind him.

Upon his arrival at Yarlshof, the alteration in his countenance was so great, that Swertha conjectured he was about to fall into one of those fits of deep melancholy which she termed his dark hour.

'And what better could be expected,' thought Swertha, 'when he must needs go visit Norna of the Fitful Head, when she was in the haunted kirk of Saint Ringan's?'

But without testifying any other symptoms of an alienated mind than that of deep and sullen dejection, her master acquainted her with his intention to go to the fair of Kirkwall,—a thing so contrary to his usual habits, that the housekeeper well-nigh refused to credit her ears. Shortly after, he heard, with apparent indifference, the accounts returned by the different persons who had been sent out in quest of Mordaunt, by sea and land, who all of them returned without any tidings. The equanimity with which Mertoun heard the report of their bad success, convinced Swertha still more firmly that, in his interview with Norna, that issue had been predicted to him by the sibyl whom he had consulted.

The township were yet more surprised, when their tacksman, Mr. Mertoun, as if on some sudden resolution, made preparations to visit Kirkwall during the fair, although he had hitherto avoided sedulously all such places of public resort. Swertha puzzled herself a good deal, without being able to penetrate this mystery; and vexed herself still more concern-

ing the fate of her young master. But her concern was much softened by the deposit of a sum of money, seeming, however moderate in itself, a treasure in her eyes, which her master put into her hands, acquainting her, at the same time, that he had taken his passage for Kirkwall in a small bark belonging to the proprietor of the island of Mousa.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Nae langer she wept,—her tears were a' spent,—
Despair it was come, and she thought it content;
She thought it content, but her cheek it grew pale,
And she droop'd, like a lily broke down by the hail.*
CONTINUATION OF AULD ROBIN GRAY.

THE condition of Minna much resembled that of the village heroine in Lady Ann Lindsay's beautiful ballad. Her natural firmness of mind prevented her from sinking under the pressure of the horrible secret, which haunted her while awake, and was yet more tormenting during her broken and hurried slumbers. There is no grief so dreadful as that which we dare not communicate, and in which we can neither ask nor desire sympathy; and when to this is added the burden of a guilty mystery to an innocent bosom, there is little wonder that Minna's health should have sunk under the burden.

To the friends around, her habits and manners, nay, her temper, seemed altered to such an extraordinary degree, that it is no wonder that some should have ascribed the change to witchcraft, and some to incipient madness. She became unable to bear the solitude in which she formerly delighted to spend her time; yet, when she hurried into society, it was without either joining in, or attending to, what passed. Generally she appeared wrapped in sad and even sullen abstraction, until her attention was suddenly roused by some casual mention of the name of Cleveland, or of Mordaunt Mertoun, at which she started with the horror of one who sees the lighted match applied to a charged mine, and expects to be instantly involved in the effects of the explosion. And when she observed that the discovery was not yet made, it was so far from being a consolation, that she almost wished the worst was known, rather than endure the continued agonies of suspense.

Her conduct towards her sister was so variable, yet uniformly so painful to the kind-hearted Brenda, that it seemed to all around one of the strongest features of her malady. Sometimes Minna was impelled to seek her sister's company, as if by the consciousness that they were common sufferers by a misfortune of which she herself alone could grasp the extent; and then suddenly the feeling of the injury which Brenda had received through the supposed agency of Cleveland, made her unable to bear her presence, and still less to endure the consolation which her sister, mistaking the nature of her malady, vainly endeavoured to administer. Frequently, also, did it happen that, while Brenda was imploring her sister to take comfort, she incautiously touched upon some subject which thrilled to the very centre of her soul; so that, unable to conceal her agony, Minna would rush hastily from the apartment. All these different moods, though they too much resembled, to one who knew not their real source, the caprices of unkind estrangement, Brenda endured with such prevailing and unruffled gentleness of disposition, that Minna was frequently moved to shed floods of tears upon her neck; and perhaps the moments in which she did so, though embittered by the recollection that her fatal secret concerned the destruction of Brenda's happiness as well as her own, were still, softened as they were by sisterly affection, the most endurable moments of this most miserable period of her life.

The effects of the alternations of moping melancholy, fearful agitation, and bursts of nervous feeling, were soon visible on the poor young woman's face and person. She became pale and emaciated; her eye lost the steady, quiet look of happiness and innocence, and was alternately dim and wild, as she was acted upon by a general feeling of her own distressful condition, or by some quicker and more poignant sense of agony. Her very features seemed to change, and become sharp and eager, and her voice, which, in its ordinary tones, was low and placid, now sometimes sunk in indistinct mutterings, and sometimes was raised beyond the natural key, in hasty and abrupt exclamations. When in company with others, she was sullenly silent, and when she ventured into solitude, was observed (for it was now thought very proper to watch her on such occasions) to speak much to herself.

The pharmacy of the islands was in vain resorted to by Minna's anxious father. Sages of both sexes, who knew the virtues of every herb which drinks the dew, and augmented these virtues by words of might, used while they prepared and applied the medicines, were attended with no benefit; and Magnus, in the utmost anxiety, was at last induced to have recourse to the advice of his kinswoman, Norna of the Fitful Head, although, owing to circumstances, noticed in the course of the story, there was at this time some estrangement between them. His first application was in vain—Norna was then at her usual place of residence, upon the sea-coast, near the headland from which she usually took her designation; but although Eric Scambester himself brought the message, she refused positively to see him or return any answer.

Magnus was angry at the slight put upon his messenger and message, but his anxiety on Minna's account, as well as the respect which he had for Norna's real misfortunes and imputed wisdom and power, prevented him from indulging, on the present occasion, his usual irritability of disposition. On the contrary, he determined to make an application to his kinswoman in his own person. He kept his purpose, however, to himself, and only desired his daughters to be in readiness to attend him upon a visit to a relation,

* It is worth while saying that this motto, and the ascription of the beautiful ballad from which it is taken to the Right Honourable Lady Ann Lindsay, occasioned the ingenious authoress's acknowledgment of the ballad, of which the Editor, on her permission, published a small impression inscribed to the Bannatyne Club.

whom he had not seen for some time, and directed them, at the same time, to carry some provisions along with them, as the journey was distant, and they might perhaps find their friend unprovided.

Unaccustomed to ask explanations of his pleasure, and hoping that exercise and the amusement of such an excursion might be of service to her sister, Brenda, upon whom all household and family charges now devolved, caused the necessary preparations to be made for the expedition; and on the next morning they were engaged in tracing the long and tedious course of beach and of moorland, which, only varied by occasional patches of oats and barley, where a little ground had been selected for cultivation, divided Burgh-Westra from the north-western extremity of the Mainland (as the principal island is called), which terminates in the cape called Fitful Head, as the south-western point ends in the cape of Sumburgh.

On they went, through wild and over wold, the Udaller bestriding a strong, square-made, well-barrelled palfrey, of Norwegian breed, somewhat taller, and yet as stout, as the ordinary ponies of the country; while Minna and Brenda, famed, amongst other accomplishments, for their horsemanship, rode two of those hardy animals, which, bred and reared with more pains than is usually bestowed, showed, both by the neatness of their form and their activity, that the race, so much and so carelessly neglected, is capable of being improved into beauty without losing anything of its spirit or vigour. They were attended by two servants on horseback, and two on foot, secure that the last circumstance would be no delay to their journey, because a great part of the way was so rugged, or so marshy, that the horses could only move at a foot pace; and that, whenever they met with any considerable tract of hard and even ground, they had only to borrow from the nearest herd of ponies the use of a couple for the accommodation of these pedestrians.

The journey was a melancholy one, and little conversation passed, except when the Udaller, pressed by impatience and vexation, urged his pony to a quick pace, and again, recollecting Minna's weak state of health, slackened to a walk, and reiterated inquiries how she felt herself, and whether the fatigue was not too much for her. At noon the party halted, and partook of some refreshment, for which they had made ample provision, beside a pleasant spring, the pureness of whose waters, however, did not suit the Udaller's palate, until qualified by a liberal addition of right Nantz. After he had a second, yea, and a third time, filled a large silver travelling-cup, embossed with a German Cupid smoking a pipe, and a German Bacchus emptying his flask down the throat of a bear, he began to become more talkative than vexation had permitted him to be during the early part of their journey, and thus addressed his daughters:—

'Well, children, we are within a league or two of Norna's dwelling, and we shall soon see how the old spell-mutterer will receive us.'

Minna interrupted her father with a faint exclamation; while Brenda, surprised to a great degree, exclaimed, 'Is it then to Norna that we are to make this visit?—Heaven forbid!'

'And wherefore should Heaven forbid?' said the Udaller, knitting his brows; 'wherefore, I would gladly know, should Heaven forbid me to visit my kinswoman, whose skill may be of use to your sister, if any woman in Zetland, or man either, can be of service to her?—You are a fool, Brenda,—your sister has more sense.—Cheer up, Minna!—thou wert ever wont to like her songs and stories, and used to hang about her neck, when little Brenda cried and ran from her like a Spanish merchantman from a Dutch caper.' *

'I wish she may not frighten me as much today, father,' replied Brenda, desirous of indulging Minna in her taciturnity, and at the same time to amuse her father by sustaining the conversation; 'I have heard so much of her dwelling, that I am rather alarmed at the thought of going there uninvited.'

'Thou art a fool,' said Magnus, 'to think that a visit from her kinsfolks can ever come amiss to a kind, hearty Hjaltland heart, like my cousin Norna's.—And, now I think on't, I will be sworn that is the reason why she would not receive Eric Scambester!—It is many a long day since I have seen her chimney smoke, and I have never carried you thither—She hath indeed some right to call me unkind. But I will tell her the truth—and that is, that, though such be the fashion, I do not think it is fair or honest to eat up the substance of lone women-folks, as we do that of our brother udallers, when we roll about from house to house in the winter season, until we gather like a snowball, and eat up all wherever we come.'

'There is no fear of our putting Norna to any distress just now,' replied Brenda, 'for I have ample provision of everything that we can possibly need—fish, and bacon, and salted mutton, and dried geese—more than we could eat in a week, besides enough of liquor for you, father.'

'Right, right, my girl!' said the Udaller; 'a well-found ship makes a merry voyage—so we shall only want the kindness of Norna's roof, and a little bedding for you; for, as to myself, my sea-cloak, and honest dry boards of Norway deal, suit me better than your eider-down cushions and mattresses. So that Norna will have the pleasure of seeing us without having a stiver's worth of trouble.'

'I wish she may think it a pleasure, sir,' replied Brenda.

'Why, what does the girl mean, in the name of the Martyr?' replied Magnus Troil; 'dost thou think my kinswoman is a heathen, who will not rejoice to see her own flesh and blood?—I would I were as sure of a good year's fishing!—No, no! I only fear we may find her from home at present, for she is often a wanderer, and all with thinking over much on what can never be helped.'

Minna sighed deeply as her father spoke, and the Udaller went on:—

'Dost thou sigh at that, my girl?—why, 'tis the fault of half the world—let it never be thine own, Minna.'

Another suppressed sigh intimated that the caution came too late.

* A light-armed vessel of the seventeenth century, adapted for privateering, and much used by the Dutch.

'I believe you are afraid of my cousin as well as Brenda is,' said the Udaller, gazing on her pale countenance; 'if so, speak the word, and we will return back again as if we had the wind on our quarter, and were running fifteen knots by the line.'

'Do, for Heaven's sake, sister, let us return!' said Brenda imploringly; 'you know—you remember—you must be well aware that Norna can do nought to help you.'

'It is but too true,' said Minna, in a subdued voice; 'but I know not—she may answer a question—a question that only the miserable may ask of the miserable.'

'Nay, my kinswoman is no miser,' answered the Udaller, who only heard the beginning of the word; 'a good income she has, both in Orkney and here, and many a fair lispund of butter is paid to her. But the poor have the best share of it, and shame fall the Zetlander who begrudges them; the rest she spends, I wot not how, in her journeys through the islands. But you will laugh to see her house, and Nick Strumpfer, whom she calls Pacolet—many folks think Nick is the devil, but he is flesh and blood, like any of us—his father lived in Græmsay.—I shall be glad to see Nick again.'

While the Udaller thus ran on, Brenda, who, in recompense for a less portion of imagination than her sister, was gifted with sound common sense, was debating with herself the probable effect of this visit on her sister's health. She came finally to the resolution of speaking with her father aside upon the first occasion which their journey should afford. To him she determined to communicate the whole particulars of their nocturnal interview with Norna, to which, among other agitating causes, she attributed the depression of Minna's spirits,—and then make himself the judge whether he ought to persist in his visit to a person so singular, and expose his daughter to all the shock which her nerves might possibly receive from the interview.

Just as she had arrived at this conclusion, her father, dashing the crumbs from his laced waistcoat with one hand, and receiving with the other a fourth cup of brandy and water, drank devoutly to the success of their voyage, and ordered all to be in readiness to set forward. Whilst they were saddling their ponies, Brenda, with some difficulty, contrived to make her father understand she wished to speak to him in private—no small surprise to the honest Udaller, who, though secret as the grave in the very few things where he considered secrecy as of importance, was so far from practising mystery in general, that his most important affairs were often discussed by him openly in presence of his whole family, servants included.

But far greater was his astonishment, when, remaining purposely with his daughter Brenda a little in the wake, as he termed it, of the other riders, he heard the whole account of Norna's visit to Burgh-Westra, and of the communication with which she had then astounded his daughters. For a long time he could utter nothing but interjections, and ended with a thousand curses on his kinswoman's folly in telling his daughters such a history of horror.

'I have often heard,' said the Udaller, 'that she was quite mad, with all her wisdom, and all her knowledge of the seasons; and, by the bones of my namesake the Martyr, I begin now to believe it most assuredly! I know no more how to steer than if I had lost my compass. Had I known this before we set out, I think I had remained at home; but now that we have come so far, and that Norna expects us'

'Expects us, father!' said Brenda; 'how can that be possible?'

'Why, that I know not—but she that can tell how the wind is to blow, can tell which way we are designing to ride. She must not be provoked;—perhaps she has done my family this ill for the words I had with her about that lad Mordaunt Mertoun, and if so, she can undo it again;—and so she shall, or I will know the cause wherefore. But I will try fair words first.'

Finding it thus settled that they were to go forward, Brenda endeavoured next to learn from her father whether Norna's tale was founded in reality. He shook his head, groaned bitterly, and in a few words acknowledged that the whole, so far as concerned her intrigue with a stranger, and her father's death, of which she became the accidental and most innocent cause, was a matter of sad and indisputable truth. 'For her infant,' he said, 'he could never, by any means, learn what became of it.'

'Her infant!' exclaimed Brenda; 'she spoke not a word of her infant!'

'Then I wish my tongue had been blistered,' said the Udaller, 'when I told you of it!—I see that, young and old, a man has no better chance of keeping a secret from you women, than an eel to keep himself in his hold when he is sniggled with a loop of horse-hair—sooner or later the fisher teases him out of his hole, when he has once the noose round his neck.'

'But the infant, my father,' said Brenda, still insisting on the particulars of this extraordinary story, 'what became of it?'

'Carried off, I fancy, by the blackguard Vaughan,' answered the Udaller, with a gruff accent, which plainly betokened how weary he was of the subject.

'By Vaughan?' said Brenda; 'the lover of poor Norna, doubtless!—What sort of man was he, father?'

'Why, much like other men, I fancy,' answered the Udaller; 'I never saw him in my life. He kept company with the Scottish families at Kirkwall; and I with the good old Norse folk. Ah! if Norna had dwelt always amongst her own kin, and not kept company with her Scottish acquaintance, she would have known nothing of Vaughan, and things might have been otherwise. —But then I should have known nothing of your blessed mother, Brenda—and that,' he said, his large blue eyes shining with a tear, 'would have saved me a short joy and a long sorrow.'

'Norna could but ill have supplied my mother's place to you, father, as a companion and a friend—that is, judging from all I have heard,' said Brenda, with some hesitation. But Magnus, softened by recollections of his beloved wife, answered her with more indulgence than she expected.

'I would have been content,' he said, 'to have

wedded Norna at that time. It would have been the soldering of an old quarrel—the healing of an old sore. All our blood relations wished it, and, situated as I was, especially not having seen your blessed mother, I had little will to oppose their counsels. You must not judge of Norna or of me by such an appearance as we now present to you—She was young and beautiful, and I gamesome as a Highland buck, and little caring what haven I made for, having, as I thought, more than one under my lee. But Norna preferred this man Vaughan, and, as I told you before, it was, perhaps, the best kindness she could have done to me.'

'Ah, poor kinswoman!' said Brenda. 'But believe you, father, in the high powers which she claims—in the mysterious vision of the dwarf—in the'——

She was interrupted in these questions by Magnus, to whom they were obviously dis-

'I believe, Brenda,' he said, 'according to the belief of my forefathers—I pretend not to be a wiser man than they were in their time,—and they all believed that, in cases of great worldly distress, Providence opened the eyes of the mind, and afforded the sufferers a vision of futurity. It was but a trimming of the boat, with reverence,'—here he touched his hat reverentially; 'and after all the shifting of ballast, poor Norna is as heavily loaded in the bows as ever was an Orkneyman's yawl at the dog-fishing—she has more than affliction enough on board to balance whatever gifts she may have had in the midst of her calamity. They are as painful to her, poor soul, as a crown of thorns would be to her brows, though it were the badge of the empire of Denmark. And do not you, Brenda, seek to be wiser than your fathers. Your sister Minna, before she was so ill, had as much reverence for whatever was produced in Norse, as if it had been in the Pope's bull, which is all written in pure Latin.'

'Poor Norna!' repeated Brenda; 'and her child—was it never recovered?'

'What do I know of her child?' said the Udaller, more gruffly than before, 'except that she was very ill, both before and after the birth, though we kept her as merry as we could with pipe and harp, and so forth;—the child had come before its time into this bustling world, so it is likely it has been long dead.—But you know nothing of all these matters, Brenda; so get along for a foolish girl, and ask no more questions about what it does not become you to inquire into.'

So saying, the Udaller gave his sturdy little palfrey the spur, and, cantering forward over rough and smooth, while the pony's accuracy and firmness of step put all difficulties of the path at secure defiance, he placed himself soon by the side of the melancholy Minna, and permitted her sister to have no further share in his conversation than as it was addressed to them jointly. She could but comfort herself with the hope that, as Minna's disease appeared to have its seat in the imagination, the remedies recommended by Norna might have some chance of being effectual, since, in all probability, they would be addressed to the same faculty.

Their way had hitherto held chiefly over moss and moor, varied occasionally by the necessity of making a circuit around the heads of those long lagoons, called voes, which run up into and indent the country in such a manner, that, though the Mainland of Zetland may be thirty miles or more in length, there is, perhaps, no part of it which is more than three miles distant from the salt water. But they had now approached the north-western extremity of the isle, and travelled along the top of an immense ridge of rocks, which had for ages withstood the rage of the Northern Ocean, and of all the winds by which it is buffeted.

At length exclaimed Magnus to his daughters, 'There is Norna's dwelling!—Look up, Minna, my love; for if this does not make you laugh, nothing will. Saw you ever anything but an osprey that would have made such a nest for herself as that is?—By my namesake's bones, there is not the like of it that living thing ever dwelt in (having no wings and the use of reason), unless it chanced to be the Frawa Stack off Papa, where the king's daughter of Norway was shut up to keep her from her lovers—and all to little purpose, if the tale be true,* for, maidens, I would have you to wot that it is hard to keep flax from the lowe.'†

CHAPTER XXVII.

Thrice from the cavern's darksome womb
Her groaning voice arose;
And come, my daughter, fearless come,
And fearless tell thy woes!

MEIKLE.

THE dwelling of Norna, though none but a native of Zetland, familiar during his whole life with every variety of rock-scenery, could have seen anything ludicrous in this situation, was not unaptly compared by Magnus Troil to the eyrie of the osprey or sea-eagle. It was very small, and had been fabricated out of one of those dens which are called Burghs and Picts-houses in Zetland, and Duns on the mainland of Scotland and the Hebrides, and which seemed to be the first effort at architecture—the connecting link betwixt a fox's hole in a cairn of loose stones, and an attempt to construct a human habitation out of the same materials, without the use of lime or cement of any kind,—without any timber, so far as can be seen from their remains,—without any knowledge of the arch or of the stair. Such as they are, however, the numerous remains of these dwellings, for there is one found on every headland, islet, or point of vantage, which could afford the inhabitants additional means of defence, tend to prove that the remote people by whom these Burghs were constructed were a numerous race, and that the islands had then a much greater population than, from other circumstances, we might have been led to anticipate.

The Burgh of which we at present speak had

* The *Frawa Stack*, or Maiden Rock, an inaccessible cliff, divided by a narrow gulf from the island of Papa, has on the summit some ruins, concerning which there is a legend similar to that of Danaë.

† *Lowe*, flame.

been altered and repaired at a later period, probably by some petty despot, or sea-rover, who, tempted by the security of the situation, which occupied the whole of a projecting point of rock, and was divided from the mainland by a rent or chasm of some depth, had built some additions to it in the rudest style of Gothic defensive architecture; — had plastered the inside with lime and clay, and broken out windows for the admission of light and air; and finally, by roofing it over, and dividing it into storeys by means of beams of wreck-wood, had converted the whole into a tower, resembling a pyramidical dovecot, formed by a double wall, still containing within its thickness that set of circular galleries, or concentric rings, which is proper to all the forts of this primitive construction, and which seem to have constituted the only shelter which they were originally qualified to afford to their shivering inhabitants.*

This singular habitation, built out of the loose stones which lay scattered around, and exposed for ages to the vicissitudes of the elements, was as grey, weather-beaten, and wasted as the rock on which it was founded, and from which it could not easily be distinguished, so completely did it resemble in colour, and so little did it differ in regularity of shape from, a pinnacle or fragment of the cliff.

Minna's habitual indifference to all that of late had passed around her, was for a moment suspended by the sight of an abode which, at another and happier period of her life, would have attracted at once her curiosity and her wonder. Even now she seemed to feel interest as she gazed upon this singular retreat, and recollected it was that of certain misery, and probable insanity, connected, as its inhabitant asserted, and Minna's faith admitted, with power over the elements and the capacity of intercourse with the invisible world.

'Our kinswoman,' she muttered, 'has chosen her dwelling well, with no more of earth than a sea-fowl might rest upon, and all around sightless tempests and raging waves. Despair and magical power could not have a fitter residence.'

Brenda, on the other hand, shuddered when she looked on the dwelling to which they were advancing, by a difficult, dangerous, and precarious path, which sometimes, to her great terror, approached to the verge of the precipice; so that, Zetlander as she was, and confident as she had reason to be in the steadiness and sagacity of the sure-footed pony, she could scarce suppress an inclination to giddiness, especially at one point, when, being foremost of the party, and turning a sharp angle of the rock, her feet, as they projected from the side of the pony, hung for an instant sheer over the ledge of the precipice, so that there was nothing save empty space betwixt the sole of her shoe and the white foam of the vexed ocean, which dashed, howled, and foamed five hundred feet below. What would have driven a maiden of another country into delirium, gave her but a momentary uneasiness, which was instantly lost in the hope that the impression which the scene appeared to make on her sister's imagination might be favourable to her cure.

She could not help looking back to see how Minna should pass the point of peril, which she herself had just rounded; and could hear the strong voice of the Udaller, though to him such rough paths were familiar as the smooth sea-beach, call, in a tone of some anxiety, 'Take heed, Jarto,'† as Minna, with an eager look, dropped her bridle, and stretched forward her arms, and even her body, over the precipice, in the attitude of the wild swan, when, balancing itself, and spreading its broad pinions, it prepares to launch from the cliff on the bosom of the winds. Brenda felt, at that instant, a pang of unutterable terror, which left a strong impression on her nerves, even when relieved, as it instantly was, by her sister recovering herself and sitting upright on her saddle, the opportunity and temptation (if she felt it) passing away, as the quiet, steady animal which supported her rounded the projecting angle, and turned its patient and firm step from the verge of the precipice.

They now attained a more level and open space of ground, being the flat top of an isthmus of projecting rock, narrowing again towards a point, where it was terminated by the chasm which separated the small peak or *stack*, occupied by Norna's habitation, from the main ridge of cliff and precipice. This natural fosse, which seemed to have been the work of some convulsion of nature, was deep, dark, and irregular, narrower towards the bottom, which could not be distinctly seen, and widest at top, having the appearance as if that part of the cliff occupied by the building had been half rent away from the isthmus which it terminated,—an idea favoured by the angle at which it seemed to recede from the land, and lean towards the sea, with the building which crowned it.

This angle of projection was so considerable, that it required recollection to dispel the idea that the rock, so much removed from the perpendicular, was about to precipitate itself seaward, with its old tower; and a timorous person would have been afraid to put foot upon it, lest an addition of weight, so inconsiderable as that of the human body, should hasten a catastrophe which seemed at every instant impending.

Without troubling himself about such fantasies, the Udaller rode towards the tower, and there dismounting along with his daughters, gave the ponies in charge to one of their domestics, with directions to disencumber them of their burdens, and turn them out for rest and refreshment upon the nearest heath. This done, they approached the gate, which seemed formerly to have been connected with the land by a rude drawbridge, some of the apparatus of which was still visible. But the rest had been long demolished, and was replaced by a stationary foot-bridge, formed of barrel-staves covered with turf, very narrow and ledgeless, and supported by a sort of arch, constructed out of the jawbones of the whale. Along this 'brig of dread' the Udaller stepped with his usual portly majesty of stride, which

* Note W. Pictish Burgh.

† [A term of endearment, equivalent to *darling*, from the Norse *jarte*, heart.]

threatened its demolition and his own at the same time; his daughters trod more lightly and more safely after him, and the whole party stood before the low and rugged portal of Norna's habitation.

'If she should be abroad after all,' said Magnus, as he plied the black oaken door with repeated blows;—'but if so, we will at least lie by a day for her return, and make Nick Strumpfer pay the demurrage in bland and brandy.'

As he spoke, the door opened, and displayed, to the alarm of Brenda, and the surprise of Minna herself, a square-made dwarf, about four feet five inches high, with a head of most portentous size, and features correspondent—namely, a huge mouth, a tremendous nose, with large black nostrils, which seemed to have been slit upwards, blubber lips of an unconscionable size, and huge wall eyes, with which he leered, sneered, grinned, and goggled on the Udaller as an old acquaintance, without uttering a single word. The young women could hardly persuade themselves that they did not see before their eyes the very demon Trolld, who made such a distinguished figure in Norna's legend. Their father went on addressing this uncouth apparition in terms of such condescending friendship as the better sort apply to their inferiors, when they wish, for any immediate purpose, to conciliate or coax them,—a tone, by the bye, which generally contains, in its very familiarity, as much offence as the more direct assumption of distance and superiority.

'Ha, Nick! honest Nick!' said the Udaller, 'here you are, lively and lovely as Saint Nicholas your namesake, when he is carved with an axe for the headpiece of a Dutch dogger. How dost thou do, Nick, or Pacolet, if you like that better? Nicholas, here are my two daughters, nearly as handsome as thyself, thou seest.'

Nick grinned, and did a clumsy obeisance by way of courtesy, but kept his broad misshapen person firmly placed in the doorway.

'Daughters,' continued the Udaller, who seemed to have his reasons for speaking this Cerberus fair, at least according to his own notions of propitiation,—'this is Nick Strumpfer, maidens, whom his mistress calls Pacolet, being a light-limbed dwarf, as you see, like him that wont to fly about like a *Scourie*,* on his wooden hobby-horse, in the old story-book of Valentine and Orson, that you, Minna, used to read whilst you were a child. I assure you he can keep his mistress's counsel, and never told one of her secrets in his life—ha, ha, ha!'

The ugly dwarf grinned ten times wider than before, and showed the meaning of the Udaller's jest, by opening his immense jaws, and throwing back his head, so as to discover that in the immense cavity of his mouth there only remained the small shrivelled remnant of a tongue, capable, perhaps, of assisting him in swallowing his food, but unequal to the formation of articulate sounds. Whether this organ had been curtailed by cruelty, or injured by disease, it was impossible to guess; but that the unfortunate being had not been originally dumb, was evident from his retaining this horrible exhibition, he repaid the Udaller's mirth with a loud, horrid, and discordant laugh, which had something in it the more hideous that his mirth seemed to be excited by his own misery. The sisters looked on each other in silence and fear, and even the Udaller appeared disconcerted.

'And how now,' he proceeded after a minute's pause, 'when didst thou wash that throat of thine, that is about the width of the Pentland Firth, with a cup of brandy? Ha, Nick! I have that with me which is sound stuff, boy, ha!'

The dwarf bent his beetle-brows, shook his misshapen head, and made a quick sharp indication, throwing his right hand up to his shoulder with the thumb pointed backwards.

'What! my kinswoman,' said the Udaller, comprehending the signal, 'will be angry? Well, shalt have a flask to carouse when she is from home, old acquaintance;—lips and throats may swallow, though they cannot speak.'

Pacolet grinned a grim assent.

'And now,' said the Udaller, 'stand out of the way, Pacolet, and let me carry my daughters to see their kinswoman. By the bones of Saint Magnus, it shall be a good turn in thy way—nay, never shake thy head, man; for if thy mistress be at home, see her we will.'

The dwarf again intimated the impossibility of their being admitted, partly by signs, partly by mumbling some uncouth and most disagreeable sounds, and the Udaller's mood began to arise.

'Tittle-tattle, man!' said he; 'trouble not me with thy gibberish, but stand out of the way, and the blame, if there be any, shall rest with me.'

So saying, Magnus Troil laid his sturdy hand upon the collar of the recusant dwarf's jacket of blue wadmaal, and, with a strong, but not a violent grasp, removed him from the doorway, pushed him gently aside, and entered, followed by his two daughters, whom a sense of apprehension, arising out of all which they saw and heard, kept very close to him. A crooked and dusky passage, through which Magnus led the way, was dimly enlightened by a shot-hole communicating with the interior of the building, and originally intended, doubtless, to command the entrance by a hagbut or culverin. As they approached nearer, for they walked slowly and with hesitation, the light, imperfect as it was, was suddenly obscured; and on looking upward to discern the cause, Brenda was startled to observe the pale and obscurely-seen countenance of Norna gazing downward upon them without speaking a word. There was nothing extraordinary in this, as the mistress of the mansion might be naturally enough looking out to see what guests were thus suddenly and unceremoniously intruding themselves on her presence. Still, however, the natural paleness of her features, exaggerated by the light in which they were at present exhibited,—the immoveable sternness of her look, which showed neither kindness nor courtesy of civil reception,—her dead silence, and the singular appearance of everything about her dwelling, augmented the dismay which Brenda had already conceived. Magnus Troil and Minna had walked slowly forward, without observing the apparition of their singular hostess.

* [A young sea-gull.]

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The witch then raised her wither'd arm,
And waved her wand on high,
And, while she spoke the mutter'd charm,
Dark lightning fill'd her eye.

MEIKLE.

'THIS should be the stair,' said the Udaller, blundering in the dark against some steps of irregular ascent—'This should be the stair, unless my memory greatly fail me; ay, and there she sits,' he added, pausing at a half-open door, 'with all her tackle about her as usual, and as busy, doubtless, as the devil in a gale of wind.'

As he made this irreverent comparison, he entered, followed by his daughters, the darkened apartment in which Norna was seated, amidst a confused collection of books of various languages, parchment scrolls, tablets and stones inscribed with the straight and angular characters of the Runic alphabet, and similar articles, which the vulgar might have connected with the exercise of the forbidden arts. There was also lying in the chamber, or hung over the rude and ill-contrived chimney, an old shirt of mail, with the headpiece, battle-axe, and lance which had once belonged to it; and on a shelf were disposed, in great order, several of those curious stone axes, formed of green granite, which are often found in these islands, where they are called thunderbolts by the common people, who usually preserve them as a charm of security against the effects of lightning. There were, moreover, to be seen amid the strange collection, a stone sacrificial knife, used perhaps for immolating human victims, and one or two of the brazen implements called celts, the purpose of which has troubled the repose of so many antiquaries. A variety of other articles, some of which had neither name nor were capable of description, lay in confusion about the apartment; and in one corner, on a quantity of withered seaweed, reposed what seemed, at first view, to be a large unshapely dog, but, when seen more closely, proved to be a tame seal, which it had been Norna's amusement to domesticate.

This uncouth favourite bristled up in its corner upon the arrival of so many strangers, with an alertness similar to that which a terrestrial dog would have displayed on a similar occasion; but Norna remained motionless, seated behind a table of rough granite, propped up by misshapen feet of the same material, which, besides the old book with which she seemed to be busied, sustained a cake of the coarse unleavened bread, three parts oatmeal, and one of the sawdust of fir, which is used by the poor peasants of Norway, beside which stood a jar of water.

Magnus Troil remained a minute in silence gazing upon his kinswoman, while the singularity of her mansion inspired Brenda with much fear, and changed, though but for a moment, the melancholy and abstracted mood of Minna, into a feeling of interest not unmixed with awe. The silence was interrupted by the Udaller, who, unwilling on the one hand to give his kinswoman offence, and desirous on the other to show that he was not daunted by a reception so singular, opened the conversation thus:—

'I give you good e'en, cousin Norna—my daughters and I have come far to see you.'

Norna raised her eyes from her volume, looked full at her visitors, then let them quietly sit down on the leaf with which she seemed to be engaged.

'Nay, cousin,' said Magnus, 'take your own time—our business with you can wait your leisure.—See here, Minna, what a fair prospect here is of the cape, scarce a quarter of a mile off! you may see the billows breaking on it topmast high. Our kinswoman has got a pretty seal, too.—Here sealchie, my man, whew, whew!'

The seal took no further notice of the Udaller's advances to acquaintance, than by uttering a low growl.

'He is not so well trained,' continued the Udaller, affecting an air of ease and unconcern, 'as Peter MacRaw's, the old piper of Stornoway, who had a seal that flapped its tail to the tune of *Caberfae*, and acknowledged no other whatever.*—Well, cousin,' he concluded, observing that Norna closed her book, 'are you going to give us a welcome at last, or must we go farther than our blood-relation's house to seek one, and that when the evening is wearing late apace?'

'Ye dull and hard-hearted generation, as deaf as the adder to the voice of the charmer,' answered Norna, addressing them, 'why come ye to me? You have slighted every warning I could give of the coming harm, and now that it hath come upon you, ye seek my counsel when it can avail you nothing.'

'Look you, kinswoman,' said the Udaller, with his usual frankness and boldness of manner and accent, 'I must needs tell you that your courtesy is something of the coarsest and the coldest. I cannot say that I ever saw an adder, in regard there are none in these parts; but, touching my own thoughts of what such a thing may be, it cannot be termed a suitable comparison to me or to my daughters, and that I would have you to know. For old acquaintance, and certain other reasons, I do not leave your house upon the instant; but as I came hither in all kindness and civility, so I pray you to receive me with the like, otherwise we will depart, and leave shame on your inhospitable threshold.'

'How!' said Norna, 'dare you use such bold language in the house of one from whom all men—from whom you yourself—come to solicit counsel and aid? They who speak to the Reimkennar must lower their voice to her before whom winds and waves hush both blast and billow.'

'Blast and billow may hush themselves if they will,' replied the peremptory Udaller, 'but that will not I. I speak in the house of my friend as in my own, and strike sail to none.'

* The MacRaws were followers of the MacKen[illegible] whose chief has the name of Caberfae, or R[illegible]de, which the cognisance borne on his standard [illegible] the worthy piper trained the seal [illegible] respect to the clan-term which [illegible]nt to *darling*, from the taught to dogs, who, unused [illegible] after their fashion, to the tune [illegible]

'And hope ye,' said Norna, 'by this rudeness to compel me to answer to your interrogatories?'

'Kinswoman,' replied Magnus Troil, 'I know not so much as you of the old Norse sagas; but this I know, that when kempies were wont, long since, to seek the habitations of the galdragons and spae-women,* they came with their axes on their shoulders, and their good swords drawn in their hands, and compelled the power whom they invoked to listen to and to answer them, ay, were it Odin himself.'

'Kinsman,' said Norna, arising from her seat, and coming forward, 'thou hast spoken well, and in good time for thyself and thy daughters; for hadst thou turned from my threshold without extorting an answer, morning's sun had never again shone upon you. The spirits who serve me are jealous, and will not be employed in aught that may benefit humanity, unless their service is commanded by the undaunted importunity of the brave and the free. And now speak, what wouldst thou have of me?'

'My daughter's health,' replied Magnus, 'which no remedies have been able to restore.'

'Thy daughter's health?' answered Norna; 'and what is the maiden's ailment?'

'The physician,' said Troil, 'must name the disease. All that I can tell thee of it is'——

'Be silent,' said Norna, interrupting him; 'I know all that thou canst tell me, and more than thou thyself knowest. Sit down, all of you—and thou, maiden,' she said, addressing Minna, 'sit thou in that chair,' pointing to the place she had just left, 'once the seat of Giervada, at whose voice the stars hid their beams, and the moon herself grew pale.'

Minna moved with slow and tremulous step towards the rude seat thus indicated to her. It was composed of stone, formed into some semblance of a chair by the rough and unskilful hand of some ancient Gothic artist.

Brenda, creeping as close as possible to her father, seated herself along with him upon a bench at some distance from Minna, and kept her eyes, with a mixture of fear, pity, and anxiety, closely fixed upon her. It would be difficult altogether to decipher the emotions by which this amiable and affectionate girl was agitated at that moment. Deficient in her sister's predominating quality of high imagination, and little credulous, of course, to the marvellous, she could not but entertain some vague and indefinite fears on her own account, concerning the nature of the scene which was soon to take place. But these were in a manner swallowed up in her apprehensions on the score of her sister, who, with a frame so much weakened, spirits so much exhausted, and a mind so susceptible of the impressions which all around her was calculated to excite, now sat pensively resigned to the agency of one whose treatment might produce the most baneful effects upon such a subject.

Brenda gazed at Minna, who sat in that rude chair of dark stone, her finely formed shape and limbs making the strongest contrast with its [illegible]derous and irregular angles, her cheek and [illegible] clay, and her eyes turned upward, [illegible] mixture of resignation and excited enthusiasm which belonged to her disease and her character. The younger sister then looked on Norna, who muttered to herself in a low monotonous manner, as, gliding from one place to another, she collected different articles, which she placed one by one on the table. And lastly, Brenda looked anxiously to her father, to gather, if possible, from his countenance, whether he entertained any part of her own fears for the consequences of the scene which was to ensue, considering the state of Minna's health and spirits. But Magnus Troil seemed to have no such apprehensions; he viewed with stern composure Norna's preparations, and appeared to wait the event with the composure of one who, confiding in the skill of a medical artist, sees him preparing to enter upon some important and painful operation, in the issue of which he is interested by friendship or by affection.

Norna, meanwhile, went onward with her preparations, until she had placed on the stone table a variety of miscellaneous articles, and, among the rest, a small chafing-dish full of charcoal, a crucible, and a piece of thin sheet-lead. She then spoke aloud—'It is well that I was aware of your coming hither—ay, long before you yourself had resolved it—how should I else have been prepared for that which is now to be done?—Maiden,' she continued, addressing Minna, 'where lies thy pain?'

The patient answered by pressing her hand to the left side of her bosom.

'Even so,' replied Norna, 'even so—'tis the site of weal or woe.—And you, her father and her sister, think not this the idle speech of one who talks by guess—if I can tell the ill, it may be that I shall be able to render that less severe, which may not, by any aid, be wholly amended.—The heart—ay, the heart—touch that, and the eye grows dim, the pulse fails, the wholesome stream of our blood is choked and troubled, our limbs decay like sapless sea-weed in a summer's sun; our better views of existence are past and gone; what remains is the dream of lost happiness, or the fear of inevitable evil. But the Reimkennar must to her work—well is it that I have prepared the means.'

She threw off her long dark-coloured mantle, and stood before them in her short jacket of light-blue wadmaal, with its skirt of the same stuff, fancifully embroidered with black velvet, and bound at the waist with a chain or girdle of silver, formed into singular devices. Norna next undid the fillet which bound her grizzled hair, and, shaking her head wildly, caused it to fall in dishevelled abundance over her face and around her shoulders, so as almost entirely to hide her features. She then placed a small crucible on the chafing-dish already mentioned,—dropped a few drops from a vial on the charcoal below,—pointed towards it her wrinkled forefinger, which she had previously moistened with liquid from another small bottle, and said with a deep voice, 'Fire, do thy duty;'—and the words were no sooner spoken, than, probably by some chemical combination of which the spectators were not aware, the charcoal which was under the crucible became slowly ignited; while Norna, as if impatient of the delay, threw hastily back her

* [A y[illegible]d fortune-tellers.

disordered tresses, and, while her features reflected the sparkles and red light of the fire, and her eyes flashed from amidst her hair like those of a wild animal from its cover, blew fiercely till the whole was in an intense glow. She paused a moment from her toil, and muttering that the elemental spirit must be thanked, recited, in her usual monotonous yet wild note of chanting, the following verses:—

'Thou so needful, yet so dread,
With cloudy crest and wing of red;
Thou, without whose genial breath
The North would sleep the sleep of death;
Who deign'st to warm the cottage hearth,
Yet hurl'st proud palaces to earth,—
Brightest, keenest of the Powers
Which form and rule this world of ours,
With my rhyme of Runic, I
Thank thee for thy agency.'

She then severed a portion from the small mass of sheet-lead which lay upon the table, and, placing it in the crucible, subjected it to the action of the lighted charcoal, and, as it melted, she sung,—

'Old Reimkennar, to thy art
Mother Hertha sends her part;
She, whose gracious bounty gives
Needful food for all that lives.
From the deep mine of the north
Came the mystic metal forth,
Doom'd, amidst disjointed stones,
Long to cere a champion's bones,
Disinhumed my charms to aid—
Mother Earth, my thanks are paid.'

She then poured out some water from the jar into a large cup, or goblet, and sung once more, as she slowly stirred it round with the end of her staff,—

'Girdle of our islands dear,
Element of Water, hear!
Thou whose power can overwhelm
Broken mounds and ruined realm
On the lowly Belgian strand;
All thy fiercest rage can never
Of our soil a furlong sever
From our rock-defended land;
Play then gently thou thy part,
To assist old Norna's art.'

She then, with a pair of pincers, removed the crucible from the chafing-dish, and poured the lead, now entirely melted, into the bowl of water, repeating at the same time,—

'Elements, each other greeting,
Gifts and powers attend your meeting!'

The melted lead, spattering as it fell into the water, formed, of course, the usual combination of irregular forms which is familiar to all who in childhood have made the experiment, and from which, according to our childish fancy, we may have selected portions bearing some resemblance to domestic articles—the tools of mechanics, or the like. Norna seemed to busy herself in some such researches, for she examined the mass of lead with scrupulous attention, and detached it into different portions, without apparently being able to find a fragment in the form which she desired.

At length she again muttered, rather as speaking to herself than to her guests, 'He, the Viewless, will not be omitted,—he will have his tribute even in the work to which he gives nothing.—Stern Compeller of the Clouds, thou shalt also hear the voice of the Reimkennar.'

Thus speaking, Norna once more threw the lead into the crucible, where, hissing and spattering as the wet metal touched the sides of the red-hot vessel, it was soon again reduced into a state of fusion. The sibyl meantime turned to a corner of the apartment, and, opening suddenly a window which looked to the north-west, let in the fitful radiance of the sun, now lying almost level upon a great mass of red clouds, which, boding future tempests, occupied the edge of the horizon, and seemed to brood over the billows of the boundless sea. Turning to this quarter, from which a low, hollow, moaning breeze then blew, Norna addressed the Spirit of the Winds, in tones which seemed to resemble his own,—

'Thou, that over billows dark
Safely send'st the fisher's bark,—
Giving him a path and motion
Through the wilderness of ocean;
Thou, that when the billows brave ye,
O'er the shelves can'st drive the navy,—
Did'st thou chafe as one neglected,
While thy brethren were respected?
To appease thee, see, I tear
This full grasp of grizzled hair;
Oft thy breath hath through it sung,
Softening to my magic tongue,—
Now, 'tis thine to bid it fly
Through the wide expanse of sky,
'Mid the countless swarms to sail
Of wild-fowl wheeling on thy gale.
Take thy portion and rejoice,—
Spirit, thou hast heard my voice!'

Norna accompanied these words with the action which they described, tearing a handful of hair with vehemence from her head, and strewing it upon the wind as she continued her recitation. She then shut the casement, and again involved the chamber in the dubious twilight, which best suited her character and occupation. The melted lead was once more emptied into the water, and the various whimsical conformations which it received from the operation were examined with great care by the sibyl, who at length seemed to intimate, by voice and gesture, that her spell had been successful. She selected from the fused metal a piece about the size of a small nut, bearing in shape a close resemblance to that of the human heart, and approaching Minna, again spoke in song,—

'She who sits by haunted well
Is subject to the Nixie's spell;
She who walks on lonely beach,
To the Mermaid's charmed speech;
She who walks round ring of green,
Offends the peevish Fairy Queen;
And she who takes rest in the Dwarfie's cave,
A weary weird of woe shall have.

By ring, by spring, by cave, by shore,
Minna Troil has braved all this and more;
And yet hath the root of her sorrow and ill
A source that's more deep and more mystic still.'

Minna, whose attention had been latterly something disturbed by reflections on her own secret sorrow, now suddenly recalled it, and looked eagerly on Norna as if she expected to learn from her rhymes something of deep interest. The northern si[illegible] or Rune, which ceeded to pierce the piec[illegible] the form of a heart, and [illegible] gold wire, by which it mi[illegible] to darling, from the

chain or necklace. She then proceeded in her rhyme,—

'Thou art within a demon's hold
More wise than Haims, more strong than Trolld;
No siren sings so sweet as he,—
No fay springs lighter on the lea;
No elfin power hath half the art
To soothe, to move, to wring the heart,—
Life-blood from the cheek to drain,
Drench the eye, and dry the vein.
Maiden, ere we further go,
Dost thou note me, ay or no?'

Minna replied in the same rhythmical manner, which, in jest and earnest, was frequently used by the ancient Scandinavians,—

'I mark thee, my mother, both word, look, and sign;
Speak on with the riddle—to read it be mine.'

'Now, Heaven and every saint be praised!' said Magnus. 'They are the first words to the purpose which she hath spoken these many days.'

'And they are the last she shall speak for many a month,' said Norna, incensed at the interruption, 'if you again break the progress of my spell. Turn your faces to the wall, and look not hitherward again, under penalty of my severe displeasure. You, Magnus Troil, from hard-hearted audacity of spirit, and you, Brenda, from wanton and idle disbelief in that which is beyond your bounden comprehension, are unworthy to look on this mystic work, and the glance of your eyes mingles with, and weakens the spell; for the powers cannot brook distrust.'

Unaccustomed to be addressed in a tone so peremptory, Magnus would have made some angry reply; but reflecting that the health of Minna was at stake, and considering that she who spoke was a woman of many sorrows, he suppressed his anger, bowed his head, shrugged his shoulders, assumed the prescribed posture, averting his head from the table, and turning towards the wall. Brenda did the same, on receiving a sign from her father, and both remained profoundly silent.

Norna then addressed Minna once more,—

'Mark me! for the word I speak
Shall bring the colour to thy cheek.
This leaden heart, so light of cost,
The symbol of a treasure lost,
Thou shalt wear in hope and in peace,
That the cause of your sickness and sorrow may
cease,
When crimson foot meets crimson hand
In the Martyr's Aisle, and in Orkney-land.'

Minna coloured deeply at the last couplet, intimating, as she failed not to interpret it, that Norna was completely acquainted with the secret cause of her sorrow. The same conviction led the maiden to hope in the favourable issue which the sibyl seemed to prophesy; and not venturing to express her feelings in any manner more intelligible, she pressed Norna's withered hand with all the warmth of affection, first to her breast and then to her bosom, bedewing it at the same time with her tears.

With more of human feeling than she usually exhibited, Norna extricated her hand from the [illegible] but that [illegible] poor girl, whose tears now flowed originally dumb, [illegible]th more tenderness of manner [illegible], she knotted the leaden [illegible]ld, and hung it around Minna's neck, singing, as she performed that last branch of the spell,—

'Be patient, be patient, for Patience hath power
To ward us in danger, like mantle in shower;
A fairy gift you best may hold
In a chain of fairy gold;
The chain and the gift are each a true token
That not without warrant old Norna has spoken;
But thy nearest and dearest must never behold them,
Till time shall accomplish the truths I have told
them.'

The verses being concluded, Norna carefully arranged the chain around her patient's neck, so as to hide it in her bosom, and thus ended the spell—a spell which, at the moment I record these incidents, it is known, has been lately practised in Zetland, where any decline of health, without apparent cause, is imputed by the lower orders to a demon having stolen the heart from the body of the patient, and where the experiment of supplying the deprivation by a leaden one, prepared in the manner described, has been resorted to within these few years. In a metaphorical sense, the disease may be considered as a general one in all parts of the world; but, as this simple and original remedy is peculiar to the isles of Thule, it were unpardonable not to preserve it at length, in a narrative connected with Scottish antiquities.*

A second time Norna reminded her patient that, if she showed or spoke of the fairy gifts, their virtue would be lost—a belief so common as to be received into the superstitions of all nations. Lastly, unbuttoning the collar which she had just fastened, she showed her a link of the gold chain, which Minna instantly recognised as that formerly given by Norna to Mordaunt Mertoun. This seemed to intimate he was yet alive, and under Norna's protection; and she gazed on her with the most eager curiosity. But the sibyl imposed her finger on her lips in token of silence, and a second time involved the chain in those folds which modestly and closely veiled one of the most beautiful, as well as one of the kindest bosoms in the world.

Norna then extinguished the lighted charcoal, and, as the water hissed upon the glowing embers, commanded Magnus and Brenda to look around and behold her task accomplished.

CHAPTER XXIX.

See yonder woman, whom our swains revere,
And dread in secret, while they take her counsel
When sweetheart shall be kind, or when cross dame
shall die;
Where lurks the thief who stole the silver tankard,
And how the pestilent murrain may be cured.—
The sage adviser's mad, stark mad, my friend;
Yet, in her madness, hath the art and cunning
To wring fools' secrets from their inmost bosoms,
And pay inquirers with the coin they gave her.
OLD PLAY.

It seemed as if Norna had indeed full right to claim the gratitude of the Udaller for the im-

* The spells described in this chapter are not altogether imaginary. By this mode of pouring lead into water, and selecting the part which chances to assume a resemblance to the human heart, which must be worn by the patient around her or his neck, the sage persons of Zetland pretend to cure the fatal disorder called the loss of a heart.

proved condition of his daughter's health. She once more threw open the window, and Minna drying her eyes, and advancing with affectionate confidence, threw herself on her father's neck, and asked his forgiveness for the trouble she had of late occasioned to him. It is unnecessary to add that this was at once granted, with a full, though rough burst of paternal tenderness, and as many close embraces as if his child had been just rescued from the jaws of death. When Magnus had dismissed Minna from his arms, to throw herself into those of her sister, and express to her, rather by kisses and tears than in words, the regret she entertained for her late wayward conduct, the Udaller thought proper in the meantime to pay his thanks to their hostess, whose skill had proved so efficacious. But scarce had he come out with 'Much respected kinswoman, I am but a plain old Norseman,'—when she interrupted him by pressing her finger on her lips.

'There are those around us,' she said, 'who must hear no mortal voice, witness no sacrifice to mortal feelings—there are times when they even mutiny against me, their sovereign mistress, because I am still shrouded in the flesh of humanity. Fear, therefore, and be silent. I, whose deeds have raised me from the low-sheltered valley of life, where dwell its social wants and common charities—I, who have bereft the giver of the gift which he gave, and stand alone on a cliff of immeasurable height, detached from earth, save from the small portion that supports my miserable tread—I alone am fit to cope with these sullen mates. Fear not, therefore, but yet be not too bold, and let this night to you be one of fasting and of prayer.'

If the Udaller had not, before the commencement of the operation, been disposed to dispute the commands of the sibyl, it may be well believed he was less so now, that it had terminated to all appearance so fortunately. So he sat down in silence, and seized upon a volume which lay near him, as a sort of desperate effort to divert ennui, for on no other occasion had Magnus been known to have recourse to a book for that purpose. It chanced to be a book much to his mind, being the well-known work of Olaus Magnus, upon the manners of the ancient Northern nations. The book is unluckily in the Latin language, and the Danske or Dutch were either of them much more familiar to the Udaller. But then it was the fine edition published in 1555, which contains representations of the war-chariots, fishing exploits, warlike exercises, and domestic employments of the Scandinavians; and thus the information which the work refused to the understanding, was addressed to the eye, which, as is well known both to old and young, answers the purpose of amusement as well, if not better.

Meanwhile the two sisters, pressed as close to each other as two flowers on the same stalk, sat with their arms reciprocally passed over each other's shoulder, as if they feared some new and unforeseen cause of coldness was about to separate them, and interrupt the sister-like harmony which had been but just restored. Norna sat opposite to them, sometimes revolving the large parchment volume with which they had found her employed at their entrance, and sometimes gazing on the sisters, with a fixed look, in which an interest of a kind unusually tender seemed occasionally to disturb the stern and rigorous solemnity of her countenance. All was still and silent as death, and the subsiding emotions of Brenda had not yet permitted her to wonder whether the remaining hours of the evening were to be passed in the same manner, when the scene of tranquillity was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the dwarf Pacolet, or, as the Udaller called him, Nicholas Strumpfer.

Norna darted an angry glance on the intruder, who seemed to deprecate her resentment by holding up his hands and uttering a babbling sound; then instantly resorting to his usual mode of conversation, he expressed himself by a variety of signs made rapidly upon his fingers, and as rapidly answered by his mistress, so that the young women, who had never heard of such an art, and now saw it practised by two beings so singular, almost conceived their mutual intelligence the work of enchantment. When they had ceased their intercourse, Norna turned to Magnus Troil with much haughtiness, and said, 'How, my kinsman! have you so far forgot yourself as to bring earthly food into the house of the Reimkennar, and make preparations in the dwelling of Power and of Despair for refection, and wassail, and revelry?—Speak not—answer not,' she said; 'the duration of the cure which was wrought even now depends on your silence and obedience—bandy but a single look or word with me, and the latter condition of that maiden shall be worse than the first!'

This threat was an effectual charm upon the tongue of the Udaller, though he longed to indulge it in vindication of his conduct.

'Follow me, all of you,' said Norna, striding to the door of the apartment, 'and see that no one looks backwards—we leave not this apartment empty, though we, the children of mortality, be removed from it.'

She went out, and the Udaller signed to his daughters to follow, and to obey her injunctions. The sibyl moved swifter than her guests down the rude descent (such it might rather be termed than a proper staircase), which led to the lower apartment. Magnus and his daughters, when they entered the chamber, found their own attendants aghast at the presence and proceedings of Norna of the Fitful Head.

They had been previously employed in arranging the provisions, which they had brought along with them, so as to present a comfortable cold meal, as soon as the appetite of the Udaller, which was as regular as the return of tide, should induce him to desire some refreshment; and now they stood staring in fear and surprise, while Norna, seizing upon one article after another, and well supported by the zealous activity of Pacolet, flung their whole preparations out of the rude aperture which served for a window, and over the cliff, from which the ancient Burgh arose, into the ocean, which raged and foamed beneath. *Vifda* (dried beef), hams, and pickled pork flew after each other into empty space, smoked geese were restored to the air, and cured fish to the sea, their native elements, indeed, but which they were no longer capable of

traversing; and the devastation proceeded so rapidly, that the Udaller could scarce secure from the wreck his silver drinking-cup; while the large leathern flask of brandy, which was destined to supply his favourite beverage, was sent to follow the rest of the supper, by the hands of Pacolet, who regarded, at the same time, the disappointed Udaller with a malicious grin, as if, notwithstanding his own natural taste for the liquor, he enjoyed the disappointment and surprise of Magnus Troil still more than he would have relished sharing his enjoyment.

The destruction of the brandy-flask exhausted the patience of Magnus, who roared out in a tone of no small displeasure, 'Why, kinswoman, this is wasteful madness—where, and on what, would you have us sup?'

'Where you will,' answered Norna, 'and on what you will,—but not in my dwelling, and not on the food with which you have profaned it. Vex my spirit no more, but begone every one of you! You have been here too long for my good, perhaps for your own.'

'How, kinswoman,' said Magnus, 'would you make outcasts of us at this time of night, when even a Scotchman would not turn a stranger from the door?—Bethink you, dame, it is shame on our lineage for ever, if this squall of yours should force us to slip cables, and go to sea so scantily provided.'

'Be silent, and depart,' said Norna; 'let it suffice you have got that for which you came. I have no harbourage for mortal guests, no provision to relieve human wants. There is beneath the cliff a beach of the finest sand, a stream of water as pure as the well of Kildinguie, and the rocks bear dulse as wholesome as that of Guiodin; and well you wot that the well of Kildinguie and the dulse of Guiodin will cure all maladies save black death.'*

'And well I wot,' said the Udaller, 'that I would eat corrupted sea-weed like a starling, or salted seal's flesh like the men of Burraforth, or wilks, buckies, and lampits, like the poor sneaks of Stroma, rather than break wheat bread and drink red wine in a house where it is begrudged me.—And yet,' he said, checking himself, 'I am wrong, very wrong, my cousin, to speak thus to you, and I should rather thank you for what you have done, than upbraid you for following your own ways. But I see you are impatient—we will be all under way presently. —And you, ye knaves,' addressing his servants, 'that were in such hurry with your service before it was lacked, get out of doors with you presently, and manage to catch the ponies; for I see we must make for another harbour to-night, if we would not sleep with an empty stomach, and on a hard bed.'

The domestics of Magnus, already sufficiently alarmed at the violence of Norna's conduct, scarce waited the imperious command of their master to evacuate her dwelling with all despatch; and the Udaller, with a daughter on each arm, was in the act of following them, when Norna said emphatically, 'Stop!' They obeyed, and again turned towards her. She held out her hand to Magnus, which the placable Udaller instantly folded in his own ample palm.

'Magnus,' she said, 'we part by necessity, but, I trust, not in anger?'

'Surely not, cousin,' said the warm-hearted Udaller, well-nigh stammering in his hasty disclamation of all unkindness,—'most assuredly not. I never bear ill-will to any one, much less to one of my own blood, and who has piloted me with her advice through many a rough tide, as I would pilot a boat betwixt Swona and Stroma, through all the waws, wells, and swelchies of the Pentland Firth.'

'Enough,' said Norna; 'and now farewell, with such a blessing as I dare bestow—not a word more! Maidens,' she added, 'draw near, and let me kiss your brows.'

The sibyl was obeyed by Minna with awe, and by Brenda with fear; the one overmastered by the warmth of her imagination, the other by the natural timidity of her constitution. Norna then dismissed them, and in two minutes afterwards they found themselves beyond the bridge, and standing upon the rocky platform in front of the ancient Pictish Burgh, which it was the pleasure of this sequestered female to inhabit. The night, for it was now fallen, was unusually serene. A bright twilight, which glimmered far over the surface of the sea, supplied the brief absence of the summer's sun; and the waves seemed to sleep under its influence, so faint and slumberous was the sound with which one after another rolled on and burst against the foot of the cliff on which they stood. In front of them stood the rugged fortress, seeming, in the uniform greyness of the atmosphere, as aged, as shapeless, and as massive as the rock on which it was founded. There was neither sight nor sound that indicated human habitation, save that from one rude shot-hole glimmered the flame of the feeble lamp by which the sibyl was probably pursuing her mystical and nocturnal studies, shooting upon the twilight, in which it was soon lost and confounded, a single line of tiny light; bearing the same proportion to that of the atmosphere, as the aged woman and her serf, the sole inhabitants of that desert, did to the solitude with which they were surrounded.

For several minutes, the party, thus suddenly and unexpectedly expelled from the shelter where they had reckoned upon spending the night, stood in silence, each wrapped in their own separate reflections. Minna, her thoughts fixed on the mystical consolation which she had received, in vain endeavoured to extract from the words of Norna a more distinct and intelligible meaning; and the Udaller had not yet recovered his surprise at the extrusion to which he had been thus whimsically subjected, under circumstances that prohibited him from resenting as an insult treatment which, in all other respects, was so shocking to the genial hospitality of his nature, that he still felt like one disposed to be angry, if he but knew how to set about it. Brenda was the first who brought matters to a point, by asking whither they were to go, and how they were to spend the night? The question, which was asked in a tone that, amidst its simplicity, had something dolorous in it, entirely changed the train of her father's ideas; and the unex-

* So at least says an Orkney proverb.

pected perplexity of their situation now striking him in a comic point of view, he laughed till his very eyes ran over, while every rock around him rung, and the sleeping sea-fowl were startled from their repose by the loud, hearty explosions of his obstreperous hilarity.

The Udaller's daughters, eagerly representing to their father the risk of displeasing Norna by this unlimited indulgence of his mirth, united their efforts to drag him to a farther distance from her dwelling. Magnus, yielding to their strength, which, feeble as it was, his own fit of laughter rendered him incapable of resisting, suffered himself to be pulled to a considerable distance from the Burgh, and then, escaping from their hands, and sitting down, or rather suffering himself to drop, upon a large stone which lay conveniently by the wayside, he again laughed so long and lustily, that his vexed and anxious daughters became afraid that there was something more than natural in these repeated convulsions.

At length his mirth exhausted both itself and the Udaller's strength. He groaned heavily, wiped his eyes, and said, not without feeling some desire to renew his obstreperous cachinnation, 'Now, by the bones of Saint Magnus, my ancestor and namesake, one would imagine that being turned out of doors at this time of night was nothing short of an absolutely exquisite jest; for I have shaken my sides at it till they are sore. There we sat, made snug for the night, and I made as sure of a good supper and a can as ever I had been of either,—and here we are all taken aback; and then poor Brenda's doleful voice, and melancholy question of, "What is to be done, and where are we to sleep?" In good faith, unless one of those knaves, who must needs torment the poor woman by their trencher-work before it was wanted, can make amends by telling us of some snug port under our lee, we have no other course for it but to steer through the twilight on the bearing of Burgh-Westra, and rough it out as well as we can by the way. I am sorry but for you, girls; for many a cruise have I been upon when we were on shorter allowance than we are like to have now.—I would I had but secured a morsel for you, and a drop for myself; and then there had been but little to complain of.'

Both sisters hastened to assure the Udaller that they felt not the least occasion for food.

'Why, that is well,' said Magnus; 'and so being the case, I will not complain of my own appetite, though it is sharper than convenient. And the rascal, Nicholas Strumpfer,—what a leer the villain gave me as he started the good Nantz into the salt water! He grinned, the knave, like a seal on a skerry.—Had it not been for vexing my poor kinswoman Norna, I would have sent his misbegotten body and misshapen jolterhead after my bonnie flask, as sure as Saint Magnus lies at Kirkwall!'

By this time the servants returned with the ponies, which they had very soon caught—these sensible animals finding nothing so captivating in the pastures where they had been suffered to stray, as inclined them to resist the invitation again to subject themselves to saddle and bridle. The prospects of the party were also considerably improved, by learning that the contents of their sumpter-ponies' burden had not been entirely exhausted,—a small basket having fortunately escaped the rage of Norna and Pacolet, by the rapidity with which one of the servants had caught up and removed it. The same domestic, an alert and ready-witted fellow, had observed upon the beach, not above three miles distant from the Burgh, and about a quarter of a mile off their straight path, a deserted skeoe, or fisherman's hut, and suggested that they should occupy it for the rest of the night, in order that the ponies might be refreshed, and the young ladies spend the night under cover from the raw evening air.

When we are delivered from great and serious dangers, our mood is, or ought to be, grave, in proportion to the peril we have escaped, and the gratitude due to protecting Providence. But few things raise the spirits more naturally or more harmlessly, than when means of extrication from any of the lesser embarrassments of life are suddenly presented to us; and such was the case in the present instance. The Udaller, relieved from the apprehensions of his daughters suffering from fatigue, and himself from too much appetite and too little food, carolled Norse ditties, as he spurred Bergen through the twilight, with as much glee and gallantry as if the night-ride had been entirely a matter of his own free choice. Brenda lent her voice to some of his choruses, which were echoed in ruder notes by the servants, who, in that simple state of society, were not considered as guilty of any breach of respect by mingling their voices with the song. Minna, indeed, was as yet unequal to such an effort; but she compelled herself to assume some share in the general hilarity of the meeting; and, contrary to her conduct since the fatal morning which concluded the festival of Saint John, she seemed to take her usual interest in what was going on around her, and answered with kindness and readiness the repeated inquiries concerning her health, with which the Udaller every now and then interrupted his carol. And thus they proceeded by night a happier party by far than they had been when they traced the same route on the preceding morning, making light of the difficulties of the way, and promising themselves shelter and a comfortable night's rest in the deserted hut which they were now about to approach, and which they expected to find in a state of darkness and solitude.

But it was the lot of the Udaller that day to be deceived more than once in his calculations.

'And which way lies this cabin of yours, Laurie?' said the Udaller, addressing the intelligent domestic of whom we just spoke.

'Yonder it should be,' said Laurence Scholey, 'at the head of the voe—but, by my faith, if it be the place, there are folk there before us—God and Saint Ronan send that they be canny company!'

In truth there was a light in the deserted hut, strong enough to glimmer through every chink of the shingles and wreck-wood of which it was constructed, and to give the whole cabin the appearance of a smithy seen by night. The universal superstition of the Zetlanders seized upon Magnus and his escort.

'They are trows,' said one voice.

'They are witches,' murmured another.

'They are Mermaids,' muttered a third; 'only hear their wild singing!'

All stopped; and, in effect, some notes of music were audible, which Brenda, with a voice that quivered a little, but yet had a turn of arch ridicule in its tone, pronounced to be the sound of a fiddle.

'Fiddle or fiend,' said the Udaller, who, if he believed in such nightly apparitions as had struck terror into his retinue, certainly feared them not—'fiddle or fiend, may the devil fetch me if a witch cheats me out of supper to-night for the second time!'

So saying, he dismounted, clenched his trusty truncheon in his hand, and advanced towards the hut, followed by Laurence alone; the rest of his retinue continuing stationary on the beach beside his daughters and his ponies.

CHAPTER XXX.

> What ho, my jovial mates! come on! we'll frolic it,
> Like fairies frisking in the merry moonshine,
> Seen by the curtal friar, who, from some christening
> Or some blithe bridal, hies belated cell-ward—
> He starts, and changes his bold bottle swagger
> To churchman's pace professional, and, ransacking
> His treacherous memory for some holy hymn,
> Finds but the roundel of the midnight catch.
>
> OLD PLAY.

THE stride of the Udaller relaxed nothing of its length or of its firmness as he approached the glimmering cabin, from which he now heard distinctly the sound of the fiddle. But if still long and firm, his steps succeeded each other rather more slowly than usual; for, like a cautious, though a brave general, Magnus was willing to reconnoitre his enemy before assailing him. The trusty Laurence Scholey, who kept close behind his master, now whispered into his ear, 'So help me, sir, as I believe that the ghaist, if ghaist it be, that plays so bravely on the fiddle, must be the ghaist of Maister Claud Halcro, or his wraith at least; for never was bow-drawn across thairm which brought out the gude auld spring of "Fair and Lucky" so like his ain.'

Magnus was himself much of the same opinion; for he knew the blithe minstrelsy of the spirited little old man, and hailed the hut with a hearty hilloa, which was immediately replied to by the cheery note of his ancient messmate, and Halcro himself presently made his appearance on the beach.

The Udaller now signed to his retinue to come up, while he asked his friend, after a kind greeting and much shaking of hands, 'How the devil he came to sit there, playing old tunes in so desolate a place, like an owl whooping to the moon?'

'And tell me rather, Fowd,' said Claud Halcro, 'how you came to be within hearing of me? ay, by my word, and with your bonnie daughters, too?—Jarto Minna and Jarto Brenda, I bid you welcome to these yellow sands—and there shake hands, as glorious John, or some other body, says, upon the same occasion. And how came you here, like two fair swans, making day out of twilight, and turning all you step upon to silver?'

'You shall know all about them presently,' answered Magnus; 'but what messmates have you got in the hut with you? I think I hear some one speaking.'

'None,' replied Claud Halcro, 'but that poor creature the factor, and my imp of a boy Giles. I—but come in—come in—here you will find us starving in comfort—not so much as a mouthful of sour sillocks to be had for love or money.'

'That may be in a small part helped,' said the Udaller; 'for though the best of our supper is gone over the Fitful Crags to the sealchies and the dog-fish, yet we have got something in the kit still.—Here, Laurie, bring up the *vifda*.'

'*Jokul, jokul!*'* was Laurence's joyful answer; and he hastened for the basket.

'By the bicker of Saint Magnus,'† said Halcro, 'and the burliest bishop that ever quaffed it for luck's sake, there is no finding your locker empty, Magnus! I believe sincerely that ere a friend wanted, you could, like old Luggie the warlock, fish up boiled and roasted out of the pool of Kibster.'‡

'You are wrong there, Jarto Claud,'§ said Magnus Troil, 'for, far from helping me to a supper, the foul fiend, I believe, has carried off great part of mine this blessed evening; but you are welcome to share and share of what is left.' This was said while the party entered the hut.

Here, in a cabin which smelled strongly of dried fish, and whose sides and roof were jet black with smoke, they found the unhappy Triptolemus Yellowley seated beside a fire made of dried sea-weed, mingled with some peats and wreck-wood; his sole companion a bare-footed, yellow-haired Zetland boy, who acted occasionally as a kind of page to Claud Halcro, bearing his fiddle on his shoulders, saddling his pony, and rendering him similar duties of kindly observance. The disconsolate agriculturist, for such his visage betokened him, displayed little surprise, and less animation, at the arrival of the Udaller and his companions, until, after the party had drawn close to the fire (a neighbourhood which the dampness of the night air rendered far from disagreeable), the pannier was opened, and a tolerable supply of barley-bread and hung-beef, besides a flask of brandy (no doubt smaller than that which the relentless hand of Pacolet had emptied into the ocean), gave assurances of a tolerable supper. Then, indeed, the worthy factor grinned, chuckled, rubbed his hands, and inquired after all friends at Burgh-Westra.

* *Jokul*, yes, sir; a Norse expression, still in common use.

† The Bicker of Saint Magnus, a vessel of enormous dimensions, was preserved at Kirkwall, and presented to each Bishop of the Orkneys. If the new incumbent was able to quaff it out at one draught, which was a task for Hercules or Rorie Mhor of Dunvegan, the omen boded a crop of unusual fertility.

‡ Luggie, a famous conjuror, was wont, when storms prevented him from going to his usual employment of fishing, to angle over a steep rock, at the place called, from his name, Luggie's Knoll. At other times he drew up dressed food while they were out at sea, of which his comrades partook boldly from natural courage, without caring who stood cook. The poor man was finally condemned and burnt at Scalloway.

§ *Jarto*. See note, p. 472.

When they had all partaken of this needful refreshment, the Udaller repeated his inquiries of Halcro, and more particularly of the factor, how they came to be nestled in such a remote corner at such an hour of night.

'Maister Magnus Troil,' said Triptolemus, when a second cup had given him spirits to tell his tale of woe, 'I would not have you think that it is a little thing that disturbs me. I come of that grain that takes a sair wind to shake it. I have seen many a Martinmas and many a Whitsunday in my day, whilk are the times peculiarly grievous to those of my craft, and I could aye bide the bang; but I think I am like to be dung ower a'thegither in this damned country of yours —Gude forgie me for swearing—but evil communication corrupteth good manners.'

'Now, Heaven guide us,' said the Udaller, 'what is the matter with the man? Why, man, if you will put your plough into new land, you must look to have it hank on a stone now and then—You must set us an example of patience, seeing you come here for our improvement.'

'And the deil was in my feet when I did so,' said the factor; 'I had better have set myself to improve the cairn on Clochnaben.'

'But what is it, after all,' said the Udaller, 'that has befallen you?—what is it that you complain of?'

'Of everything that has chanced to me since I landed on this island, which I believe was accursed at the very creation,' said the agriculturist, 'and assigned as a fitting station for sorners, thieves, whores (I beg the ladies' pardon), witches, bitches, and all evil spirits!'

'By my faith, a goodly catalogue!' said Magnus; 'and there has been the day, that if I had heard you give out the half of it, I should have turned improver myself, and have tried to amend your manners with a cudgel.'

'Bear with me,' said the factor, 'Maister Fowd, or Maister Udaller, or whatever else they may call you, and as you are strong be pitiful, and consider the luckless lot of any inexperienced person who lights upon this earthly paradise of yours. He asks for drink, they bring him sour whey—no disparagement to your brandy, Fowd, which is excellent—You ask for meat, and they bring you sour sillocks that Satan might choke upon—You call your labourers together, and bid them work; it proves Saint Magnus's day, or Saint Ronan's day, or some infernal saint or other's—or else, perhaps, they have come out of bed with the wrong foot foremost, or they have seen an owl, or a rabbit has crossed their path, or they have dreamed of a roasted horse—in short, nothing is to be done—Give them a spade, and they work as if it burned their fingers; but set them to dancing, and see when they will tire of funking and flinging!'

'And why should they, poor bodies,' said Claud Halcro, 'as long as there are good fiddlers to play to them?'

'Ay, ay,' said Triptolemus, shaking his head, 'you are a proper person to uphold them in such a humour. Well, to proceed:—I till a piece of my best ground; down comes a sturdy beggar that wants a kailyard, or a plant-a-cruive, as you call it, and he claps down an enclosure in the middle of my bit shot of corn, as lightly as if he was baith laird and tenant; and gainsay him wha likes, there he dibbles in his kail-plants! I sit down to my sorrowful dinner, thinking to have peace and quietness there at least; when in comes one, two, three, four, or half-a-dozen of skelping long lads, from some foolery or anither, misca' me for barring my ain door against them, and eat up the best half of what my sister's providence—and she is not over bountiful—has allotted for my dinner! Then enters a witch, with an ell-wand in her hand, and she raises the wind or lays it, whichever she likes, majors up and down my house as if she was mistress of it, and I am bounden to thank Heaven if she carries not the broadside of it away with her!'

'Still,' said the Fowd, 'this is no answer to my question—how the foul fiend I come to find you at moorings here?'

'Have patience, worthy sir,' replied the afflicted factor, 'and listen to what I have to say, for I fancy it will be as well to tell you the whole matter. You must know, I once thought that I had gotten a small godsend, that might have made all these matters easier.'

'How! a godsend! Do you mean a wreck,' Master Factor?' exclaimed Magnus; 'shame upon you, that should have set example to others!'

'It was no wreck,' said the factor; 'but if you must needs know, it chanced that I raised an hearthstane in one of the old chambers at Stourburgh (for my sister is minded that there is little use in mair fireplaces about a house than one, and I wanted the stane to knock bear upon), when what should I light on but a horn full of old coins, silver the maist feck of them, but wi' a bit sprinkling of gold among them too.* Weel, I thought this was a dainty windfa', and so thought Baby, and we were the mair willing to put up with a place where there were siccan braw nest-eggs—and we slade down the stane cannily over the horn, which seemed to me to be the very cornucopia, or horn of abundance; and for further security, Baby wad visit the room may be twenty times in the day, and mysel' at an orra time, to the boot of a' that.'

'On my word, and a very pretty amusement,' said Claud Halcro, 'to look over a horn of one's own siller. I question if glorious John Dryden ever enjoyed such a pastime in his life—I am very sure I never did.'

'Yes, but you forget, Yarto Claud,' said the Udaller, 'that the factor was only counting over the money for my lord the Chamberlain. As he is so keen for his lordship's rights in whales and wrecks, surely he would not forget him in treasure-trove.'

'A-hem! a-hem! a-he—he—hem!' ejaculated Triptolemus, seized at the moment with an awkward fit of coughing,—'no doubt my lord's right in the matter would have been considered, being in the hand of one, though I say it, as just as can be found in Angusshire, let alone the Mearns. But mark what happened of late! One day, as I went up to see that all was safe and snug, and just to count out the share that should have been his lordship's—for surely the labourer, as one may call the finder, worthy

* Note X. Antique coins found.

of his hire—nay, some learned men say that when the finder, in point of trust and in point of power, representeth the *dominus*, or lord superior, he taketh the whole; but let that pass as a kittle question *in apicibus juris*, as we wont to say at Saint Andrews—Well, sir and ladies, when I went to the upper chamber, what should I see but an ugsome, ill-shaped, and most uncouth dwarf, that wanted but hoofs and horns to have made an utter devil of him, counting over the very hornful of siller! I am no timorous man, Master Fowd, but, judging that I should proceed with caution in such a matter—for I had reason to believe that there was devilry in it—I accosted him in Latin (whilk it is maist becoming to speak to aught whilk taketh upon it as a goblin), and conjured him *in nomine*, and so forth, with such words as my poor learning could furnish of a suddenty, whilk, to say truth, were not so many, nor altogether so purely latineezed as might have been, had I not been few years at college, and many at the pleugh. Well, sirs, he started at first, as one that heareth that which he expects not; but presently recovering himself, he wawls on me with his grey een, like a wild-cat, and opens his mouth, whilk resembled the mouth of an oven, for the deil a tongue he had in it, that I could spy, and took upon his ugly self altogether the air and bearing of a bull-dog, whilk I have seen loosed at a fair upon a mad staig;* whereupon I was something daunted, and withdrew myself to call upon sister Baby, who fears neither dog nor devil, when there is in question the little penny siller. And truly she raise to the fray as I hae seen the Lindsays and Ogilvies bristle up, when Donald MacDonnoch, or the like, made a start down frae the Highlands on the braes of Islay. But an auld useless carline, called Tronda Dronsdaughter (they might call her Drone the sel' of her, without further addition), flung herself right in my sister's gate, and yelloched and skirled, that you would have thought her a whole generation of hounds; whereupon I judged it best to make ae yoking of it, and stop the pleugh until I got my sister's assistance. Whilk when I had done, and we mounted the stair to the apartment in which the said dwarf, devil, or other apparition, was to be seen, dwarf, horn, and siller were as clean gane as if the cat had lickit the place where I saw them.'

Here Triptolemus paused in his extraordinary narration, while the rest of the party looked upon each other in surprise, and the Udaller muttered to Claud Halcro—'By all tokens, this must have been either the devil or Nicholas Strumpfer; and if it were him, he is more of a goblin than e'er I gave him credit for, and shall be apt to rate him as such in future.' Then, addressing the factor, he inquired—'Saw ye nought how this dwarf of yours parted company?'

'As I shall answer it, no,' replied Triptolemus, with a cautious look around him, as if daunted by the recollection; 'neither I, nor Baby, who had her wits more about her, not having seen this unseemly vision, could perceive any way by whilk he made evasion. Only Tronda said she saw him flee forth of the window of the west roundel of the auld house, upon a dragon, as she averred. But, as the dragon is held a fabulous animal, I suld pronounce her averment to rest upon *deceptio visus*.'

'But may we not ask further,' said Brenda, stimulated by curiosity to know as much of her cousin Norna's family as was possible, 'how all this operated upon Master Yellowley, so as to occasion his being in this place at so unseasonable an hour?'

'Seasonable it must be, Mistress Brenda, since it brought us into your sweet company,' answered Claud Halcro, whose mercurial brain far outstripped the slow conceptions of the agriculturist, and who became impatient of being so long silent. 'To say the truth, it was I, Mistress Brenda, who recommended to our friend the factor, whose house I chanced to call at just after this mischance (and where, by the way, owing doubtless to the hurry of their spirits, I was but poorly received), to make a visit to our other friend at Fitful Head, well judging from certain points of the story, at which my other and more particular friend than either' (looking at Magnus) 'may chance to form a guess, that they who break a head are the best to find a plaster. And as our friend the factor scrupled travelling on horseback,—in respect of some tumbles from our ponies'——

'Which are incarnate devils,' said Triptolemus aloud, muttering under his breath, 'like every live thing that I have found in Zetland.'

'Well, Fowd,' continued Halcro, 'I undertook to carry him to Fitful Head in my little boat, which Giles and I can manage as if it were an admiral's barge full manned; and Master Triptolemus Yellowley will tell you how seamanlike I piloted him to the little haven within a quarter of a mile of Norna's dwelling.'

'I wish to Heaven you had brought me as safe back again,' said the factor.

'Why, to be sure,' replied the minstrel, 'I am, as glorious John says—

> A daring pilot in extremity,
> Pleased with the danger when the waves go high,
> I seek the storm—but, for a calm unfit,
> Will steer too near the sands, to show my wit.'

'I showed little wit in entrusting myself to your charge,' said Triptolemus; 'and you still less when you upset the boat at the throat of the voe, as you call it, when even the poor bairn, that was mair than half drowned, told you that you were carrying too much sail; and then ye wad fasten the rape to the bit stick on the boat-side, that ye might have time to play on the fiddle.'

'What!' said the Udaller, 'make fast the sheets to the thwart? a most unseasonable practice, Claud Halcro.'

'And sae came of it,' replied the agriculturist; 'for the neist blast (and we are never lang without ane in these parts) whomled us as a gudewife would whomle a bowie, and ne'er a thing wad Maister Halcro save but his fiddle. The puir bairn swam out like a water-spaniel, and I swattered hard for my life, wi' the help of ane of the oars; and here we are, comfortless creatures, that, till a good wind blew you here, had naething to eat but a mouthful of Norway rusk,

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* ... e han... , says, ... you ... oung unbroken horse.

that has mair sawdust than ryemeal in it, and tastes liker turpentine than onything else.'

'I thought we heard you very merry,' said Brenda, 'as we came along the beach.'

'Ye heard a fiddle, Mistress Brenda,' said the factor, 'and maybe ye may think there can be nae dearth, miss, where that is skirling. But then it was Maister Claud Halcro's fiddle, whilk, I am apt to think, wad skirl at his father's death-bed, or at his ain, sae lang as his fingers could pinch the thairm. And it was nae sma' aggravation to my misfortune to have him bumming a' sorts of springs—Norse and Scots, Highland and Lawland, English and Italian—in my lug, as if nothing had happened that was amiss, and we all in such stress and perplexity.'

'Why, I told you sorrow would never right the boat, factor,' said the thoughtless minstrel, 'and I did my best to make you merry; if I failed, it was neither my fault nor my fiddle's. I have drawn the bow across it before glorious John Dryden himself.'

'I will hear no stories about glorious John Dryden,' answered the Udaller, who dreaded Halcro's narratives as much as Triptolemus did his music,—'I will hear nought of him, but one story to every three bowls of punch,—it is our old paction, you know. But tell me, instead, what said Norna to you about your errand?'

'Ay, there was anither fine upshot,' said Master Yellowley. 'She wadna look at us, or listen to us; only she bothered our acquaintance, Master Halcro here, who thought he could have sae much to say wi' her, with about a score of questions about your family and household estate, Master Magnus Troil; and when she had gotten a' she wanted out of him, I thought she wad hae dung him ower the craig, like an empty peacod.'

'And for yourself?' said the Udaller.

'She wadna listen to my story, nor hear sae much as a word that I had to say,' answered Triptolemus; 'and sae much for them that seek to witches and familiar spirits!'

'You needed not to have had recourse to Norna's wisdom, Master Factor,' said Minna, not unwilling, perhaps, to stop his railing against the friend who had so lately rendered her service; 'the youngest child in Orkney could have told you that fairy treasures, if they are not wisely employed for the good of others, as well as of those to whom they are imparted, do not dwell long with their possessors.'

'Your humble servant to command, Mistress Minnie,' said Triptolemus; 'I thank ye for the hint,—and I am blithe that you have gotten your wits—I beg pardon, I meant your health—into the barn-yard again. For the treasure, I neither used nor abused it—they that live in the house with my sister Baby wad find it hard to do either!—and as for speaking of it, whilk they say muckle offends them whom we in Scotland call good neighbours, and you call drows, the face of the auld Norse kings on the coins themselves might have spoken as much about it as ever I did.'

'The factor,' said Claud Halcro, not unwilling to seize the opportunity of revenging himself on Triptolemus, for disgracing his seamanship and disparaging his music,—'The factor was so scrupulous as to keep the thing quiet even from his master, the Lord Chamberlain; but now that the matter has ta'en wind, he is likely to have to account to his master for that which is no longer in his possession; for the Lord Chamberlain will be in no hurry, I think, to believe the story of the dwarf. Neither do I think' (winking to the Udaller) 'that Norna gave credit to a word of so odd a story; and I daresay that was the reason that she received us, I must needs say, in a very dry manner. I rather think she knew that Triptolemus, our friend here, had found some other hiding-hole for the money, and that the story of the goblin was all his own invention. For my part, I will never believe there was such a dwarf to be seen as the creature Master Yellowley describes, until I set my own eyes on him.'

'Then you may do so at this moment,' said the factor; 'for by——' (he muttered a deep asseveration as he sprung on his feet in great horror), 'there the creature is!'

All turned their eyes in the direction in which he pointed, and saw the hideous misshapen figure of Pacolet, with his eyes fixed and glaring at them through the smoke. He had stolen upon their conversation unperceived, until the factor's eye lighted upon him in the manner we have described. There was something so ghastly in his sudden and unexpected appearance, that even the Udaller, to whom his form was familiar, could not help starting. Neither pleased with himself for having testified this degree of emotion, however slight, nor with the dwarf who had given cause to it, Magnus asked him sharply what was his business there. Pacolet replied by producing a letter, which he gave to the Udaller, uttering a sound resembling the word *Shogh.**

'That is the Highlandman's language,' said the Udaller—'didst thou learn that, Nicholas, when you lost your own?'

Pacolet nodded, and signed to him to read his letter.

'That is no such easy matter by firelight, my good friend,' replied the Udaller; 'but it may concern Minna, and we must try.'

Brenda offered her assistance, but the Udaller answered, 'No, no, my girl,—Norna's letters must be read by those they are written to. Give the knave Strumpfer a drop of brandy the while, though he little deserves it at my hands, considering the grin with which he sent the good Nantz down the crag this morning, as if it had been as much ditch-water.'

'Will you be this honest gentleman's cup-bearer—his Ganymede, friend Yellowley, or shall I?' said Claud Halcro aside to the factor; while Magnus Troil, having carefully wiped his spectacles, which he produced from a large copper case, had disposed them on his nose, and was studying the epistle of Norna.

'I would not touch him, or go near him, for all the Carse of Gowrie,' said the factor, whose fears were by no means entirely removed, though he saw that the dwarf was received as a creature of flesh and blood by the rest of the company; 'but I pray you to ask him what he has done with my horn of coins?'

* In Gaelic, *there.*

The dwarf, who heard the question, threw back his head, and displayed his enormous throat, pointing to it with his finger.

'Nay, if he has swallowed them, there is no more to be said,' replied the factor; 'only I hope he will thrive on them as a cow on wet clover. He is Dame Norna's servant, it's like, —such man, such mistress! But if theft and witchcraft are to go unpunished in this land, my lord must find another factor; for I have been used to live in a country where men's worldly gear was keepit from infang and outfang thief, as well as their immortal souls from the claws of the deil and his cummers—sain and save us!'

The agriculturist was perhaps the less reserved in expressing his complaints, that the Udaller was for the present out of hearing, having drawn Claud Halcro apart into another corner of the hut.

'And tell me,' said he, 'friend Halcro, what errand took thee to Sumburgh, since I reckon it was scarce the mere pleasure of sailing in partnership with yonder barnacle?'

'In faith, Fowd,' said the bard, 'and if you will have the truth, I went to speak to Norna on your affairs.'

'On my affairs?' replied the Udaller; 'on what affairs of mine?'

'Just touching your daughter's health. I heard that Norna refused your message, and would not see Eric Scambester. Now, said I to myself, I have scarce joyed in meat, or drink, or music, or aught else, since Yarta Minna has been so ill; and I may say, literally as well as figuratively, that my day and night have been made sorrowful to me. In short, I thought I might have some more interest with old Norna than another, as Scalds and wise women were always accounted something akin; and I undertook the journey with the hope to be of some use to my old friend and his lovely daughter.'

'And it was most kindly done of you, good, warm-hearted Claud,' said the Udaller, shaking him warmly by the hand,—'I ever said you showed the good old Norse heart amongst all thy fiddling and thy folly.—Tut, man, never wince for the matter, but be blithe that th heart is better than thy head. Well,— warrant you got no answer from Norna?'

'None to purpose,' replied Claud Halcro; 'but she held me close to question about Minna's illness, too, —and I told her how I had met her abroad the other morning in no very good weather, and how her sister Brenda said she had hurt her foot;—in short, I told her all and everything I knew.'

'And something more besides, it would seem,' said the Udaller; 'for I, at least, never heard before that Minna had hurt herself.'

'O, a scratch! a mere scratch!' said the old man; 'but I was startled about it—terrified lest it had been the bite of a dog, or some hurt from a venomous thing. I told all to Norna, however.'

'And what,' answered the Udaller, 'did she say, in the way of reply?'

'She bade me begone about my business, and told me that the issue would be known at the Kirkwall fair; and said just the like to this noodle of a factor—it was all that either of us got for our labour,' said Halcro.

'That is strange,' said Magnus. 'My kinswoman writes me in this letter not to fail going thither with my daughters. This fair runs strongly in her head;—one would think she intended to lead the market, and yet she has nothing to buy or to sell there that I know of. And so you came away as wise as you went, and swamped your boat at the mouth of the voe?'

'Why, how could I help it?' said the poet. 'I had set the boy to steer, and as the flaw came suddenly off shore, I could not let go the tack and play on the fiddle at the same time. But it is all well enough,—salt water never harmed Zetlander, so as he could get out of it; and, as Heaven would have it, we were within man's depth of the shore, and, chancing to find this skeoe, we should have done well enough, with shelter and fire, and are much better than well with your good cheer and good company. But it wears late, and Night and Day must be both as sleepy as old Midnight can make them. There is an inner crib here, where the fishers slept,— somewhat fragrant with the smell of their fish, but that is wholesome. They shall bestow themselves there, with the help of what cloaks you have, and then we will have one cup of brandy, and one stave of glorious John, or some little trifle of my own, and so sleep as sound as cobblers.'

'Two glasses of brandy, if you please,' said the Udaller, 'if our stores do not run dry; but not a single stave of glorious John, or of any one else, to-night.'

And this being arranged and executed agreeably to the peremptory pleasure of the Udaller, the whole party consigned themselves to slumber for the night, and on the next day departed for their several habitations, Claud Halcro having previously arranged with the Udaller that he would accompany him and his daughters on their proposed visit to Kirkwall.

CHAPTER XXXI.

By this hand, thou think'st me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff for obduracy and persistency; let the end try the man . . . Albeit I could tell to thee (as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend), I could be sad, and sad indeed, too.

HENRY IV. *Part II. Act 2, Sc. 2.*

WE must now change the scene from Zetland to Orkney, and request our readers to accompany us to the ruins of an elegant, though ancient structure, called the Earl's Palace. These remains, though much dilapidated, still exist in the neighbourhood of the massive and venerable pile, which Norwegian devotion dedicated to Saint Magnus the Martyr, and, being contiguous to the Bishop's Palace, which is also ruinous, the place is impressive, as exhibiting vestiges of the mutations both in church and state which have affected Orkney, as well as countries more exposed to such convulsions. Several parts of these ruinous buildings might be selected (under suitable modifications) as the model of a Gothic mansion, provided architects would be contented rather to imitate what is really beautiful in that species of building, than to make a medley of

the caprices of the order, confounding the military, ecclesiastical, and domestic styles of all ages at random, with additional fantasies and combinations of their own device, 'all formed out of the builder's brain.'

The Earl's Palace forms three sides of an oblong square, and has, even in its ruins, the air of an elegant yet massive structure, uniting as was usual in the residence of feudal princes, the character of a palace and of a castle. A great banqueting-hall, communicating with several large rounds, or projecting turret-rooms, and having at either end an immense chimney, testifies the ancient northern hospitality of the Earls of Orkney, and communicates, almost in the modern fashion, with a gallery, or withdrawing room, of corresponding dimensions, and having, like the hall, its projecting turrets. The lordly hall itself is lighted by a fine Gothic window of shafted stone at one end, and is entered by a spacious and elegant staircase, consisting of three flights of stone steps. The exterior ornaments and proportions of the ancient building are also very handsome, but, being totally unprotected, this remnant of the pomp and grandeur of earls, who assumed the licence as well as the dignity of petty sovereigns, is now fast crumbling to decay, and has suffered considerably since the date of our story.

With folded arms and downcast looks, the pirate Cleveland was pacing slowly the ruined hall which we have just described; a place of retirement which he had probably chosen because it was distant from public resort. His dress was considerably altered from that which he usually wore in Zetland, and seemed a sort of uniform, richly laced, and exhibiting no small quantity of embroidery; a hat with a plume, and a small sword very handsomely mounted, then the constant companion of every one who assumed the rank of a gentleman, showed his pretensions to that character. But if his exterior was so far improved, it seemed to be otherwise with his health and spirits. He was pale, and had lost both the fire of his eyes and the vivacity of his step, and his whole appearance indicated melancholy of mind, or suffering of body, or a combination of both evils.

As Cleveland thus paced these ancient ruins, a young man, of a light and slender form, whose showy dress seemed to have been studied with care, yet exhibited more extravagance than judgment or taste, whose manner was a jaunty affectation of the free and easy rake of the period, and the expression of whose countenance was lively, with a cast of effrontery, tripped up the staircase, entered the hall, and presented himself to Cleveland, who merely nodded to him, and, pulling his hat deeper over his brows, resumed his solitary and discontented promenade.

The stranger adjusted his own hat, nodded in return, took snuff with the air of a *petit maître* from a richly-chased gold box, offered it to Cleveland as he passed, and being repulsed rather coldly, replaced the box in his pocket, folded his arms in his turn, and stood looking with fixed attention on his motions whose solitude he had interrupted. At length Cleveland stopped short, as if impatient of being longer the subject of his observation, and said abruptly, 'Why can I not be left alone for half-an-hour, and what the devil is it that you want?'

'I am glad you spoke first,' answered the stranger carelessly; 'I was determined to know whether you were Clement Cleveland, or Cleveland's ghost, and they say ghosts never take the first word, so I now set it down for yourself in life and limb; and here is a fine old hurly-house you have found out for an owl to hide himself in at midday, or a ghost to revisit the pale glimpses of the moon, as the divine Shakspeare says.'

'Well, well,' answered Cleveland abruptly, 'your jest is made, and now let us have your earnest.'

'In earnest, then, Captain Cleveland,' replied his companion, 'I think you know me for your friend.'

'I am content to suppose so,' said Cleveland.

'It is more than supposition,' replied the young man; 'I have proved it—proved it both here and elsewhere.'

'Well, well,' answered Cleveland, 'I admit you have been always a friendly fellow—and what then?'

'Well, well—and what then?' replied the other; 'this is but a brief way of thanking folk. Look you, captain, here is Benson, Barlowe, Dick Fletcher, and a few others of us who wished you well, have kept your old comrade Captain Goffe in these seas upon the look-out for you, when he and Hawkins, and the greater part of the ship's company, would fain have been down on the Spanish Main, and at the old trade.'

'And I wish to God that you had all gone about your business,' said Cleveland, 'and left me to my fate.'

'Which would have been to be informed against and hanged, captain, the first time that any of these Dutch or English rascals, whom you have lightened of their cargoes, came to set their eyes upon you; and no place more likely to meet with seafaring men, than in these islands. And here, to screen you from such a risk, we have been wasting our precious time, till folk are grown very peery; and when we have no more goods or money to spend amongst them, the fellows will be for grabbing the ship.'

'Well, then, why do you not sail off without me?' said Cleveland.—'There has been fair partition, and all have had their share—let all do as they like. I have lost my ship, and having been once a captain, I will not go to sea under command of Goffe, or any other man. Besides, you know well enough that both Hawkins and he bear me ill-will for keeping them from sinking the Spanish brig, with the poor devils of negroes on board.'

'Why, what the foul fiend is the matter with thee?' said his companion. 'Are you Clement Cleveland, our own old true-hearted Clem of the Cleuch, and do you talk of being afraid of Hawkins and Goffe, and a score of such fellows, when you have myself, and Barlowe, and Dick Ely; your back? When was it we [illegible] has done in council or in fight, that y[illegible] of our flinching now? And [illegible] Goffe, I hope it is no new th[illegible] fortune, who are going on t[illegible]

a captain now and then? Let us alone for that,—captain you shall be; for death rock me asleep if I serve under that fellow Goffe, who is as very a bloodhound as ever sucked bitch? No, no, I thank you—my captain must have a little of the gentleman about him, howsoever. Besides, you know, it was you who first dipped my hands in the dirty water, and turned me from a stroller by land, to a rover by sea.'

'Alas, poor Bunce!' said Cleveland, 'you owe me little thanks for that service.'

'That is as you take it,' replied Bunce; 'for my part I see no harm in levying contributions on the public either one way or t'other. But I wish you would forget that name of Bunce, and call me Altamont, as I have often desired you to do. I hope a gentleman of the roving trade has as good a right to have an alias as a stroller, and I never stepped on the boards but what I was Altamont at the least.'

'Well, then, Jack Altamont,' replied Cleveland, 'since Altamont is the word'——

'Yes, but, captain, *Jack* is not the word, though Altamont be so. Jack Altamont—why, 'tis a velvet coat with paper lace—Let it be Frederick, captain; Frederick Altamont is all of a piece.'

'Frederick be it then, with all my heart,' said Cleveland; 'and pray tell me, which of your names will sound best at the head of the Last Speech, Confession, and Dying Words of John Bunce, *alias* Frederick Altamont, who was this morning hanged at Execution Dock, for the crime of Piracy upon the High Seas?'

'Faith, I cannot answer that question without another can of grog, captain; so if you will go down with me to Bet Haldane's on the quay, I will bestow some thought on the matter, with the help of a right pipe of Trinidado. We will have the gallon bowl filled with the best stuff you ever tasted, and I know some smart wenches who will help us to drain it. But you shake your head—you're not i' the vein?—Well, then, I will stay with you; for by this hand, Clem, you shift me not off. Only I will ferret you out of this burrow of old stones, and carry you into sunshine and fair air. Where shall we go?'

'Where you will,' said Cleveland, 'so that you keep out of the way of our own rascals, and all others.'

'Why, then,' replied Bunce, 'you and I will go up to the hill of Whitford, which overlooks the town, and walk together as gravely and honestly as a pair of well-employed attorneys.'

As they proceeded to leave the ruinous castle, Bunce, turning back to look at it, thus addressed his companion:—

'Hark ye, captain, dost thou know who last inhabited this old cockloft?'

'An Earl of the Orkneys, they say,' replied Cleveland.

'And are you avised what death he died of?' said Bunce; 'for I have heard that it was of a tight neck-collar—a hempen fever, or the like.'

'The people here do say,' replied Cleveland, say, in the [illegible] some hundred years ago, had
'She bade me be[illegible]become acquainted with the
told me that the i[illegible]d a leap in the air.'
Kirkwall fair; and [illegible]re now!' said Bunce; 'there
noodle of a factor— being hanged in those days,
got for our labour,' s[illegible]

and in such worshipful company. And what might his lordship have done to deserve such promotion?'

'Plundered the liege subjects, they say,' replied Cleveland; 'slain and wounded them, fired upon his Majesty's flag, and so forth.'

'Near akin to a gentleman rover, then,' said Bunce, making a theatrical bow towards the old building; 'and therefore, my most potent, grave, and reverend Signior Earl, I crave leave to call you my loving cousin, and bid you most heartily adieu. I leave you in the good company of rats and mice, and so forth, and I carry with me an honest gentleman, who, having of late had no more heart than a mouse, is now desirous to run away from his profession and friends like a rat, and would therefore be a most fitting denizen of your earlship's palace.'

'I would advise you not to speak so loud, my good friend Frederick Altamont, or John Bunce,' said Cleveland. 'When you were on the stage, you might safely rant as loud as you listed; but in your present profession, of which you are so fond, every man speaks under correction of the yard-arm and a running noose.'

The comrades left the little town of Kirkwall in silence, and ascended the hill of Whitford, which raises its brow of dark heath, uninterrupted by enclosures, or cultivation of any kind, to the northward of the ancient burgh of Saint Magnus. The plain at the foot of the hill was already occupied by numbers of persons who were engaged in making preparations for the fair of Saint Olla, to be held upon the ensuing day, and which forms a general rendezvous to all the neighbouring islands of Orkney, and is even frequented by many persons from the more distant archipelago of Zetland. It is, in the words of the proclamation, 'a free mercat and fair, holden at the good burgh of Kirkwall on the third of August, being Saint Olla's day,' and continuing for an indefinite space thereafter, extending from three days to a week, and upwards. The fair is of great antiquity, and derives its name from Olaus, Olave, Ollaw, the celebrated monarch of Norway, who, rather by the edge of his sword than any milder argument, introduced Christianity into these isles, and was respected as the patron of Kirkwall some time before he shared that honour with Saint Magnus the Martyr.

It was no part of Cleveland's purpose to mingle in the busy scene which was here going on; and, turning their route to the left, they soon ascended into undisturbed solitude, save where the grouse, more plentiful in Orkney, perhaps, than in any other part of the British dominions, rose in covey, and went off before them.* Having continued to ascend till they had well-nigh reached the summit of the conical hill, both turned round, as with one consent, to look at and admire the prospect beneath.

The lively bustle which extended between the foot of the hill and the town, gave life and variety to that part of the scene; then was seen the town itself, out of which arose, like a great mass, superior in proportion as it seemed

* It is very curious that the grouse, plenty in Orkney as the text declares, should be totally unknown in the neighbouring archipelago of Zetland, which is only about sixty miles' distance, with the Fair Isle as a step between.

to the whole burgh, the ancient Cathedral of Saint Magnus, of the heaviest order of Gothic architecture, but grand, solemn, and stately, the work of a distant age and of a powerful hand. The quay, with the shipping, lent additional vivacity to the scene; and not only the whole beautiful bay, which lies betwixt the promontories of Inganess and Quanterness, at the bottom of which Kirkwall is situated, but all the sea, so far as visible, and in particular the whole strait betwixt the island of Shapinsha and that called Pomona, or the Mainland, was covered and enlivened by a variety of boats and small vessels, freighted from distant islands to convey passengers or merchandise to the fair of Saint Olla.

Having attained the point by which this fair and busy prospect was most completely commanded, each of the strangers, in seaman fashion, had recourse to his spy-glass, to assist the naked eye in considering the bay of Kirkwall, and the numerous vessels by which it was traversed. But the attention of the two companions seemed to be arrested by different objects. That of Bunce, or Altamont, as he chose to call himself, was riveted to the armed sloop, where, conspicuous by her square rigging and length of beam, with the English jack and pennon, which they had the precaution to keep flying, she lay among the merchant vessels, as distinguished from them by the trim neatness of her appearance, as a trained soldier amongst a crowd of clowns.

'Yonder she lies,' said Bunce; 'I wish to God she was in the Bay of Honduras—you, captain, on the quarter-deck, I your lieutenant, and Fletcher quartermaster, and fifty stout fellows under us—I should not wish to see these blasted heaths and rocks again for a while!—And captain you shall soon be. The old brute Goffe gets drunk as a lord every day, swaggers and shoots and cuts among the crew; and besides, he has quarrelled with the people here, so damnably, that they will scarce let water or provisions go on board of us, and we expect an open breach every day.'

As Bunce received no answer, he turned short round on his companion, and, perceiving his attention otherwise engaged, exclaimed,—'What the devil is the matter with you? or what can you see in all that trumpery small craft, which is only loaded with stock-fish, and ling, and smoked geese, and tubs of butter that is worse than tallow?—the cargoes of the whole lumped together would not be worth the flash of a pistol.—No, no; give me such a chase as we might see from the masthead off the island of Trinidado. Your Don, rolling as deep in the water as a grampus, deep-loaden with rum, sugar, and bales of tobacco, and all the rest ingots, moidores, and gold-dust; then set all sail, clear the deck, stand to quarters, up with the Jolly Roger*—we near her—we make her out to be well manned and armed'——

'Twenty guns on her lower deck,' said Cleveland.

'Forty, if you will,' retorted Bunce, 'and we have but ten mounted—never mind. The Don blazes away—never mind yet, my brave lads—run her alongside, and on board with you—to work with your grenadoes, your cutlasses, pole-axes, and pistols—The Don cries Misericordia, and we share the cargo without *co licencio, Seignior*.'

'By my faith,' said Cleveland, 'thou takest so kindly to the trade, that all the world may see that no honest man was spoiled when you were made a pirate. But you shall not prevail on me to go farther in the devil's road with you; for you know yourself that what is got over his back is spent—you wot how. In a week, or a month at most, the rum and the sugar are out, the bales of tobacco have become smoke, the moidores, ingots, and gold-dust have got out of our hands, into those of the quiet, honest, conscientious folks who dwell at Port-Royal and elsewhere—wink hard on our trade as long as we have money, but not a jot beyond. Then we have cold looks, and it may be a hint is given to the judge marshal; for, when our pockets are worth nothing, our honest friends, rather than want, will make money upon our heads. Then comes a high gallows and a short halter, and so dies the gentleman rover. I tell thee, I will leave this trade; and when I turn my glass from one of these barks and boats to another, there is not the worst of them which I would not row for life, rather than continue to be what I have been. These poor men make the sea a means of honest livelihood and friendly communication between shore and shore, for the mutual benefit of the inhabitants; but we have made it a road to the ruin of others, and to our own destruction here and in eternity.—I am determined to turn honest man, and use this life no longer!'

'And where will your honesty take up its abode, if it please you?' said Bunce.—'You have broken the laws of every nation, and the hand of the law will detect and crush you wherever you may take refuge.—Cleveland, I speak to you more seriously than I am wont to do. I have had my reflections, too, and they have been bad enough, though they have lasted but a few minutes, to spoil me weeks of joviality. But here is the matter,—what can we do but go on as we have done, unless we have a direct purpose of adorning the yard-arm?'

'We may claim the benefit of the proclamation to those of our sort who come in and surrender,' said Cleveland.

'Umph!' answered his companion dryly; 'the date of that day of grace has been for some time over, and they may take the penalty or grant the pardon at their pleasure. Were I you, I would not put my neck in such a venture.'

'Why, others have been admitted but lately to favour, and why should not I?' said Cleveland.

'Ay,' replied his associate, 'Harry Glasby and some others have been spared; but Glasby did what was called good service, in betraying his comrades, and retaking the Jolly Fortune; and that I think you would scorn, even to be revenged of the brute Goffe yonder.'

'I would die a thousand times sooner,' said Cleveland.

'I will be sworn for it,' said Bunce; 'and the

* The pirates gave this name to the black flag, which, with many horrible devices to enchance its terrors, was their favourite ensign.

others were forecastle fellows—petty larceny rogues, scarce worth the hemp it would have cost to hang them. But your name has stood too high amongst the gentlemen of fortune for you to get off so easily. You are the prime buck of the herd, and will be marked accordingly.'

'And why so, I pray you?' said Cleveland; 'you know well enough my aim, Jack.'

'Frederick, if you please,' said Bunce.

'The devil take your folly!—Prithee keep thy wit, and let us be grave for a moment.'

'For a moment—be it so,' said Bunce; 'but I feel the spirit of Altamont coming fast upon me,—I have been a grave man for ten minutes already.'

'Be so then for a little longer,' said Cleveland. 'I know, Jack, that you really love me; and since we have come thus far in this talk, I will trust you entirely. Now tell me, why should I be refused the benefit of this gracious proclamation? I have borne a rough outside, as thou knowest; but, in time of need, I can show the number of lives which I have been the means of saving, the property which I have restored to those who owned it, when, without my intercession, it would have been wantonly destroyed. In short, Bunce, I can show'——

'That you were as gentle a thief as Robin Hood himself,' said Bunce; 'and for that reason, I, Fletcher, and the better sort among us, love you, as one who saves the character of us gentlemen rovers from utter reprobation.—Well, suppose your pardon made out, what are you to do next?—what class in society will receive you?—with whom will you associate? Old Drake, in Queen Bess's time, could plunder Peru and Mexico without a line of commission to show for it, and, blessed be her memory! he was knighted for it on his return. And there was Hal Morgan, the Welshman, nearer our time, in the days of merry King Charles, brought all his gettings home, had his estate and his country-house, and who but he? But that is all ended now—once a pirate, and an outcast for ever. The poor devil may go and live, shunned and despised by every one, in some obscure seaport, with such part of his guilty earnings as courtiers and clerks leave him—for pardons do not pass the seals for nothing;—and when he takes his walk along the pier, if a stranger asks, who is the down-looking, swarthy, melancholy man, for whom all make way, as if he brought the plague in his person? the answer shall be, that is such a one, the pardoned pirate!—No honest man will speak to him, no woman of repute will give him her hand.'

'Your picture is too highly coloured, Jack,' said Cleveland, suddenly interrupting his friend; 'there are women—there is one, at least, that would be true to her lover, even if he were what you have described.'

Bunce was silent for a moment, and looked fixedly at his friend. 'By my soul!' he said, at length, 'I begin to think myself a conjuror. Unlikely as it all was, I could not help suspecting from the beginning that there was a girl in the case. Why, this is worse than Prince Volscius in love—ha! ha! ha!'

'Laugh as you will,' said Cleveland, 'it is true;—there is a maiden who is contented to love me, pirate as I am; and I will fairly own to you, Jack, that, though I have often at times detested our roving life, and myself for following it, yet I doubt if I could have found resolution to make the break which I have now resolved on, but for her sake.'

'Why, then, God-a-mercy!' replied Bunce, 'there is no speaking sense to a madman; and love in one of your trade, captain, is little better than lunacy. The girl must be a rare creature for a wise man to risk hanging for her. But hark ye, may she not be a little touched as well as yourself?—and is it not sympathy that has done it? She cannot be one of our ordinary cockatrices, but a girl of conduct and character.'

'Both are as undoubted as that she is the most beautiful and bewitching creature whom the eye ever opened upon,' answered Cleveland.

'And she loves thee, knowing thee, most noble captain, to be a commander among those gentlemen of fortune whom the vulgar call pirates!'

'Even so—I am assured of it,' said Cleveland.

'Why, then,' answered Bunce, 'she is either mad in good earnest, as I said before, or she does not know what a pirate is.'

'You are right in the last point,' replied Cleveland. 'She has been bred in such remote simplicity, and utter ignorance of what is evil, that she compares our occupation with that of the old Norsemen who swept sea and haven with their victorious galleys, established colonies, conquered countries, and took the name of sea-kings.'

'And a better one it is than that of pirate, and comes much to the same purpose, I dare say,' said Bunce. 'But this must be a mettled wench!—why did you not bring her aboard? methinks it was pity to baulk her fancy.'

'And do you think,' said Cleveland, 'that I could so utterly play the part of a fallen spirit as to avail myself of her enthusiastic error, and bring an angel of beauty and innocence acquainted with such a hell as exists on board of yonder infernal ship of ours?—I tell you, my friend, that, were all my former sins doubled in weight and in dye, such a villany would have outglared and outweighed them all.'

'Why, then, Captain Cleveland,' said his confidant, 'methinks it was but a fool's part to come hither at all. The news must one day have gone abroad, that the celebrated pirate, Captain Cleveland, with his good sloop the Revenge, had been lost on the Mainland of Zetland, and all hands perished; so you would have remained hid both from friend and enemy, and might have married your pretty Zetlander, and converted your sash and scarf into fishing nets, and your cutlass into a harpoon, and swept the seas for fish instead of florins.'

'And so I had determined,' said the captain; 'but a yagger, as they call them here, like a meddling, peddling thief as he is, brought down intelligence to Zetland of your lying here, and I was fain to set off, to see if you were the consort of whom I had told them, long before I thought of leaving the roving trade.'

'Ay,' said Bunce, 'and so far you judged well. For, as you had heard of our being at Kirkwall, so we should have soon learned that you were at Zetland; and some of us from friendship, some

for hatred, and some for fear of your playing Harry Glasby upon us, would have come down for the purpose of getting you into our company again.'

'I suspected as much,' said the captain, 'and therefore was fain to decline the courteous offer of a friend, who proposed to bring me here about this time. Besides, Jack, I recollected that, as you say, my pardon will not pass the seals without money, my own was waxing low—no wonder, thou knowest I was never a churl of it—and so'——

'And so you came for your share of the cobs?' replied his friend—'It was wisely done; and we shared honourably—so far Goffe has acted up to articles, it must be allowed. But keep your purpose of leaving him close in your breast, for I dread his playing you some dog's trick or other; for he certainly thought himself sure of your share, and will hardly forgive your coming alive to disappoint him.'

'I fear him not,' said Cleveland, 'and he knows that well. I would I were as well clear of the consequences of having been his comrade, as I hold myself to be of all those which may attend his ill-will. Another unhappy job I may be troubled with—I hurt a young fellow who has been my plague for some time, in an unhappy brawl that chanced the morning I left Zetland.'

'Is he dead?' asked Bunce; 'it is a more serious question here than it would be on the Grand Caimains or the Bahama Isles, where a brace or two of fellows may be shot in a morning, and no more heard of or asked about them than if they were so many wood-pigeons. But here it may be otherwise; so I hope you have not made your friend immortal?'

'I hope not,' said the captain, 'though my anger has been fatal to those who have given me less provocation. To say the truth, I was sorry for the lad, notwithstanding, and especially as I was forced to leave him in mad keeping.'

'In mad keeping!' said Bunce; 'why, what means that?'

'You shall hear,' replied his friend. 'In the first place, you are to know, this young man came suddenly on me while I was trying to gain Minna's ear for a private interview before I set sail, that I might explain my purpose to her. Now, to be broken in on by the accursed rudeness of this young fellow at such a moment'——

'The interruption deserved death,' said Bunce, 'by all the laws of love and honour!'

'A truce with your ends of plays, Jack, and listen one moment.—The brisk youth thought proper to retort, when I commanded him to be gone. I am not, thou knowest, very patient, and enforced my commands with a blow, which he returned as roundly. We struggled, till I became desirous that we should part at any rate, which I could only effect by a stroke of my poniard, which, according to old use, I have, thou knowest, always about me. I had scarce done this when I repented; but there was no time to think of anything save escape and concealment, for if the house rose on me, I was lost; as the fiery old man, who is head of the family, would have done justice on me had I been his brother. I took the body hastily on my shoulders to carry it down to the sea-shore, with the purpose of throwing it into a *riva*, as they call them, or chasm, of great depth, where it would have been long enough in being discovered. This done, I intended to jump into the boat which I had lying ready, and set sail for Kirkwall. But as I was walking hastily towards the beach with my burden, the poor young fellow groaned, and so apprised me that the wound had not been instantly fatal. I was by this time well concealed amongst the rocks, and, far from desiring to complete my crime, I laid the young man on the ground, and was doing what I could to staunch the blood, when suddenly an old woman stood before me. She was a person whom I had frequently seen while in Zetland, and to whom they ascribe the character of a sorceress, or, as the negroes say, an Obi woman. She demanded the wounded man of me, and I was too much pressed for time to hesitate in complying with her request. More she was about to say to me, when we heard the voice of a silly old man belonging to the family, singing at some distance. She then pressed her finger on her lip as a sign of secrecy, whistled very low, and, a shapeless, deformed brute of a dwarf coming to her assistance, they carried the wounded man into one of the caverns with which the place abounds, and I got to my boat and to sea with all expedition. If that old hag be, as they say, connected with the King of the Air, she favoured me that morning with a turn of her calling; for not even the West Indian tornadoes, which we have weathered together, made a wilder racket than the squall that drove me so far out of our course, that, without a pocket-compass, which I chanced to have about me, I should never have recovered the Fair Isle, for which we ran, and where I found a brig which brought me to this place. But whether the old woman meant me weal or woe, here we came at length in safety from the sea, and here I remain in doubts and difficulties of more kinds than one.'

'O, the devil take the Sumburgh Head,' said Bunce, 'or whatever they call the rock that you knocked our clever little Revenge against!'

'Do not say *I* knocked her on the rock,' said Cleveland; 'have I not told you fifty times, if the cowards had not taken to their boat, though I showed them the danger, and told them they would all be swamped, which happened the instant they cast off the painter, she would have been afloat at this moment? Had they stood by me and the ship, their lives would have been saved; had I gone with them, mine would have been lost; who can say which is for the best?'

'Well,' replied his friend, 'I know your case now, and can the better help and advise. I will be true to you, Clement, as the blade to the hilt; but I cannot think that you should leave us. As the old Scottish song says, "Wae's my heart that we should sunder!"—But come, you will aboard with us to-day, at any rate?'

'I have no other place of refuge,' said Cleveland, with a sigh.

He then once more ran his eyes over the bay, directed his spy-glass upon several of the vessels which traversed its surface, in hopes, doubtless, of discerning the vessel of Magnus Troil, and then followed his companion down the hill in silence.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I strive like to the vessel in the tide-way,
Which, lacking favouring breeze, hath not the power
To stem the powerful current.—Even so,
Resolving daily to forsake my vices,
Habits, strong circumstance, renew'd temptation,
Sweep me to sea again.—O heavenly breath,
Fill thou my sails, and aid the feeble vessel,
Which ne'er can reach the blessed port without thee!
'TIS ODDS WHEN EVENS MEET.

CLEVELAND, with his friend Bunce, descended the hill for a time in silence, until at length the latter renewed their conversation.

'You have taken this fellow's wound more on your conscience than you need, captain—I have known you do more, and think less on't.'

'Not on such slight provocation, Jack,' replied Cleveland. 'Besides, the lad saved my life; and, say that I requited him the favour, still we should not have met on such evil terms; but I trust that he may receive aid from that woman, who has certainly strange skill in simples.'

'And over simpletons, captain,' said his friend, 'in which class I must e'en put you down, if you think more on this subject. That you should be made a fool of by a young woman, why, it is many an honest man's case;—but to puzzle your pate about the mummeries of an old one, is far too great a folly to indulge a friend in. Talk to me of your Minna, since you so call her, as much as you will; but you have no title to trouble your faithful squire-errant with your old mumping magician. And now here we are once more amongst the booths and tents, which these good folk are pitching—let us look, and see whether we may not find some fun and frolic amongst them. In merry England, now, you would have seen, on such an occasion, two or three bands of strollers, as many fire-eaters and conjurors, as many shows of wild beasts; but amongst these grave folks, there is nothing but what savours of business and of commodity—no, not so much as a single squall from my merry gossip Punch and his rib Joan.'

As Bunce thus spoke, Cleveland cast his eyes on some very gay clothes, which, with other articles, hung out upon one of the booths, that had a good deal more of ornament and exterior decoration than the rest. There was in front a small sign of canvas painted, announcing the variety of goods which the owner of the booth, Bryce Snailsfoot, had on sale, and the reasonable prices at which he proposed to offer them to the public. For the further gratification of the spectator, the sign bore on the opposite side an emblematic device, resembling our first parents in their vegetable garments, with this legend—

Poor sinners whom the snake deceives,
Are fain to cover them with leaves.
Zetland hath no leaves, 'tis true,
Because that trees are none, or few;
But we have flax and taits of woo',
For linen cloth and wadmaal blue;
And we have many of foreign knacks
Of finer waft than woo' or flax.
Ye gallanty Lambmas lads,* appear,
And bring your Lambmas sisters here.
Bryce Snailsfoot spares not cost or care
To pleasure every gentle pair.

While Cleveland was perusing these goodly rhymes, which brought to his mind Claud Halcro, to whom, as the poet-laureate of the island, ready with his talent alike in the service of the great and small, they probably owed their origin, the worthy proprietor of the booth, having cast his eye upon him, began with hasty and trembling hand to remove some of the garments, which, as the sale did not commence till the ensuing day, he had exposed either for the purpose of airing them, or to excite the admiration of the spectators.

'By my word, captain,' whispered Bunce to Cleveland, 'you must have had that fellow under your clutches one day, and he remembers one gripe of your talons and fears another. See how fast he is packing his wares out of sight, so soon as he set eyes on you.'

'*His* wares!' said Cleveland, on looking more attentively at his proceedings: 'by Heaven, they are my clothes which I left in a chest at Yarlshof when the Revenge was lost there.—Why, Bryce Snailsfoot, thou thief, dog, and villain, what means this? Have you not made enough of us by cheap buying and dear selling, that you have seized on my trunk and wearing apparel?'

Bryce Snailsfoot, who probably would otherwise not have been willing to *see* his friend the captain, was now, by the vivacity of his attack, obliged to pay attention to him. He first whispered to his little foot-page, by whom, as we have already noticed, he was usually attended, 'Run to the town-council-house, yarto, and tell the provost and bailies they maun send some of their officers speedily, for here is like to be wild wark in the fair.'

So having said, and having seconded his commands by a push on the shoulder of his messenger, which sent him spinning out of the shop as fast as heels could carry him, Bryce Snailsfoot turned to his old acquaintance, and, with that amplification of words and exaggeration of manners, which in Scotland is called 'making a phrase,' he ejaculated—'The Lord be gude to us! the worthy Captain Cleveland, that we were all so grieved about, returned to relieve our hearts again! Wat have my cheeks been for you' (here Bryce wiped his eyes), 'and blithe am I now to see you restored to your sorrowing friends!'

'My sorrowing friends, you rascal!' said Cleveland; 'I will give you better cause for sorrow than ever you had on my account, if you do not tell me instantly where you stole all my clothes.'

'Stole!' ejaculated Bryce, casting up his eyes; 'now the Powers be gude to us!—the poor gentleman has lost his reason in that weary gale of wind.'

'Why, you insolent rascal!' said Cleveland, grasping the cane which he carried, 'do you think to bamboozle me with your impudence? As you would have a whole head on your shoulders, and your bones in a whole skin, one minute longer, tell me where the devil you stole my wearing apparel?'

Bryce Snailsfoot ejaculated once more a repetition of the word 'Stole! Now Heaven be gude to us!' but at the same time, conscious

* It was anciently a custom at Saint Olla's Fair at Kirkwall, that the young people of the lower class, and of either sex, associated in pairs for the period of the fair, during which the couple were termed Lambmas brother and sister. It is easy to conceive that the exclusive familiarity arising out of this custom was liable to abuse, the rather that it is said little scandal was attached to the indiscretions which it occasioned.

with pistols and cutlasses, as well as with the less lethal weapons which alone they had as yet made use of.

They gained their boat in safety, and jumped into it, carrying along with them Cleveland, to whom circumstances seemed to offer no other refuge, and pushed off for their vessel, singing in chorus to their oars an old ditty, of which the natives of Kirkwall could only hear the first stanza:—

Robin Rover
Said to his crew,
Up with the black flag,
Down with the blue!—
Fire on the main-top,
Fire on the bow,
Fire on the gun-deck,
Fire down below!

The wild chorus of their voices was heard long after the words ceased to be intelligible.—And thus was the pirate Cleveland again thrown almost involuntarily amongst those desperate associates, from whom he had so often resolved to detach himself.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Parental love, my friend, has power o'er wisdom,
And is the charm, which, like the falconer's lure,
Can bring from heaven the highest soaring spirits.—
So, when famed Prosper doff'd his magic robe,
It was Miranda pluck'd it from his shoulders.
OLD PLAY.

OUR wandering narrative must now return to Mordaunt Mertoun.—We left him in the perilous condition of one who has received a severe wound, and we now find him in the situation of a convalescent—pale, indeed, and feeble, from the loss of much blood, and the effects of a fever which had followed the injury, but so far fortunate, that the weapon, having glanced on the ribs, had only occasioned a great effusion of blood, without touching any vital part, and was now well-nigh healed; so efficacious were the vulnerary plants and salves with which it had been treated by the sage Norna of Fitful Head.

The matron and her patient now sat together in a dwelling in a remote island. He had been transported during his illness, and ere he had perfect consciousness, first to her singular habitation near Fitful Head, and thence to her present abode, by one of the fishing boats in the station of Burgh-Westra. For such was the command possessed by Norna over the superstitious character of her countrymen, that she never failed to find faithful agents to execute her commands, whatever these happened to be; and, as her orders were generally given under injunctions of the strictest secrecy, men reciprocally wondered at occurrences, which had in fact been produced by their own agency, and that of their neighbours, and in which, had they communicated freely with each other, no shadow of the marvellous would have remained.

Mordaunt was now seated by the fire, in an apartment indifferently well furnished, having a book in his hand, which he looked upon from time to time with signs of ennui and impatience; feelings which at length so far overcame him, that, flinging the volume on the table, he fixed his eyes on the fire, and assumed the attitude of one who is engaged in unpleasant meditation.

Norna, who sat opposite to him, and appeared busy in the composition of some drug or unguent, anxiously left her seat, and, approaching Mordaunt, felt his pulse, making at the same time the most affectionate inquiries whether he felt any sudden pain, and where it was seated. The manner in which Mordaunt replied to these earnest inquiries, although worded so as to express gratitude for her kindness, while he disclaimed any feeling of indisposition, did not seem to give satisfaction to the Pythoness.

'Ungrateful boy!' she said, 'for whom I have done so much; you whom I have rescued, by my power and skill, from the very gates of death,—are you already so weary of me that you cannot refrain from showing how desirous you are to spend, at a distance from me, the very first intelligent days of the life which I have restored you?'

'You do me injustice, my kind preserver,' replied Mordaunt; 'I am not tired of your society; but I have duties which recall me to ordinary life.'

'Duties!' repeated Norna; 'and what duties can or ought to interfere with the gratitude which you owe to me?—Duties! Your thoughts are on the use of your gun, or on clambering among the rocks in quest of sea-fowl. For these exercises your strength doth not yet fit you; and yet these are the duties to which you are so anxious to return!'

'Not so, my good and kind mistress,' said Mordaunt.—'To name one duty, out of many, which makes me seek to leave you, now that my strength permits, let me mention that of a son to his father.'

'To your father!' said Norna, with a laugh that had something in it almost frantic. 'O, you know not how we can, in these islands, at once cancel such duties! And for your father,' she added, proceeding more calmly, 'what has he done for you to deserve the regard and duty you speak of?—Is he not the same, who, as you have long since told me, left you for so many years poorly nourished among strangers, without inquiring whether you were alive or dead, and only sending, from time to time, supplies in such fashion as men relieve the leprous wretch to whom they fling alms from a distance? And, in these later years, when he had made you the companion of his misery, he has been by starts your pedagogue, by starts your tormentor, but never, Mordaunt, never your father.'

'Something of truth there is in what you say,' replied Mordaunt: 'My father is not fond; but he is, and has ever been, effectively kind. Men have not their affections in their power, and it is a child's duty to be grateful for the benefits which he receives, even when coldly bestowed. My father has conferred instruction on me, and I am convinced he loves me. He is unfortunate; and even if he loved me not'——

'And he does *not* love you,' said Norna hastily; 'he never loved anything, or any one, save himself. He is unfortunate, but well are his misfortunes deserved.—O, Mordaunt, you have

one parent only,—one parent, who loves you as the drops of the heart-blood!'

'I know I have but one parent,' replied Mordaunt; 'my mother has been long dead.—But your words contradict each other.'

'They do not—they do not,' said Norna, in a paroxysm of the deepest feeling; 'you have but one parent. Your unhappy mother is not dead —I would to God that she were!—but she is not dead. Thy mother is the only parent that loves thee; and I—I, Mordaunt,' throwing herself on his neck, 'am that most unhappy—yet most happy mother.'

She closed him in a strict and convulsive embrace; and tears, the first, perhaps, which she had shed for many years, burst in torrents as she sobbed on his neck. Astonished at what he heard, felt, and saw,—moved by the excess of her agitation, yet disposed to ascribe this burst of passion to insanity,—Mordaunt vainly endeavoured to tranquillize the mind of this extraordinary person.

'Ungrateful boy!' she said; 'who but a mother would have watched over thee as I have watched? From the instant I saw thy father, when he little thought by whom he was observed, a space now many years back, I knew him well; and, under his charge, I saw you, then a stripling,—while Nature, speaking loud in my bosom, assured me, thou wert blood of my blood, and bone of my bone. Think how often you have wondered to see me, when least expected, in your places of pastime and resort! Think how often my eye has watched you on the giddy precipices, and muttered those charms which subdue the evil demons, who show themselves to the climber on the giddiest point of his path, and force him to quit his hold! Did I not hang around thy neck, in pledge of thy safety, that chain of gold, which an elfin king gave to the founder of our race? Would I have given that dear gift to any but the son of my bosom?—Mordaunt, my power has done that for thee that a mere mortal mother would dread to think of. I have conjured the Mermaid at midnight, that thy bark might be prosperous on the haaf! I have hushed the winds, and navies have flapped their empty sails against the masts in inactivity, that you might safely indulge your sport upon the crags!'

Mordaunt, perceiving that she was growing yet wilder in her talk, endeavoured to frame an answer which should be at once indulgent, soothing, and calculated to allay the rising warmth of her imagination.

'Dear Norna,' he said, 'I have indeed many reasons to call you mother, who have bestowed so many benefits upon me; and from me you shall ever receive the affection and duty of a child. But the chain you mentioned, it has vanished from my neck—I have not seen it since the ruffian stabbed me.'

'Alas! and can you think of it at this moment?' said Norna, in a sorrowful accent.—'But be it so;—and know, it was I took it from thy neck, and tied it around the neck of her who is dearest to you; in token that the union betwixt you, which has been the only earthly wish which I have had the power to form, shall yet, even yet be accomplished—ay, although hell should open to forbid the banns!'

'Alas!' said Mordaunt, with a sigh, 'you remember not the difference betwixt our situation —her father is wealthy, and of ancient birth.'

'Not more wealthy than will be the heir of Norna of Fitful Head,' answered the Pythoness —'not of better or more ancient blood than that which flows in thy veins, derived from thy mother, the descendant of the same yarls and sea-kings from whom Magnus boasts his origin.—Or dost thou think, like the pedant and fanatic strangers who have come amongst us, that thy blood is dishonoured because my union with thy father did not receive the sanction of a priest?—Know that we were wedded after the ancient manner of the Norse—our hands were clasped within the circle of Odin,* with such deep vows of eternal fidelity, as even the laws of these usurping Scots would have sanctioned as equivalent to a blessing before the altar. To the offspring of such a union, Magnus has nought to object. It was weak—it was criminal on my part, but it conveyed no infamy to the birth of my son.'

The composed and collected manner in which Norna argued these points, began to impose upon Mordaunt an incipient belief in the truth of what she said, and, indeed, she added so many circumstances, satisfactorily and rationally connected with each other, as seemed to confute the notion that her story was altogether the delusion of that insanity which sometimes showed itself in her speech and actions. A thousand confused ideas rushed upon him, when he supposed it possible that the unhappy person before him might actually have a right to claim from him the respect and affection due to a parent from a son. He could only surmount them by turning his mind to a different, and scarce less interesting topic, resolving within himself to take time for further inquiry and mature consideration, ere he either rejected or admitted the claim which Norna preferred upon his affection and duty. His benefactress, at least, she undoubtedly was, and he could not err in paying her, as such, the respect and attention due from a son to a mother; and so far, therefore, he might gratify Norna without otherwise standing committed.

'And do you then really think, my mother, —since so you bid me term you,' said Mordaunt, 'that the proud Magnus Troil may, by any inducement, be prevailed upon to relinquish the angry feelings which he has of late adopted towards me, and to permit my addresses to his daughter Brenda?'

'Brenda!' repeated Norna—'who talks of Brenda?—It is of Minna that I spoke to you.'

'But it was of Brenda that I thought,' replied Mordaunt, 'of her that I now think, and of her alone that I will ever think.'

'Impossible, my son!' replied Norna. 'You cannot be so dull of heart, so poor of spirit, as to prefer the idle mirth and housewife simplicity of the younger sister, to the deep feeling and high mind of the noble-spirited Minna? Who would stoop to gather the lowly violet, that might have the rose for stretching out his hand?'

Some think the lowliest flowers are the

* See an explanation of this promise, Note V.

sweetest,' replied Mordaunt, 'and in that faith will I live and die.'

'You dare not tell me so!' answered Norna fiercely; then, instantly changing her tone, and taking his hand in the most affectionate manner, she proceeded:—'You must not—you will not tell me so, my dear son—you will not break a mother's heart in the very first hour in which she has embraced her child!—Nay, do not answer, but hear me. You must wed Minna—I have bound around her neck a fatal amulet, on which the happiness of both depends. The labours of my life have for years had this direction. Thus it must be and not otherwise—Minna must be the bride of my son!'

'But is not Brenda equally near, equally dear to you?' replied Mordaunt.

'As near in blood,' said Norna, 'but not so dear, no, not half so dear, in affection. Minna's mild, yet high and contemplative spirit renders her a companion meet for one whose ways, like mine, are beyond the ordinary paths of this world. Brenda is a thing of common and ordinary life, an idle laugher and scoffer, who would level art with ignorance, and reduce power to weakness, by disbelieving and turning into ridicule whatever is beyond the grasp of her shallow intellect.'

'She is indeed,' answered Mordaunt, 'neither superstitious nor enthusiastic, and I love her the better for it. Remember, also, my mother, that she returns my affection, and that Minna, if she loves any one, loves the stranger Cleveland.'

'She does not—she dares not,' answered Norna, 'nor dares he pursue her further. I told him, when first he came to Burgh-Westra, that I destined her for you.'

'And to that rash annunciation,' said Mordaunt, 'I owe this man's persevering enmity—my wound, and well-nigh the loss of my life. See, my mother, to what point your intrigues have already conducted us, and, in Heaven's name, prosecute them no further!'

It seemed as if this reproach struck Norna with the force, at once, and vivacity of lightning; for she struck her forehead with her hand, and seemed about to drop from her seat. Mordaunt, greatly shocked, hastened to catch her in his arms, and, though scarce knowing what to say, attempted to utter some incoherent expressions.

'Spare me, Heaven, spare me!' were the first words which she muttered; 'do not let my crime be avenged by his means!—Yes, young man,' she said, after a pause, 'you have dared to tell what I dared not tell myself. You have pressed that upon me, which, if it be truth, I cannot believe, and yet continue to live!'

Mordaunt in vain endeavoured to interrupt her with protestations of his ignorance how he had offended or grieved her, and of his extreme regret that he had unintentionally done either. She proceeded, while her voice trembled wildly, with vehemence:

'Yes! you have touched on that dark suspicion which poisons the consciousness of my power,—the sole boon which was given me in exchange for innocence and for peace of mind! Your voice joins that of the demon which even while the elements confess me their mistress, whispers to me, "Norna, this is but delusion—your power rests but in the idle belief of the ignorant, supported by a thousand petty artifices of your own."—This is what Brenda says—this is what you would say; and false, scandalously false as it is, there are rebellious thoughts in this wild brain of mine' (touching her forehead with her finger as she spoke), 'that, like an insurrection in an invaded country, arise to take part against their distressed sovereign.—Spare me, my son!' she continued, in a voice of supplication, 'spare me!—the sovereignty of which your words would deprive me is no enviable exaltation. Few would covet to rule over gibbering ghosts, and howling winds, and raging currents. My throne is a cloud, my sceptre a meteor, my realm is only peopled with fantasies; but I must either cease to be, or continue to be the mightiest as well as the most miserable of beings!'*

'Do not speak thus mournfully, my dear and unhappy benefactress,' said Mordaunt, much affected; 'I will think of your power whatever you would have me believe. But, for your own sake, view the matter otherwise. Turn your thoughts from such agitating and mystical studies, from such wild subjects of contemplation, into another and a better channel. Life will again have charms, and religion will have comforts for you.'

She listened to him with some composure, as if she weighed his counsel, and desired to be guided by it; but, as he ended, she shook her head, and exclaimed,—

'It cannot be. I must remain the dreaded—the mystical—the Reimkennar—the controller of the elements, or I must be no more! I have no alternative, no middle station. My post must be high on yon lofty headland, where never stood human foot save mine—or I must sleep at the bottom of the unfathomable ocean, its white billows booming over my senseless corpse. The parricide shall never also be denounced as the impostor!'

'The parricide!' echoed Mordaunt, stepping back in horror.

'Yes, my son!' answered Norna, with a stern composure, even more frightful than her former impetuosity; 'within these fatal walls my father met his death by my means. In yonder chamber was he found a livid and lifeless corpse. Beware of filial disobedience, for such are its fruits!'

So saying, she arose and left the apartment, where Mordaunt remained alone to meditate at leisure upon the extraordinary communication which he had received. He himself had been taught by his father a disbelief in the ordinary superstitions of Zetland; and he now saw that Norna, however ingenious in duping others, could not altogether impose on herself. This was a strong circumstance in favour of her sanity of intellect; but, on the other hand, her imputing to herself the guilt of parricide seemed so wild and improbable, as, in Mordaunt's opinion, to throw much doubt upon her other assertions.

He had leisure enough to make up his mind on these particulars, for no one approached the solitary dwelling, of which Norna, her dwarf, and he himself were the sole inhabitants. The

* Note Y. Character of Norna.

Hoy Island, in which it stood, is rude, bold, and lofty, consisting entirely of three hills—or rather one huge mountain divided into three summits, with the chasms, rents, and valleys, which descend from its summit to the sea, while its crest, rising to great height, and shivered into rocks which seem almost inaccessible, intercepts the mists as they drive from the Atlantic, and, often obscured from the human eye, forms the dark and unmolested retreat of hawks, eagles, and other birds of prey. *

The soil of the island is wet, mossy, cold, and unproductive, presenting a sterile and desolate appearance, excepting where the sides of small rivulets, or mountain ravines, are fringed with dwarf bushes of birch, hazel, and wild currant, some of them so tall as to be denominated trees in that bleak and bare country.

But the view of the sea-beach, which was Mordaunt's favourite walk, when his convalescent state began to permit him to take exercise, had charms which compensated the wild appearance of the interior. A broad and beautiful sound or strait divides this lonely and mountainous island from Pomona, and in the centre of that sound lies, like a tablet composed of emerald, the beautiful and verdant little island of Græmsay. On the distant Mainland is seen the town or village of Stromness, the excellence of whose haven is generally evinced by a considerable number of shipping in the roadstead, and, from the bay growing narrower, and lessening as it recedes, runs inland into Pomona, where its tide fills the fine sheet of water called the Loch of Stennis.

On this beach Mordaunt was wont to wander for hours, with an eye not insensible to the beauties of the view, though his thoughts were agitated with the most embarrassing meditations on his own situation. He was resolved to leave the island as soon as the establishment of his health should permit him to travel; yet gratitude to Norna, of whom he was at least the adopted, if not the real son, would not allow him to depart without her permission, even if he could obtain means of conveyance, of which he saw little possibility. It was only by importunity that he extorted from his hostess a promise, that, if he would consent to regulate his motions according to her directions, she would herself convey him to the capital of the Orkney Islands, when the approaching fair of Saint Olla should take place there.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Hark to the insult loud, the bitter sneer,
The fierce threat answering to the brutal jeer;
Oaths fly like pistol-shots, and vengeful words
Clash with each other like conflicting swords.—
The robber's quarrel by such sounds is shown,
And true men have some chance to gain their own.

CAPTIVITY, A POEM.

WHEN Cleveland, borne off in triumph from his assailants in Kirkwall, found himself once more on board the pirate vessel, his arrival was hailed with hearty cheers by a considerable part of the crew, who rushed to shake hands with him, and offer their congratulations on his return; for the situation of a buccanier captain raised him very little above the level with the lowest of his crew, who, in all social intercourse, claimed the privilege of being his equal.

When his faction, for so these clamorous friends might be termed, had expressed their own greetings, they hurried Cleveland forward to the stern, where Goffe, their present commander, was seated on a gun, listening in a sullen and discontented manner to the shout which announced Cleveland's welcome. He was a man betwixt forty and fifty, rather under the middle size, but so very strongly made, that his crew used to compare him to a sixty-four cut down. Black-haired, bull-necked, and beetle-browed, his clumsy strength and ferocious countenance contrasted strongly with the manly figure and open countenance of Cleveland, in which even the practice of his atrocious profession had not been able to eradicate a natural grace of motion and generosity of expression. The two piratical captains looked upon each other for some time in silence, while the partisans of each gathered around him. The elder part of the crew were the principal adherents of Goffe, while the young fellows, amongst whom Jack Bunce was a principal leader and agitator, were in general attached to Cleveland.

At length Goffe broke silence. 'You are welcome aboard, Captain Cleveland.—Smash my taffrail! I suppose you think yourself commodore yet! but that was over, by G—, when you lost your ship, and be d—d!'

And here, once for all, we may take notice that it was the gracious custom of this commander to mix his words and oaths in nearly equal proportions, which he was wont to call *shotting* his discourse. As we delight not, however, in the discharge of such artillery, we shall only indicate by a space like this —— the places in which these expletives occurred; and thus, if the reader will pardon a very poor pun, we will reduce Captain Goffe's volley of sharp shot into an explosion of blank cartridges. To his insinuations that he was come on board to assume the chief command, Cleveland replied, that he neither desired nor would accept any such promotion, but would only ask Captain Goffe for a cast of the boat, to put him ashore in one of the other islands, as he had no wish either to command Goffe, or to remain in a vessel under his orders.

'And why not under my orders, brother?' demanded Goffe, very austerely; '— — — are you too good a man, — — —with your cheese-toaster and your gib there, — — to serve under my orders, and be d—d to you, where there are so many gentlemen that are elder and better seamen than yourself?'

'I wonder which of these capital seamen it was,' said Cleveland coolly, 'that laid the ship under the fire of yon six-gun battery, that could blow her out of the water, if they had a mind, before you could either cut or slip? Elder and better sailors than I may like to serve under such a lubber, but I beg to be excused for my own share, captain—that's all I have got to tell you.'

* Note Z. Birds of prey.

'By G—, I think you are both mad!' said Hawkins the boatswain; 'a meeting with sword and pistol may be devilish good fun in its way, when no better is to be had; but who the devil that had common sense, amongst a set of gentlemen in our condition, would fall a-quarrelling with each other, to let these duck-winged, web-footed islanders have a chance of knocking us all upon the head?'

'Well said, old Hawkins!' said Derrick the quartermaster, who was an officer of very considerable importance among these rovers. 'I say, if the two captains won't agree to live together quietly, and club both heart and head to defend the vessel, why, d—n me, depose them both, say I, and choose another in their stead!'

'Meaning yourself, I suppose, Master Quartermaster?' said Jack Bunce; 'but that cock won't fight. He that is to command gentlemen, should be a gentleman himself, I think; and I give my vote for Captain Cleveland, as spirited and as gentleman-like a man as ever daffed the world aside, and bid it pass!'

'What! *you* call yourself a gentleman, I warrant!' retorted Derrick; 'why —— your eyes! a tailor would make a better out of the worst suit of rags in your strolling wardrobe!—It is a shame for men of spirit to have such a Jack-a-dandy scarecrow on board!'

Jack Bunce was so incensed at these base comparisons, that, without more ado, he laid his hand on his sword. The carpenter, however, and boatswain interfered, the former brandishing his broad-axe, and swearing he would put the skull of the first who should strike a blow past clouting, and the latter reminding them that, by their articles, all quarrelling, striking, or more especially fighting on board, was strictly prohibited; and that if any gentlemen had a quarrel to settle, they were to go ashore and decide it with cutlass and pistol in presence of two of their messmates.

'I have no quarrel with any one, — ——!' said Goffe sullenly; 'Captain Cleveland has wandered about among the islands here, amusing himself, — — —! and we have wasted our time and property in waiting for him, when we might have been adding twenty or thirty thousand dollars to the stock-purse. However, if it pleases the rest of the gentlemen-adventurers, — — —! why, I shall not grumble about it.'

'I propose,' said the boatswain, 'that there should be a general council called in the great cabin, according to our articles, that we may consider what course we are to hold in this matter.'

A general assent followed the boatswain's proposal; for each one found his own account in these general councils, in which each of the rovers had a free vote. By far the greater part of the crew only valued this franchise, as it allowed them, upon such solemn occasions, an unlimited quantity of liquor—a right which they failed not to exercise to the uttermost, by way of aiding their deliberations. But a few amongst the adventurers, who united some degree of judgment with the daring and profligate character of their profession, were wont, at such periods, to limit themselves within the bounds of comparative sobriety, and by these, under the apparent form of a vote of the general council, all things of moment relating to the voyage and undertakings of the pirates were in fact determined. The rest of the crew, when they recovered from their intoxication, were easily persuaded that the resolution adopted had been the legitimate effort of the combined wisdom of the whole senate.

Upon the present occasion, the debauch had proceeded until the greater part of the crew were, as usual, displaying inebriation in all its most brutal and disgraceful shapes—swearing empty and unmeaning oaths—venting the most horrid imprecations in the mere gaiety of their heart—singing songs, the ribaldry of which was only equalled by their profaneness; and, from the middle of this earthly hell, the two captains, together with one or two of their principal adherents, as also the carpenter and boatswain, who always took a lead on such occasions, had drawn together into a pandemonium, or privy council of their own, to consider what was to be done; for, as the boatswain metaphorically observed, they were in a narrow channel, and behoved to keep sounding the tideway.

When they began their consultations, the friends of Goffe remarked, to their great displeasure, that he had not observed the wholesome rule to which we have just alluded; but that, in endeavouring to drown his mortification at the sudden appearance of Cleveland, and the reception he met with from the crew, the elder captain had not been able to do so without overflowing his reason at the same time. His natural sullen taciturnity had prevented this from being observed until the council began its deliberations, when it proved impossible to hide it.

The first person who spoke was Cleveland, who said that, so far from wishing the command of the vessel, he desired no favour at any one's hand, except to land him upon some island or holm at a distance from Kirkwall, and leave him to shift for himself.

The boatswain remonstrated strongly against this resolution.

'The lads,' he said, 'all knew Cleveland, and could trust his seamanship, as well as his courage; besides, he never let the grog get quite uppermost, and was always in proper trim, either to sail the ship, or to fight the ship, whereby she was never without some one to keep her course when he was on board.—And as for the noble Captain Goffe,' continued the mediator, 'he is as stout a heart as ever broke biscuit, and that I will uphold him; but then, when he has his grog aboard—I speak to his face—he is so d—d funny with his cranks and his jests, that there is no living with him. You all remember how nigh he had run the ship on that cursed Horse of Copinsha, as they call it, just by way of frolic; and then you know how he fired off his pistol under the table, when we were at the great council, and shot Jack Jenkins in the knee, and cost the poor devil his leg, with his pleasantry.'*

* This was really an exploit of the celebrated Avery the pirate, who suddenly, and without provocation, fired his pistols under the table where he sat drinking with his messmates, wounded one man severely, and thought the matter a good jest. What is still more extraordinary, his crew regarded it in the same light.

'Jack Jenkins was not a chip the worse,' said the carpenter; 'I took the leg off with my saw as well as any loblolly-boy in the land could have done—heated my broad-axe, and seared the stump—ay, by ——! and made a jury-leg that he shambles about with as well as ever he did—for Jack could never cut a feather.' *

'You are a clever fellow, carpenter,' replied the boatswain, 'a d--d clever fellow! but I had rather you tried your saw and red-hot axe upon the ship's knee timbers than on mine, sink me! —But that here is not the case. The question is, if we shall part with Captain Cleveland here, who is a man of thought and action, whereby it is my belief it would be heaving the pilot overboard when the gale is blowing on a lee-shore. And I must say, it is not the part of a true heart to leave his mates, who have been here waiting for him till they have missed stays. Our water is well-nigh out, and we have junketed till provisions are low with us. We cannot sail without provisions—we cannot get provisions without the good-will of the Kirkwall folks. If we remain here longer, the Halcyon frigate will be down upon us--she was seen off Peterhead two days since,--and we shall hang up at the yard-arm to be sun-dried. Now, Captain Cleveland will get us out of the hobble, if any can. He can play the gentleman with these Kirkwall folks, and knows how to deal with them on fair terms, and foul too, if there be occasion for it.'

'And so you would turn honest Captain Goffe a-grazing, would ye?' said an old weatherbeaten pirate, who had but one eye; 'what though he has his humours, and made my eye dowse the glim in his fancies and frolics, he is as honest a man as ever walked a quarter-deck, for all that; and d—n me but I stand by him so long as t'other lantern is lit!'

'Why, you would not hear me out,' said Hawkins; 'a man might as well talk to so many negers!—I tell you, I propose that Cleveland shall only be captain from one *post meridiem* to five *a.m.*, during which time Goffe is always drunk.'

The captain of whom he last spoke gave sufficient proof of the truth of his words, by uttering an inarticulate growl, and attempting to present a pistol at the mediator Hawkins.

'Why, look ye now!' said Derrick, 'there is all the sense he has, to get drunk on council day, like one of these poor silly fellows!'

'Ay,' said Bunce, 'drunk as Davy's sow, in the face of the field, the fray, and the senate!'

'But nevertheless,' continued Derrick, 'it will never do to have two captains in the same day. I think week about might suit better—and let Cleveland take the first turn.'

'There are as good here as any of them,' said Hawkins; 'howsomdever, I object nothing to Captain Cleveland, and I think he may help us into deep water as well as another.'

'Ay,' exclaimed Bunce, 'and a better figure he will make at bringing these Kirkwallers to order than his sober predecessor!—So Captain Cleveland for ever!'

'Stop, gentlemen,' said Cleveland, who had hitherto been silent; 'I hope you will not choose me captain without my own consent!'

'Ay, by the blue vault of heaven will we,' said Bunce, 'if it be *pro bono publico!*'

'But hear me, at least,' said Cleveland—'I do consent to take command of the vessel, since you wish it, and because I see you will ill get out of the scrape without me.'

'Why, then, I say, Cleveland for ever, again!' shouted Bunce.

'Be quiet, prithee, dear Bunce!—honest Altamont!' said Cleveland.—'I undertake the business on this condition: that, when I have got the ship cleared for her voyage, with provisions, and so forth, you will be content to restore Captain Goffe to the command, as I said before, and put me ashore somewhere to shift for myself—You will then be sure it is impossible I can betray you, since I will remain with you to the last moment.'

'Ay, and after the last moment, too, by the blue vault! or I mistake the matter,' muttered Bunce to himself.

The matter was now put to the vote; and so confident were the crew in Cleveland's superior address and management, that the temporary deposition of Goffe found little resistance even among his own partisans, who reasonably enough observed, 'He might at least have kept sober to look after his own business--E'en let him put it to rights again himself next morning, if he will.'

But when the next morning came, the drunken part of the crew, being informed of the issue of the deliberations of the council, to which they were virtually held to have assented, showed such a superior sense of Cleveland's merits, that Goffe, sulky and malcontent as he was, judged it wisest for the present to suppress his feelings of resentment until a safer opportunity for suffering them to explode, and to submit to the degradation which so frequently took place among a piratical crew.

Cleveland, on his part, resolved to take upon him, with spirit and without loss of time, the task of extricating his ship's company from their perilous situation. For this purpose, he ordered the boat, with the purpose of going ashore in person, carrying with him twelve of the stoutest and best men of the ship's company, all very handsomely appointed (for the success of their nefarious profession had enabled the pirates to assume nearly as gay dresses as their officers), and, above all, each man being sufficiently armed with cutlass and pistols, and several having pole-axes and poniards.

Cleveland himself was gallantly attired in a blue coat, lined with crimson silk, and laced with gold very richly, crimson damask waistcoat and breeches, a velvet cap, richly embroidered, with a white feather, white silk stockings, and red-heeled shoes, which were the extremity of finery among the gallants of the day. He had a gold chain several times folded round his neck, which sustained a whistle of the same metal, the ensign of his authority. Above all, he wore a decoration peculiar to those daring depredators, who, besides one, or perhaps two, brace of pistols at their belt, had usually two additional brace, of the finest mounting and workmanship, sus-

* A ship going fast through the sea is said to cut a feather, alluding to the ripple which she throws off from her bows.

pended over their shoulders in a sort of sling or scarf of crimson ribbon. The hilt and mounting of the captain's sword corresponded in value to the rest of his appointments, and his natural good mien was so well adapted to the whol equipment, that when he appeared on deck he was received with a general shout by the crew, who, as in other popular societies, judged a great deal by the eye.

Cleveland took with him in the boat, amongst others, his predecessor in office, Goffe, who was also very richly dressed, but who, not having the advantage of such an exterior as Cleveland's, looked like a boorish clown in the dress of a courtier, or rather like a vulgar-faced footpad decked in the spoils of some one whom he has murdered, and whose claim to the property of his garments is rendered doubtful in the eyes of all who look upon him, by the mixture of awkwardness, remorse, cruelty, and insolence which clouds his countenance. Cleveland probably chose to take Goffe ashore with him, to prevent his having any opportunity, during his absence, to debauch the crew from their allegiance. In this guise they left the ship, and, singing to their oars, while the water foamed higher at the chorus, soon reached the quay of Kirkwall.

The command of the vessel was in the meantime entrusted to Bunce, upon whose allegiance Cleveland knew that he might perfectly depend, and, in a private conversation with him of some length, he gave him directions how to act in such emergencies as might occur.

These arrangements being made, and Bunce having been repeatedly charged to stand upon his guard alike against the adherents of Goffe and any attempt from the shore, the boat put off. As she approached the harbour, Cleveland displayed a white flag, and could observe that their appearance seemed to occasion a good deal of bustle and alarm. People were seen running to and fro, and some of them appeared to be getting under arms. The battery was manned hastily, and the English colours displayed. These were alarming symptoms, the rather that Cleveland knew that, though there were no artillerymen in Kirkwall, yet there were many sailors perfectly competent to the management of great guns, and willing enough to undertake such service in case of need.

Noting these hostile preparations with a heedful eye, but suffering nothing like doubt or anxiety to appear on his countenance, Cleveland ran the boat right for the quay, on which several people, armed with muskets, rifles, and fowling-pieces, and others with half-pikes and whaling-knives, were now assembled, as if to oppose his landing. Apparently, however, they had not positively determined what measures they were to pursue; for, when the boat reached the quay, those immediately opposite bore back, and suffered Cleveland and his party to leap ashore without hindrance. They immediately drew up on the quay, except two, who, as their captain had commanded, remained in the boat, which they put off to a little distance; a manœuvre which, while it placed the boat (the only one belonging to the sloop) out of danger of being seized, indicated a sort of careless confidence in Cleveland and his party, which was calculated to intimidate their opponents.

The Kirkwallers, however, showed the old northern blood, put a manly face upon the matter, and stood upon the quay, with their arms shouldered, directly opposite to the rovers, and blocking up against them the street which leads to the town.

Cleveland was the first who spoke, as the parties stood thus looking upon each other.—'How is this, gentlemen burghers?' he said; 'are you Orkney folks turned Highlandmen, that you are all under arms so early this morning; or have you manned the quay to give me the honour of a salute, upon taking the command of my ship?'

The burghers looked on each other, and one of them replied to Cleveland—'We do not know who you are; it was that other man,' pointing to Goffe, 'who used to come ashore as captain.'

'That other gentleman is my mate, and commands in my absence,' said Cleveland;—'but what is that to the purpose? I wish to speak with your lord mayor, or whatever you call him.'

'The provost is sitting in council with the magistrates,' answered the spokesman.

'So much the better,' replied Cleveland.—'Where do their worships meet?'

'In the council-house,' answered the other.

'Then make way for us, gentlemen, if you please, for my people and I are going there.'

There was a whisper among the townspeople; but several were unresolved upon engaging in a desperate, and perhaps an unnecessary conflict, with desperate men; and the more determined citizens formed the hasty reflection that the strangers might be more easily mastered in the house, or perhaps in the narrow streets which they had to traverse, than when they stood drawn up and prepared for battle upon the quay. They suffered them, therefore, to proceed unmolested; and Cleveland, moving very slowly, keeping his people close together, suffering no one to press upon the flanks of his little detachment, and making four men, who constituted his rear-guard, turn round and face to the rear from time to time, rendered it, by his caution, a very dangerous task to make any attempt upon them.

In this manner they ascended the narrow street, and reached the council-house, where the magistrates were actually sitting, as the citizen had informed Cleveland. Here the inhabitants began to press forward, with the purpose of mingling with the pirates, and availing themselves of the crowd in the narrow entrance, to secure as many as they could, without allowing them room for the free use of their weapons. But this also had Cleveland foreseen, and, ere entering the council-room, he caused the entrance to be cleared and secured, commanding four of his men to face down the street, and as many to confront the crowd who were thrusting each other from above. The burghers recoiled back from the ferocious, swarthy, and sunburnt countenances, as well as the levelled arms, of these desperadoes, and Cleveland, with the rest of his party, entered the council-room, where the magistrates were sitting in council, with very

little attendance. These gentlemen were thus separated effectually from the citizens, who looked to them for orders, and were perhaps more completely at the mercy of Cleveland, than he, with his little handful of men, could be said to be at that of the multitude by whom they were surrounded.

The magistrates seemed sensible of their danger; for they looked upon each other in some confusion, when Cleveland thus addressed them:—

'Good morrow, gentlemen,—I hope there is no unkindness betwixt us. I am come to talk with you about getting supplies for my ship yonder in the roadstead—we cannot sail without them.'

'Your ship, sir?' said the provost, who was a man of sense and spirit,—'how do we know that you are her captain?'

'Look at me,' said Cleveland, 'and you will, I think, scarce ask the question again.'

The magistrate looked at him, and accordingly did not think proper to pursue that part of the inquiry, but proceeded to say, 'And if you are her captain, whence comes she, and where is she bound for? You look too much like a man-of-war's man to be master of a trader, and we know that you do not belong to the British navy.'

'There are more men-of-war on the sea than sail under the British flag,' replied Cleveland; 'but say that I were commander of a free-trader here, willing to exchange tobacco, brandy, gin, and such like, for cured fish and hides, why, I do not think I deserve so very bad usage from the merchants of Kirkwall as to deny me provisions for my money?'

'Look you, captain,' said the town-clerk, 'it is not that we are so very strait-laced neither—for, when gentlemen of your cloth come this way, it is as weel, as I tauld the provost, just to do as the collier did when he met the devil,—and that is, to have naething to say to them, if they have naething to say to us;—and there is the gentleman,' pointing to Goffe, 'that was captain before you, and may be captain after you,'—('The cuckold speaks truth in that,' muttered Goffe),—'he knows well how handsomely we entertained him, till he and his men took upon them to run through the town like hellicat devils—I see one of them there!—that was the very fellow that stopped my servant wench on the street, as she carried the lantern home before me, and insulted her before my face!'

'If it please your noble mayorship's honour and glory,' said Derrick, the fellow at whom the town-clerk pointed, 'it was not I that brought-to the bit of a tender that carried the lantern in the poop—it was quite a different sort of person.'

'Who was it, then, sir?' said the provost.

'Why, please your majesty's worship,' said Derrick, making several sea bows, and describing, as nearly as he could, the exterior of the worthy magistrate himself, 'he was an elderly gentleman,—Dutch built, round in the stern, with a white wig and a red nose—very like your majesty, I think;' then, turning to a comrade, he added, 'Jack, don't you think the fellow that wanted to kiss the pretty girl with the lantern t'other night, was very like his worship?'

'By G—,' Tom Derrick,' answered the party appealed to, 'I believe it is the very man!'

'This is insolence which we can make you repent of, gentlemen!' said the magistrate, justly irritated at their effrontery; 'you have behaved in this town as if you were in an Indian village at Madagascar. You yourself, captain, if captain you be, were at the head of another riot, no longer since than yesterday. We will give you no provisions till we know better whom we are supplying. And do not think to bully us; when I shake this handkerchief out at the window, which is at my elbow, your ship goes to the bottom. Remember, she lies under the guns of our battery.'

'And how many of these guns are honeycombed, Mr. Mayor?' said Cleveland. He put the question by chance; but instantly perceived, from a sort of confusion which the provost in vain endeavoured to hide, that the artillery of Kirkwall was not in the best order. 'Come, come, Mr. Mayor,' he said, 'bullying will go down with us as little as with you. Your guns yonder will do more harm to the poor old sailors who are to work them, than to our sloop; and if we bring a broadside to bear on the town, why, your wives' crockery will be in some danger. And then to talk to us of seamen being a little frolicsome ashore, why, when are they otherwise? You have the Greenland whalers playing the devil among you every now and then; and the very Dutchmen cut capers in the streets of Kirkwall, like porpoises before a gale of wind. I am told you are a man of sense, and I am sure you and I could settle this matter in the course of a five minutes' palaver.'

'Well, sir,' said the provost, 'I will hear what you have to say, if you will walk this way.'

Cleveland accordingly followed him into a small interior apartment, and, when there, addressed the provost thus:—'I will lay aside my pistols, sir, if you are afraid of them.'

'D—n your pistols!' answered the provost. 'I have served the king, and fear the smell of powder as little as you do!'

'So much the better,' said Cleveland, 'for you will hear me the more coolly.—Now, sir, let us be what perhaps you suspect us, or let us be anything else, what, in the name of Heaven, can you get by keeping us here, but blows and bloodshed? for which, believe me, we are much better provided than you can pretend to be. The point is a plain one—you are desirous to be rid of us—we are desirous to be gone. Let us have the means of departure, and we leave you instantly.'

'Look ye, captain,' said the provost—'I thirst for no man's blood. You are a pretty fellow, as there were many among the buccaniers in my time—but there is no harm in wishing you a better trade. You should have the stores and welcome, for your money, so you would make these seas clear of you. But then here lies the rub. The Halcyon frigate is expected here in these parts immediately; when she hears of you she will be at you; for there is nothing the white lapelle loves better than a rover—you are seldom without a cargo of dollars. Well, he comes down, gets you under his stern'——

'Blows us into the air, if you please,' said Cleveland.

'Nay, that must be as *you* please, captain,' said the provost; 'but then, what is to come of the good town of Kirkwall, that has been packing and peeling with the king's enemies? The burgh will be laid under a round fine, and it may be that the provost may not come off so easily.'

'Well, then,' said Cleveland, 'I see where your pinch lies. Now, suppose that I run round this island of yours, and get into the roadstead at Stromness? We could get what we want put on board there, without Kirkwall or the provost seeming to have any hand in it; or, if it should be ever questioned, your want of force and our superior strength will make a sufficient apology.'

'That may be,' said the provost; 'but if I suffer you to leave your present station, and go elsewhere, I must have some security that you will not do harm to the country.'

'And we,' said Cleveland, 'must have some security on our side, that you will not detain us, by dribbling out our time till the Halcyon is on the coast. Now, I am myself perfectly willing to continue on shore as a hostage, on the one side, provided you will give me your word not to betray me, and send some magistrate, or person of consequence, aboard the sloop, where his safety will be a guarantee for mine.'

The provost shook his head, and intimated it would be difficult to find a person willing to place himself as hostage in such a perilous condition; but said he would propose the arrangement to such of the council as were fit to be trusted with a matter of such weight.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I left my poor plough to go ploughing the deep!
DIBDIN.

WHEN the provost and Cleveland had returned into the public council-room, the former retired a second time with such of his brethren as he thought proper to advise with; and while they were engaged in discussing Cleveland's proposal, refreshments were offered to him and his people. These the captain permitted his people to partake of, but with the greatest precaution against surprisal, one party relieving the guard whilst the others were at their food.

He himself, in the meanwhile, walked up and down the apartment, and conversed upon indifferent subjects with those present, like a person quite at his ease.

Amongst these individuals he saw, somewhat to his surprise, Triptolemus Yellowley, who, chancing to be at Kirkwall, had been summoned by the magistrates as representative, in a certain degree, of the Lord Chamberlain, to attend council on this occasion. Cleveland immediately renewed the acquaintance which he had formed with the agriculturist at Burgh-Westra, and asked him his present business in Orkney.

'Just to look after some of my little plans, Captain Cleveland. I am weary of fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus yonder, and I just cam ower to see how my orchard was thriving, whilk I had planted four or five miles from Kirkwall, it may be a year by-gane, and how the bees were thriving, whereof I had imported nine skeps, for the improvement of the country, and for the turning of the heather bloom into wax and honey.'

'And they thrive, I hope?' said Cleveland, who, however little interested in the matter, sustained the conversation, as if to break the chilly and embarrassed silence which hung upon the company assembled.

'Thrive!' replied Triptolemus; 'they thrive like everything else in this country, and that is the backward way.'

'Want of care, I suppose?' said Cleveland.

'The contrary, sir, quite and clean the contrary,' replied the factor; 'they died of ower muckle care, like Lucky Christie's chickens.—I asked to see the skeps, and cunning and joyful did the fallow look who was to have taken care of them—"Had there been onybody in charge but mysel'," he said, "ye might have seen the skeps, or whatever you ca' them; but there wad hae been as mony solan geese as flees in them, if it hadna been for my four quarters; for I watched them so closely, that I saw them a' creeping out at the little holes one sunny morning, and if I had not stopped the leak on the instant with a bit clay, the deil a bee, or flee, or whatever they are, would have been left in the skeps, as ye ca' them!"—In a word, sir, he had clagged up the hives, as if the puir things had had the pestilence, and my bees were as dead as if they had been smeeked—and so ends my hope, *generandi gloria mellis*, as Virgilius hath it.'

'There is an end of your mead, then,' replied Cleveland; 'but what is your chance of cider?—How does the orchard thrive?'

'O, captain! this same Solomon of the Orcadian Ophir—I am sure no man need to send hither to fetch either talents of gold or talents of sense!—I say, this wise man had watered the young apple-trees, in his great tenderness, with hot water, and they are perished, root and branch! But what avails grieving?—and I wish you would tell me instead what is all the din that these good folks are making about pirates? and what for are all these ill-looking men, that are armed like so mony Highlandmen, assembled in the judgment chamber?—for I am just come from the other side of the island, and I have heard nothing distinct about it.—And now I look at you yoursel', captain, I think you have mair of these foolish pistolets about you than should suffice an honest man in quiet times.'

'And so I think, too,' said the pacific Triton, old Haagen, who had been an unwilling follower of the daring Montrose; 'if you had been in the Glen of Edderachyllis, when we were sae sair worried by Sir John Worry'——

'You have forgot the whole matter, neighbour Haagen,' said the factor; 'Sir John Urry was on your side, and was ta'en with Montrose; by the same token, he lost his head.'

'Did he?' said the Triton.—'I believe you may be right; for he changed sides mair than ance, and wha kens whilk he died for?—But always he was there, and so was I;—a fight there was, and I never wish to see another!'

The entrance of the provost here interrupted their desultory conversation.—'We have deter-

mined,' he said, 'captain, that your ship shall go round to Stromness, or Scalpa-flow, to take in stores, in order that there may be no more quarrels between the fair folks and your seamen. And as you wish to stay on shore to see the fair, we intend to send a respectable gentleman on board your vessel to pilot her round the Mainland, as the navigation is but ticklish.'

'Spoken like a quiet and sensible magistrate, Mr. Mayor,' said Cleveland, 'and no otherwise than as I expected.—And what gentleman is to honour our quarter-deck during my absence?'

'We have fixed that too, Captain Cleveland,' said the provost; 'you may be sure we were each more desirous than another to go upon so pleasant a voyage, and in such good company; but being fair time, most of us have some affairs in hand—I myself, in respect of my office, cannot be well spared—the eldest bailie's wife is lying in—the treasurer does not agree with the sea—two bailies have the gout—the other two are absent from town—and the other fifteen members of the council are all engaged on particular business.'

'All that I can tell you, Mr. Mayor,' said Cleveland, raising his voice, 'is, that I expect'——

'A moment's patience, if you please, captain,' said the provost, interrupting him—'So that we have come to the resolution that our worthy Mr. Triptolemus Yellowley, who is factor to the Lord Chamberlain of these islands, shall, in respect of his official situation, be preferred to the honour and pleasure of accompanying you.'

'Me!' said the astonished Triptolemus; 'what the devil should I do going on your voyages?—my business is on dry land!'

'The gentlemen want a pilot,' said the provost, whispering to him, 'and there is no eviting to give them one.'

'Do they want to go bump on shore, then?' said the factor—'How the devil should I pilot them, that never touched rudder in my life?'

'Hush!—hush!—be silent!' said the provost; 'if the people of this town heard ye say such a word, your utility, and respect, and rank, and everything else, is clean gone!—No man is anything with us island folks, unless he can hand, reef, and steer.—Besides, it is but a mere form; and we will send old Pate Sinclair to help you. You will have nothing to do but to eat, drink, and be merry all day.'

'Eat and drink!' said the factor, not able to comprehend exactly why this piece of duty was pressed upon him so hastily, and yet not very capable of resisting or extricating himself from the toils of the more knowing provost—'Eat and drink?—that is all very well; but, to speak truth, the sea does not agree with me any more than with the treasurer; and I have always a better appetite for eating and drinking ashore.'

'Hush! hush! hush!' again said the provost, in an undertone of earnest expostulation; 'would you actually ruin your character out and out?—A factor of the High Chamberlain of the Isles of Orkney and Zetland, and not like the sea!—you might as well say you are a Highlander, and do not like whisky!'

'You must settle it somehow, gentlemen,' said Captain Cleveland; 'it is time we were under way.—Mr. Triptolemus Yellowley, are we to be honoured with your company?'

'I am sure, Captain Cleveland,' stammered the factor, 'I would have no objection to go anywhere with you—only'——

'He has no objection,' said the provost, catching at the first limb of the sentence, without awaiting the conclusion.

'He has no objection,' cried the treasurer.

'He has no objection,' sung out the whole four bailies together; and the fifteen councillors, all catching up the same phrase of assent, repeated it in chorus, with the additions of 'good man'—'public-spirited'—'honourable gentleman'—'burgh eternally obliged'—'where will you find such a worthy factor?' and so forth.

Astonished and confused at the praises with which he was overwhelmed on all sides, and in no shape understanding the nature of the transaction that was going forward, the astounded and overwhelmed agriculturist became incapable of resisting the part of the Kirkwall Curtius thus insidiously forced upon him, and was delivered up by Captain Cleveland to his party, with the strictest injunctions to treat him with honour and attention. Goffe and his companions began now to lead him off, amid the applauses of the whole meeting, after the manner in which the victim of ancient days was garlanded and greeted by shouts when consigned to the priests for the purpose of being led to the altar and knocked on the head, a sacrifice for the common weal. It was while they thus conducted, and in a manner forced him out of the council-chamber, that poor Triptolemus, much alarmed at finding that Cleveland, in whom he had some confidence, was to remain behind the party, tried, when just going out at the door, the effect of one remonstrating bellow; 'Nay, but, provost!—captain!—bailies!—treasurer!—councillors!—if Captain Cleveland does not go aboard to protect me, it is nae bargain, and go I will not, unless I am trailed with cart ropes!'

His protest was, however, drowned in the unanimous chorus of the magistrates and councillors, returning him thanks for his public spirit—wishing him a good voyage—and praying to Heaven for his happy and speedy return. Stunned and overwhelmed, and thinking, if he had any distinct thoughts at all, that remonstrance was vain, where friends and strangers seemed alike determined to carry the point against him, Triptolemus, without further resistance, suffered himself to be conducted into the street, where the pirate's boat's crew, assembling around him, began to move slowly towards the quay, many of the town's folk following out of curiosity, but without any attempt at interference or annoyance; for the pacific compromise which the dexterity of the first magistrate had achieved, was unanimously approved of, as a much better settlement of the disputes betwixt them and the strangers, than might have been attained by the dubious issue of an appeal to arms.

Meanwhile, as they went slowly along, Triptolemus had time to study the appearance, countenance, and dress of those into whose hands he has been thus delivered, and began to imagine that he read in their looks, not only the general

expression of a desperate character, but some sinister intentions directed particularly towards himself. He was alarmed by the truculent looks of Goffe, in particular, who, holding his arm with a gripe which resembled in delicacy of touch the compression of a smith's vice, cast on him from the outer corner of his eye oblique glances, like those which the eagle throws upon the prey which she has clutched, ere yet she proceeds, as it is technically called, to plume it. At length Yellowley's fears got so far the better of his prudence, that he fairly asked his terrible conductor, in a sort of crying whisper, 'Are you going to murder me, captain, in the face of the laws baith of God and man?'

'Hold your peace, if you are wise,' said Goffe, who had his own reasons for desiring to increase the panic of his captive; 'we have not murdered a man these three months, and why should you put us in mind of it?'

'You are but joking, I hope, good worthy captain,' replied Triptolemus. 'This is worse than witches, dwarfs, dirking of whales, cowping of cobles, put all together!—this is an away-ganging crop, with a vengeance!—What good, in Heaven's name, would murdering me do to you?'

'We might have some pleasure in it, at least,' said Goffe.—'Look these fellows in the face, and see if you see one among them that would not rather kill a man than let it alone!—But we will speak more of that when you have first had a taste of the bilboes—unless, indeed, you come down with a handsome round handful of Chili boards* for your ransom.'

'As I shall live by bread, captain,' answered the factor, 'that misbegotten dwarf has carried off the whole hornful of silver!'

'A cat-and-nine-tails will make you find it again,' said Goffe gruffly; 'flogging and pickling is an excellent recipe to bring a man's wealth into his mind—twisting a bow-string round his skull till the eyes start a little, is a very good remembrancer, too!'

'Captain,' replied Yellowley stoutly, 'I have no money—seldom can improvers have.—We turn pasture to tillage, and barley into aits, and heather into greensward, and the poor *yarpha*, as the benighted creatures here call their peat-bogs, into baittle grass-land; but we seldom make anything of it that comes back to our ain pouch.—The carles and the cart-avers make it all, and the carles and the cart-avers eat it all, and the deil clink doun with it!'

'Well, well,' said Goffe, 'if you be really a poor fellow, as you pretend, I'll stand your friend;' then, inclining his head so as to reach the ear of the factor, who stood on tiptoe with anxiety, he said, 'If you love your life, do not enter the boat with us.'

'But how am I to get away from you, while you hold me so fast by the arm, that I could not get off if the whole year's crop of Scotland depended on it?'

'Hark ye, you gudgeon,' said Goffe, 'just when you come to the water's edge, and when the fellows are jumping in and taking their oars, slue yourself round suddenly to the larboard—I will let go your arm—and then cut and run for your life!'

Triptolemus did as he was desired, Goffe's willing hand relaxed the grasp as he had promised, the agriculturist trundled off like a football that has just received a strong impulse from the foot of one of the players, and, with celerity which surprised himself as well as all beholders, fled through the town of Kirkwall. Nay, such was the impetus of his retreat, that, as if the grasp of the pirate was still open to pounce upon him, he never stopped till he had traversed the whole town, and attained the open country on the other side. They who had seen him that day,—his hat and wig lost in the sudden effort he had made to bolt forward, his cravat awry, and his waistcoat unbuttoned,—and who had an opportunity of comparing his round spherical form and short legs with the portentous speed at which he scoured through the street, might well say, that if Fury ministers arms, Fear confers wings. His very mode of running seemed to be that peculiar to his fleecy care, for, like a ram in the midst of his race, he ever and anon encouraged himself by a great bouncing attempt at a leap, though there were no obstacles in his way.

There was no pursuit after the agriculturist; and though a musket or two were presented, for the purpose of sending a leaden messenger after him, yet Goffe, turning peacemaker for once in his life, so exaggerated the dangers that would attend a breach of the truce with the people of Kirkwall, that he prevailed upon the boat's crew to forbear any active hostilities, and to pull off for their vessel with all despatch.

The burghers, who regarded the escape of Triptolemus as a triumph on their side, gave the boat three cheers, by way of an insulting farewell; while the magistrates, on the other hand, entertained great anxiety respecting the probable consequences of this breach of articles between them and the pirates; and could they have seized upon the fugitive very privately, instead of complimenting him with a civic feast in honour of the agility which he displayed, it is likely they might have delivered the runaway hostage once more into the hands of his foemen. But it was impossible to set their face publicly to such an act of violence, and therefore they contented themselves with closely watching Cleveland, whom they determined to make responsible for any aggression which might be attempted by the pirates. Cleveland, on his part, easily conjectured that the motive which Goffe had for suffering his hostage to escape, was to leave him answerable for all consequences, and, relying more on the attachment and intelligence of his friend and adherent, Frederick Altamont, alias Jack Bunce, than on anything else, expected the result with considerable anxiety, since the magistrates, though they continued to treat him with civility, plainly intimated they would regulate his treatment by the behaviour of the crew, though he no longer commanded them.

It was not, however, without some reason that he reckoned on the devoted fidelity of Bunce; for no sooner did that trusty adherent receive from Goffe, and the boat's crew, the news of the escape of Triptolemus, than he immediately

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* Commonly called, by landsmen, Spanish dollars.

concluded it had been favoured by the late captain, in order that, Cleveland being either put to death or consigned to hopeless imprisonment, Goffe might be called upon to resume the command of the vessel.

'But the drunken old boatswain shall miss his mark,' said Bunce to his confederate Fletcher; 'or else I am contented to quit the name of Altamont, and be called Jack Bunce, or Jack Dunce, if you like it better, to the end of the chapter.'

Availing himself accordingly of a sort of nautical eloquence, which his enemies termed slack-jaw, Bunce set before the crew, in a most animated manner, the disgrace which they all sustained by their captain remaining, as he was pleased to term it, in the bilboes without any hostage to answer for his safety; and succeeded so far, that, besides exciting a good deal of discontent against Goffe, he brought the crew to the resolution of seizing the first vessel of a tolerable appearance, and declaring that the ship, crew, and cargo should be dealt with according to the usage which Cleveland should receive on shore. It was judged at the same time proper to try the faith of the Orcadians, by removing from the roadstead of Kirkwall, and going round to that of Stromness, where, according to the treaty betwixt Provost Torfe and Captain Cleveland, they were to victual their sloop. They resolved, in the meantime, to entrust the command of the vessel to a council, consisting of Goffe, the boatswain, and Bunce himself, until Cleveland should be in a situation to resume his command.

These resolutions having been proposed and acceded to, they weighed anchor, and got their sloop under sail, without experiencing any opposition or annoyance from the battery, which relieved them of one important apprehension incidental to their situation.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Clap on more sail, pursue, up with your fights,
Give fire—she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all!
SHAKESPEARE.

A VERY handsome brig, which, with several other vessels, was the property of Magnus Troil, the great Zetland Udaller, had received on board that magnate himself, his two lovely daughters, and the facetious Claud Halcro, who, for friendship's sake chiefly, and the love of beauty proper to his poetical calling, attended them on their journey from Zetland to the capital of Orkney, to which Norna had referred them, as the place where her mystical oracles should at length receive a satisfactory explanation.

They passed, at a distance, the tremendous cliffs of the lonely spot of earth called the Fair Isle, which, at an equal distance from either archipelago, lies in the sea which divides Orkney from Zetland; and at length, after some baffling winds, made the Start of Sanda. Off the headland so named, they became involved in a strong current, well known by those who frequent these seas as the Roost of the Start, which carried them considerably out of their course, and, joined to an adverse wind, forced them to keep on the east side of the island of Stronsa, and finally compelled them to lie by for the night in Papa Sound, since the navigation in dark or thick weather, amongst so many low islands, is neither pleasant nor safe.

On the ensuing morning they resumed their voyage under more favourable auspices; and, coasting along the island of Stronsa, whose flat, verdant, and comparatively fertile shores formed a strong contrast to the dun hills and dark cliffs of their own islands, they doubled the cape called the Lamb Head, and stood away for Kirkwall.

They had scarce opened the beautiful bay betwixt Pomona and Shapinsha, and the sisters were admiring the massive church of Saint Magnus, as it was first seen to rise from amongst the inferior buildings of Kirkwall, when the eyes of Magnus and of Claud Halcro were attracted by an object which they thought more interesting. This was an armed sloop with her sails set, which had just left the anchorage in the bay, and was running before the wind by which the brig of the Udaller was beating in.

'A tight thing that, by my ancestors' bones!' said the old Udaller; 'but I cannot make out of what country, as she shows no colours. Spanish built, I should think her.'

'Ay, ay,' said Claud Halcro, 'she has all the look of it. She runs before the wind that we must battle with, which is the wonted way of the world. As glorious John says—

With roomy deck, and guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves;
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.'

Brenda could not help telling Halcro, when he had spouted this stanza with great enthusiasm, 'that, though the description was more like a first-rate than a sloop, yet the simile of the sea-wasp served but indifferently for either.'

'A sea-wasp?' said Magnus, with some surprise, as the sloop, shifting her course, suddenly bore down on them—'Egad, I wish she may not show us presently that she has a sting!'

What the Udaller said in jest was fulfilled in earnest; for, without hoisting colours or hailing, two shots were discharged from the sloop, one of which ran dipping and dancing upon the water, just ahead of the Zetlander's bows, while the other went through his mainsail.

Magnus caught up a speaking-trumpet, and hailed the sloop, to demand what she was, and what was the meaning of this unprovoked aggression. He was only answered by the stern command—'Down topsails instantly, and lay your mainsail to the mast—you shall see who we are presently.'

There were no means within the reach of possibility by which obedience could be evaded, where it would instantly have been enforced by a broadside; and, with much fear on the part of the sisters and Claud Halcro, mixed with anger and astonishment on that of the Udaller, the brig lay-to to await the commands of the captors.

The sloop immediately lowered a boat, with six armed hands, commanded by Jack Bunce, which rowed directly for their prize. As they approached her, Claud Halcro whispered to the

Udaller—'If what we hear of buccaniers be true, these men, with their silk scarfs and vests, have the very cut of them.'

'My daughters, my daughters!' muttered Magnus to himself, with such an agony as only a father could feel—'Go down below and hide yourselves, girls, while I'——

He threw down his speaking-trumpet and seized on a handspike, while his daughters, more afraid of the consequences of his fiery temper to himself than of anything else, hung round him, and begged him to make no resistance. Claud Halcro united his entreaties, adding, 'It were best pacify the fellows with fair words. They might,' he said, 'be Dunkirkers, or insolent man-of-war's-men on a frolic.'

'No, no,' answered Magnus; 'it is the sloop which the yagger told us of. But I will take your advice—I will have patience for these girls' sakes; yet'——

He had no time to conclude the sentence, for Bunce jumped on board with his party, and, drawing his cutlass, struck it upon the companion-ladder, and declared the ship was theirs.

'By what warrant or authority do you stop us on the high seas?' said Magnus.

'Here are half-a-dozen of warrants,' said Bunce, showing the pistols which were hung round him, according to a pirate fashion already mentioned; 'choose which you like, old gentleman, and you shall have the perusal of it presently.'

'That is to say, you intend to rob us?' said Magnus.—'So be it—we have no means to help it—only be civil to the women, and take what you please from the vessel. There is not much, but I will and can make it worth more if you use us well.'

'Civil to the women!' said Fletcher, who had also come on board with the gang—'when were we else than civil to them? ay, and kind to boot?—Look here, Jack Bunce! what a trim-going little thing here is!—By G—, she shall make a cruise with us, come of old Squaretoes what will!'

He seized upon the terrified Brenda with one hand, and insolently pulled back with the other the hood of the mantle in which she had muffled herself.

'Help, father!—help, Minna!' exclaimed the affrighted girl; unconscious, at the moment, that they were unable to render her assistance.

Magnus again uplifted the handspike, but Bunce stopped his hand.—'Avast, father!' he said, 'or you will make a bad voyage of it presently.—And you, Fletcher, let go the girl!'

'And d—n me! why should I let her go?' said Fletcher.

'Because I command you, Dick,' said the other, 'and because I'll make it a quarrel else. —And now let me know, beauties, is there one of you bears that queer heathen name of Minna, for which I have a certain sort of regard?'

'Gallant sir,' said Halcro, 'unquestionably it is because you have some poetry in your heart.'

'I have had enough of it in my mouth in my time,' answered Bunce; 'but that day is by, old gentleman—however, I shall soon find out which of these girls is Minna.—Throw back your mufflings from your faces, and don't be afraid, my Lindamiras; no one here shall meddle with you to do you wrong. On my soul, two pretty wenches!—I wish I were at sea in an egg-shell, and a rock under my lee-bow, if I would wish a better leaguer-lass than the worst of them!—Hark you, my girls; which of you would like to swing in a rover's hammock?—you should have gold for the gathering!'

The terrified maidens clung close together, and grew pale at the bold and familiar language of the desperate libertine.

'Nay, don't be frightened,' said he; 'no one shall serve under the noble Altamont but by her own free choice—there is no pressing amongst gentlemen of fortune. And do not look so shy upon me neither, as if I spoke of what you never thought of before. One of you, at least, has heard of Captain Cleveland, the rover.'

Brenda grew still paler, but the blood mounted at once in Minna's cheeks, on hearing the name of her lover thus unexpectedly introduced; for the scene was in itself so confounding, that the idea of the vessel's being the consort of which Cleveland had spoken at Burgh-Westra, had occurred to no one save the Udaller.

'I see how it is,' said Bunce, with a familiar nod, 'and I will hold my course accordingly.—You need not be afraid of any injury, father,' he added, addressing Magnus familiarly; 'and though I have made many a pretty girl pay tribute in my time, yet yours shall go ashore without either wrong or ransom.'

'If you will assure me of that,' said Magnus, 'you are as welcome to the brig and cargo, as ever I made man welcome to a can of punch.'

'And it is no bad thing that same can of punch,' said Bunce, 'if we had any one that could mix it well.'

'I will do it,' said Claud Halcro, 'with any man that ever squeezed lemon - Eric Scambester, the punch-maker of Burgh-Westra, being alone excepted.'

'And you are within a grapnel's length of him, too,' said the Udaller. -'Go down below, my girls,' he added, 'and send up the rare old man, and the punch-bowl.'

'The punch-bowl!' said Fletcher; 'I say, the bucket, d—n me!—Talk of bowls in the cabin of a paltry merchantman, but not to gentlemen strollers — rovers, I would say,' correcting himself, as he observed that Bunce looked sour at the mistake.

'And I say, these two pretty girls shall stay on deck, and fill my can,' said Bunce; 'I deserve some attendance, at least, for all my generosity.'

'And they shall fill mine too,' said Fletcher 'they shall fill it to the brim!—and I will have a kiss for every drop they spill—broil me if I won't!'

'Why, then, I tell you, you shan't!' said Bunce; 'for I'll be d—d if any one shall kiss Minna but one, and that's neither you nor I; and her other little bit of a consort shall 'scape for company;—there are plenty of willing wenches in Orkney.—And so, now I think on it, these girls shall go down below, and bolt themselves into the cabin; and we shall have

the punch up here on deck, *al fresco*, as the old gentleman proposes.'

'Why, Jack, I wish you knew your own mind,' said Fletcher, 'I have been your mess mate these two years, and I love you, and yet flay me like a wild bullock, if you have not as many humours as a monkey!—And what shall we have to make a little fun of, since you have sent the girls down below?'

'Why, we will have Master Punch-maker here,' answered Bunce, 'to give us toasts, and sing us songs.—And, in the meantime, you there, stand by sheets and tacks, and get her under way!—and you, steersman, as you would keep your brains in your skull, keep her under the stern of the sloop.—If you attempt to play us any trick, I will scuttle your sconce as if it were an old calabash!'

The vessel was accordingly got under way, and moved slowly on in the wake of the sloop which, as had been previously agreed upon, held her course, not to return to the bay of Kirkwall, but for an excellent roadstead called Inganess Bay, formed by a promontory which extends to the eastward two or three miles from the Orcadian metropolis, and where the vessels might conveniently lie at anchor while the rovers maintained any communication with the magistrates which the new state of things seemed to require.

Meantime Claud Halcro had exerted his utmost talents in compounding a bucketful of punch for the use of the pirates, which they drank out of large cans, the ordinary seamen, as well as Bunce and Fletcher who acted as officers, dipping them into the bucket with very little ceremony, as they came and went upon their duty. Magnus, who was particularly apprehensive that liquor might awaken the brutal passions of these desperadoes, was yet so much astonished at the quantities which he saw them drink, without producing any visible effect upon their reason, that he could not help expressing his surprise to Bunce himself, who, wild as he was, yet appeared by far the most civil and conversable of his party, and whom he was, perhaps, desirous to conciliate, by a compliment of which all boon topers know the value.

'Bones of Saint Magnus!' said the Udaller, 'I used to think I took off my can like a gentleman, but to see your men swallow, captain, one would think their stomachs were as bottomless as the hole of Laifell in Foula, which I have sounded myself with a line of a hundred fathoms. By my soul, the Bicker of Saint Magnus were but a sip to them!'

'In our way of life, sir,' answered Bunce, 'there is no stint till duty calls, or the puncheon is drunk out.'

'By my word, sir,' said Claud Halcro, 'I believe there is not one of your people but could drink out the mickle bicker of Scarpa, which was always offered to the Bishop of Orkney brimful of the best bummock that ever was brewed.'*

'If drinking could make them bishops,' said Bunce, 'I should have a reverend crew of them; but as they have no other clerical qualities about them, I do not propose that they shall get drunk to-day; so we will cut our drink with a song.'

'And I'll sing it, by——!' said or swore Dick Fletcher, and instantly struck up the old ditty—

> 'It was a ship, and a ship of fame,
> Launch'd off the stocks, bound for the Main,
> With an hundred and fifty brisk young men,
> All picked and chosen every one.'

'I would sooner be keel hauled than hear that song over again,' said Bunce; 'and confound your lantern jaws, you can squeeze nothing else out of them!'

'By——,' said Fletcher, 'I will sing my song whether you like it or no;' and again he sung, with the doleful tone of a north-easter whistling through sheets and shrouds—

> 'Captain Glen was our captain's name;
> A very gallant and brisk young man;
> As bold a sailor as e'er went to sea,
> And we were bound for High Barbary.'

'I tell you again,' said Bunce, 'we will have none of your screech-owl music here; and I'll be d—d if you shall sit here and make that infernal noise!'

'Why, then, I'll tell you what,' said Fletcher, getting up, 'I'll sing when I walk about, and I hope there is no harm in that, Jack Bunce.' And so, getting up from his seat, he began to walk up and down the sloop, croaking out his long and disastrous ballad.

'You see how I manage them,' said Bunce, with a smile of self-applause—'allow that fellow two strides on his own way, and you make a mutineer of him for life. But I tie him strict up, and he follows me as kindly as a fowler's spaniel after he has got a good beating.—And now your toast and your song, sir,' addressing Halcro; 'or rather your song without your toast. I have got a toast for myself. Here is success to all roving blades, and confusion to all honest men!'

'I should be sorry to drink that toast, if I could help it,' said Magnus Troil.

'What! you reckon yourself one of the honest folks, I warrant?' said Bunce.—'Tell me your trade, and I'll tell you what I think of it. As for the punch-maker here, I knew him at first glance to be a tailor, who has, therefore, no more pretensions to be honest, than he has not to be mangy. But you are some High Dutch skipper, I warrant me, that tramples on the cross when he is in Japan, and denies his religion for a day's gain.'

'No,' replied the Udaller, 'I am a gentleman of Zetland.'

'O, what!' retorted the satirical Mr. Bunce, 'you are come from the happy climate where gin is a groat a bottle, and where there is daylight for ever?'

'At your service, captain,' said the Udaller, suppressing with much pain some disposition to resent these jests on his country, although under every risk, and at all disadvantages.

'At *my* service!' said Bunce—'Ay, if there was a rope stretched from the wreck to the beach, you would be at my service to cut the hawser, make flotsom and jetsam of ship and cargo, and well if you did not give me a rap on the head with the back of the cutty axe; and you call

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* Liquor brewed for a Christmas treat. See Note AA.

yourself honest? But never mind—here goes the aforesaid toast—and do you sing me a song, Mr. Fashioner, and look it be as good as your punch.'

Halcro, internally praying for the powers of a new Timotheus, to turn his strain and check his auditor's pride, as glorious John had it, began a heart-soothing ditty with the following lines:—

> Maidens fresh as fairest rose,
> Listen to this lay of mine

'I will hear nothing of maidens or roses,' said Bunce; 'it puts me in mind what sort of a cargo we have got on board; and, by ——, I will be true to my messmate and my captain as long as I can!—And now I think on't, I'll have no more punch either—that last cup made innovation—and I am not to play Cassio to-night—and if I drink not, nobody else shall.'

So saying, he manfully kicked over the bucket, which, notwithstanding the repeated applications made to it, was still half full, got up from his seat, shook himself a little to rights, as he expressed it, cocked his hat, and, walking the quarter-deck with an air of dignity, gave by word and signal the orders for bringing the ships to anchor, which were readily obeyed by both, Goffe being then, in all probability, past any rational state of interference.

The Udaller in the meantime condoled with Halcro on their situation. 'It is bad enough,' said the tough old Norseman; 'for these are rank rogues—and yet, were it not for the girls I should not fear them. That young vapouring fellow, who seems to command, is not such a born devil as he might have been.'

'He has queer humours, though,' said Halcro; 'and I wish we were loose from him. To kick down a bucket half full of the best punch ever was made, and to cut me short in the sweetest song I ever wrote—I promise you I do not know what he may do next; it is next door to madness.'

Meanwhile, the ships being brought to anchor, the valiant Lieutenant Bunce called upon Fletcher, and, resuming his seat by his unwilling passengers, he told them they should see what message he was about to send to the wittols of Kirkwall, as they were something concerned in it. 'It shall run in Dick's name,' he said, 'as well as in mine. I love to give the poor young fellow a little countenance now and then—don't I, Dick, you d——d stupid ass?'

'Why, yes, Jack Bunce,' said Dick, 'I can't say but as you do—only you are always bullocking one about something or other, too—but, howsomdever, d'ye see'——

'Enough said—belay your jaw, Dick,' said Bunce, and proceeded to write his epistle, which, being read aloud, proved to be of the following tenor:—'For the Mayor and Aldermen of Kirkwall—Gentlemen, As, contrary to your good faith given, you have not sent us on board a hostage for the safety of our captain remaining on shore at your request, these come to tell you, we are not thus to be trifled with. We have already in our possession a brig with a family of distinction, its owners and passengers; and as you deal with our captain, so will we deal with them in every respect. And as this is the first, so assure yourselves it shall not be the last damage which we will do to your town and trade, if you do not send on board our captain, and supply us with stores according to treaty.

'Given on board the brig Mergoose of Burgh-Westra, lying in Inganess Bay. Witness our hands, commanders of the Fortune's Favourite, and gentlemen adventurers.'

He then subscribed himself Frederick Altamont, and handed the letter to Fletcher, who read the said subscription with much difficulty, and, admiring the sound of it very much, swore he would have a new name himself, and the rather that Fletcher was the most crabbed word to spell and construe, he believed, in the whole dictionary. He subscribed himself accordingly, Timothy Tugmutton.

'Will you not add a few lines to the cocombs?' said Bunce, addressing Magnus.

'Not I,' returned the Udaller, stubborn in his ideas of right and wrong even in so formidable an emergency. 'The magistrates of Kirkwall know their duty, and were I they —— But here the recollection that his daughters were at the mercy of these ruffians blanked the bold visage of Magnus Troil, and checked the defiance which was just about to issue from his lips.

'D—n me,' said Bunce, who easily conjectured what was passing in the mind of his prisoner—'that pause would have told well on the stage—it would have brought down pit, box, and gallery, egad, as Bayes has it.'

'I will hear nothing of Bayes,' said Claud Halcro (himself a little elevated); 'it is an impudent satire on glorious John; but he tickled Buckingham off for it.

> In the first rank of these did Zimri stand,
> A man so various ——

'Hold your peace!' said Bunce, drowning the voice of the admirer of Dryden in louder and more vehement asseveration; 'the Rehearsal is the best farce ever was written—and I'll make him kiss the gunner's daughter that denies it. D—n me, I was the best Prince Prettyman ever walked the boards.

> Sometimes a fisher's son, sometimes a prince.

But let us to business. Hark ye, old gentleman' (to Magnus), 'you have a sort of sulkiness about you, for which some of my profession would cut your ears out of your head and broil them for your dinner with red pepper. I have known Goffe do so to a poor devil, for looking sour and dangerous when he saw his sloop go to Davy Jones's locker with his only son on board. But I'm a spirit of another sort; and if you or the ladies are ill used, it shall be the Kirkwall people's fault, and not mine, and that's fair; and so you had better let them know your condition and your circumstances, and so forth,—and that's fair too.'

Magnus, thus exhorted, took up the pen, and attempted to write; but his high spirit so struggled with his paternal anxiety, that his hand refused its office. 'I cannot help it,' he said, after one or two illegible attempts to write—'I cannot form a letter if all our lives depended upon it.'

And he could not, with his utmost efforts, so suppress the convulsive emotions which he experienced, but that they agitated his whole

frame. The willow which bends to the tempest often escapes better than the oak which resists it; and so, in great calamities, it sometimes happens that light and frivolous spirits recover their elasticity and presence of mind sooner than those of a loftier character. In the present case Claud Halcro was fortunately able to perform the task which the deeper feelings of his friend and patron refused. He took the pen, and, in as few words as possible, explained the situation in which they were placed, and the cruel risks to which they were exposed, insinuating at the same time, as delicately as he could express it, that, to the magistrates of the country, the life and honour of its citizens should be a dearer object than even the apprehension or punishment of the guilty; taking care, however, to qualify the last expression as much as possible, for fear of giving umbrage to the pirates.

Bunce read over the letter, which fortunately met his approbation; and on seeing the name of Claud Halcro at the bottom, he exclaimed, in great surprise, and with more energetic expressions of asseveration than we choose to record,—'Why, you are the little fellow that played the fiddle to old Manager Gadabout's company, at Hogs Norton, the first season I came out there! I thought I knew your catchword of glorious John.'

At another time this recognition might not have been very grateful to Halcro's minstrel pride; but, as matters stood with him, the discovery of a golden mine could not have made him more happy. He instantly remembered the very hopeful young performer who came out in Don Sebastian, and judiciously added, that the muse of glorious John had never received such excellent support during the time that he was first (he might have added, and only) violin to Mr. Gadabout's company.

'Why, yes,' said Bunce, 'I believe you are right—I think I might have shaken the scene as well as Booth or Betterton either. But I was destined to figure on other boards' (stamping his foot upon the deck), 'and I believe I must stick by them, till I find no board at all to support me. But now, old acquaintance, I will do something for you—slue yourself this way a bit—I would have you solus.' They leaned over the taffrail, while Bunce whispered with more seriousness than he usually showed, 'I am sorry for this honest old heart of Norway pine—blight me if I am not—and for the daughters too—besides, I have my own reasons for befriending one of them. I can be a wild fellow with a willing lass of the game; but to such decent and innocent creatures—d—n me, I am Scipio at Numantia, and Alexander in the tent of Darius. You remember how I touch off Alexander?' (here he started into heroics)—

'Thus from the grave I rise to save my love,
All draw your swords with wings of lightning move.
When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay—
'Tis beauty calls, and glory shows the way.'

Claud Halcro failed not to bestow the necessary commendations on his declamation, declaring that, in his opinion as an honest man, he had always thought Mr. Altamont's giving that speech far superior in tone and energy to Betterton.

Bunce, or Altamont, wrung his hand tenderly. 'Ah, you flatter me, my dear friend,' he said; 'yet why had not the public some of your judgment!—I should not then have been at this pass. Heaven knows, my dear Mr. Halcro—Heaven knows with what pleasure I could keep you on board with me, just that I might have one friend who loves as much to hear, as I do to recite, the choicest pieces of our finest dramatic authors. The most of us are beasts—and, for the Kirkwall hostage yonder, he uses me, egad, as I use Fletcher, I think, and huffs me the more, the more I do for him. But how delightful would it be in a tropic night, when the ship was hanging on the breeze, with a broad and steady sail, for me to rehearse Alexander, with you for my pit, box, and gallery! Nay (for you are a follower of the muses, as I remember), who knows but you and I might be the means of inspiring, like Orpheus and Eurydice, a pure taste into our companions, and softening their manners, while we excited their better feelings!'

This was spoken with so much unction, that Claud Halcro began to be afraid he had both made the actual punch over potent, and mixed too many bewitching ingredients in the cup of flattery which he had administered; and that, under the influence of both potions the sentimental pirate might detain him by force, merely to realize the scenes which his imagination presented. The conjuncture was, however, too delicate to admit of any active effort on Halcro's part to redeem his blunder; and therefore he only returned the tender pressure of his friend's hand, and uttered the interjection Alas! in as pathetic a tone as he could.

Bunce immediately resumed. 'You are right, my friend, these are but vain visions of felicity, and it remains but for the unhappy Altamont to serve the friend to whom he is now to bid farewell. I have determined to put you and the two girls ashore, with Fletcher for your protection; and so call up the young women, and let them be gone before the devil get aboard of me, or of some one else. You will carry my letter to the magistrates, and second it with your own eloquence, and assure them that if they hurt but one hair of Cleveland's head, there will be the devil to pay, and no pitch hot.'

Relieved at heart by this unexpected termination of Bunce's harangue, Halcro descended the companion ladder two steps at a time, and, knocking at the cabin door, could scarce find intelligible language enough to say his errand. The sisters, hearing with unexpected joy that they were to be set ashore, muffled themselves in their cloaks, and, when they learned that the boat was hoisted out, came hastily on deck, where they were apprised, for the first time, to their great horror, that their father was still to remain on board of the pirate.

'We will remain with him at every risk,' said Minna—'we may be of some assistance to him, were it but for an instant—we will live and die with him!'

'We shall aid him more surely,' said Brenda, who comprehended the nature of their situation better than Minna, 'by interesting the people of Kirkwall to grant these gentlemen's demands.'

'Spoken like an angel of sense and beauty,' said Bunce; 'and now away with you; for,

d—n me, if this is not like having a lighted linstock in the powder-room — if you speak another word more, confound me if I know how I shall bring myself to part with you!'

'Go, in God's name, my daughters,' said Magnus. 'I am in God's hand; and when you are gone I shall care little for myself—and I shall think and say, as long as I live, that this good gentleman deserves a better trade.—Go—go—away with you!'—for they yet lingered in unwillingness to leave him.

'Stay not to kiss,' said Bunce, 'for fear I be tempted to ask my share. Into the boat with you—yet stop an instant.' He drew the three captives apart —'Fletcher,' said he, 'will answer for the rest of the fellows, and will see you safe off the sea-beach. But how to answer for Fletcher I know not, except by trusting Mr. Halcro with this little guarantee.'

He offered the minstrel a small double-barrelled pistol, which, he said, was loaded with a brace of balls. Minna observed Halcro's hand tremble as he stretched it out to take the weapon. 'Give it to me, sir,' she said, taking it from the outlaw; 'and trust to me for defending my sister and myself.'

'Bravo, bravo!' shouted Bunce. 'There spoke a wench worthy of Cleveland, the King of Rovers!'

'Cleveland!' repeated Minna; 'do you then know that Cleveland, whom you have twice named?'

'Know him! Is there a man alive,' said Bunce, 'that knows better than I do the best and stoutest fellow ever stepped betwixt stem and stern? When he is out of the bilboes, as please Heaven he shall soon be, I reckon to see you come on board of us, and reign the queen of every sea we sail over.—You have got the little guardian, I suppose you know how to use it? If Fletcher behaves ill to you, you need only draw up this piece of iron with your thumb, so—and if he persists, it is but crooking your pretty forefinger thus, and I shall lose the most dutiful messmate that ever man had—though, d—n the dog, he will deserve his death if he disobeys my orders. And now, into the boat—but stay, one kiss for Cleveland's sake.'

Brenda, in deadly terror, endured his courtesy, but Minna, stepping back with disdain, offered her hand. Bunce laughed, but kissed, with a theatrical air, the fair hand which she extended as a ransom for her lips, and at length the sisters and Halcro were placed in the boat, which rowed off under Fletcher's command.

Bunce stood on the quarter-deck, soliloquizing after the manner of his original profession. 'Were this told at Port-Royal now, or at the Isle of Providence, or in the Petits Guaves, I wonder what they would say of me! Why, that I was a good-natured milksop—a Jack-a-lent—an ass.—Well, let them. I have done enough of bad to think about it; it is worth while doing one good action, if it were but for the rarity of the thing, and to put one in good humour with one's self.' Then turning to Magnus Troil, he proceeded—'By —— these are bonarobas, these daughters of yours. The eldest would make her fortune on the London boards. What a dashing attitude the wench had with her, as she seized the pistol!—d—n me, that touch would have brought the house down! What a Roxalana the jade would have made!' (for, in his oratory, Bunce, like Sancho's gossip, Thomas Cecial, was apt to use the most energetic word which came to hand, without accurately considering its propriety). 'I would give my share of the next prize to hear her spout—

> Away, begone, and give a whirlwind room,
> Or I will blow you up like dust. Avaunt!
> Madness but meanly represents my rage.

And then, again, that little, soft, shy, tearful trembler, for Statira, to hear her recite—

> He speaks the kindest words, and looks such things,
> Vows with such passion, swears with so much grace,
> That 'tis a kind of heaven to be deluded by him.'

What a play we might have run up!—I was a beast not to think of it before I sent them off—I to be Alexander—Claud Halcro, Lysimachus—this old gentleman might have made a Clytus, for a pinch. I was an idiot not to think of it!'

There was much in this effusion which might have displeased the Udaller; but, to speak truth, he paid no attention to it. His eye, and finally his spy-glass, was employed in watching the return of his daughters to the shore. He saw them land on the beach, and, accompanied by Halcro and another man (Fletcher, doubtless), he saw them ascend the acclivity and proceed upon the road to Kirkwall, and he could even distinguish that Minna, as if considering herself as the guardian of the party, walked a little aloof from the rest, on the watch, as it seemed, against surprise, and ready to act as occasion should require. At length, as the Udaller was just about to lose sight of them, he had the exquisite satisfaction to see the party halt, and the pirate leave them, after a space just long enough for a civil farewell, and proceed slowly back on his return to the beach. Blessing the Great Being who had thus relieved him from the most agonizing fears which a father can feel, the worthy Udaller, from that instant, stood resigned to his own fate, whatever that might be.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

> Over the mountains and under the waves,
> Over the fountains and under the graves,
> Over floods that are deepest
> Which Neptune obey,
> Over rocks that are steepest,
> Love will find out the way.
>
> OLD SONG.

THE parting of Fletcher from Claud Halcro and the sisters of Burgh-Westra on the spot where it took place, was partly occasioned by a small party of armed men being seen at a distance in the act of advancing from Kirkwall, an apparition hidden from the Udaller's spy-glass by the swell of the ground, but quite visible to the pirate, whom it determined to consult his own safety by a speedy return to his boat. He was just turning away, [illegible] occasioned the short delay which [illegible] his whole [illegible] observed.

'Stop,' she said. 'I comm

your leader from me, that whatever the answer may be from Kirkwall, he shall carry his vessel, nevertheless, round to Stromness; and, being anchored there, let him send a boat ashore for Captain Cleveland when he shall see a smoke on the Bridge of Broisgar.'

Fletcher had thought, like his messmate Bunce, of asking a kiss, at least, for the trouble of escorting these beautiful young women; and perhaps, neither the terror of the approaching Kirkwall men nor of Minna's weapon might have prevented his being insolent. But the name of his captain, and, still more, the unappalled, dignified, and commanding manner of Minna Troil overawed him. He made a sea bow—promised to keep a sharp look out, and, returning to his boat, went on board with his message.

As Halcro and the sisters advanced towards the party whom they saw on the Kirkwall road, and who, on their part, had halted as if to observe them, Brenda, relieved from the fears of Fletcher's presence, which had hitherto kept her silent, exclaimed, 'Merciful Heaven!—Minna, in what hands have we left our dear father?'

'In the hands of brave men,' said Minna steadily. 'I fear not for him.'

'As brave as you please,' said Claud Halcro, 'but very dangerous rogues for all that. I know that fellow Altamont, as he calls himself, though that is not his right name neither; as deboshed a dog as ever made a burning with blood and blank verse. He began with Barnwell, and everybody thought he would end with the gallows, like the last scene in Venice Preserved.'

'It matters not,' said Minna; 'the wilder the waves, the more powerful is the voice that rules them. The name alone of Cleveland ruled the mood of the fiercest amongst them.'

'I am sorry for Cleveland,' said Brenda, 'if such are his companions. But I care little for him in comparison to my father.'

'Reserve your compassion for those who need it,' said Minna, 'and fear nothing for our father—God knows, every silver hair on his head is to me worth the treasure of an unsunned mine; but I know that he is safe while in yonder vessel, and I know that he will be soon safe on shore.'

'I would I could see it,' said Claud Halcro; 'but I fear the Kirkwall people, supposing Cleveland to be such as I dread, will not dare to exchange him against the Udaller. The Scots have very severe laws against theft boot, as they call it.'

'But who are those on the road before us?' said Brenda; 'and why do they halt there so jealously?'

'They are a patrol of the militia,' answered Halcro. 'Glorious John touches them off a little sharply—but then John was a Jacobite—

> Mouths without hands maintained at vast expense,
> In peace a charge, in war a weak defence;
> Stout once a month, they march, a blustering band,
> And ever, but in time of need, at hand.

I fancy they halted just now, taking us, as they saw us on the brow of the hill, for a party of [illegible] men, and, now they can distinguish petticoats, they are moving on accordingly.' And proved to be, as Claud Halcro had suggested, a patrol sent out to watch the motions of the pirates, and to prevent their attempting descents to damage the country.

They heartily congratulated Claud Halcro, who was well known to more than one of them, upon his escape from captivity; and the commander of the party, while offering every assistance to the ladies, could not help condoling with them on the circumstances in which their father stood, hinting, though in a delicate and doubtful manner, the difficulties which might be in the way of his liberation.

When they arrived at Kirkwall, and obtained an audience of the provost and one or two of the magistrates, these difficulties were more plainly insisted upon. 'The Halcyon frigate is upon the coast,' said the provost; 'she was seen off Duncansbay Head; and though I have the deepest respect for Mr Troil of Burgh Westra, yet I shall be answerable to law if I release from prison the captain of this suspicious vessel, on account of the safety of any individual who may be unhappily endangered by his detention. This man is now known to be the heart and soul of these buccaneers, and am I at liberty to send him abroad that he may plunder the country, or perhaps go fight the king's ship?—for he has impudence enough for anything.'

'Courage enough for anything, you mean, Mr Provost,' said Minna, unable to restrain her displeasure.

'Why, you may call it as you please, Miss Troil,' said the worthy magistrate; 'but, in my opinion, that sort of courage which proposes to fight singly against two, is little better than a kind of practical impudence.'

'But our father!' said Brenda, in a tone of the most earnest entreaty—'our father—the friend, I may say the father, of his country—to whom so many look for kindness, and so many for actual support—whose loss would be the extinction of a beacon in a storm—will you indeed weigh the risk which he runs against such a trifling thing as letting an unfortunate man from prison to seek his unhappy fate elsewhere?'

'Miss Brenda is right,' said Claud Halcro; 'I am for let a be for let a be, as the boys say; and never fash about a warrant of liberation, provost, but just take a fool's counsel, and let the goodman of the jail forget to draw his bolt on the wicket, or leave a chink of a window open, or the like, and we shall be rid of the rover, and have the one best honest fellow in Orkney or Zetland on the lee side of a bowl of punch with us in five hours.'

The provost replied in nearly the same terms as before, that he had the highest respect for Mr Magnus Troil of Burgh Westra, but that he could not suffer his consideration for any individual, however respectable, to interfere with the discharge of his duty.

Minna then addressed her sister in a tone of calm and sarcastic displeasure.—'You forget,' she said, 'Brenda, that you are talking of the safety of a poor insignificant Udaller of Zetland, to no less a person than the chief magistrate of the metropolis of Orkney—can you expect so great a person to condescend to such a trifling subject of consideration? It will be time enough

for the provost to think of complying with the terms sent to him—for comply with them at length he both must and will—when the church of Saint Magnus is beat down about his ears.'

'You may be angry with me, my pretty young lady,' said the good-humoured Provost Torfe, 'but I cannot be offended with you. The church of Saint Magnus has stood many a day, and, I think, will outlive both you and me, much more yonder pack of unhanged dogs. And besides that your father is half an Orkneyman, and has both estate and friends among us, I would, I give you my word, do as much for a Zetlander in distress as I would for any one, excepting one of our own native Kirkwallers, who are doubtless to be preferred. And if you will take up your lodgings here with my wife and myself, we will endeavour to show you,' continued he, 'that you are as welcome in Kirkwall as ever you could be in Lerwick or Scalloway.'

Minna deigned no reply to this good-humoured invitation, but Brenda declined it in civil terms, pleading the necessity of taking up their abode with a wealthy widow of Kirkwall, a relation, who already expected them.

Halcro made another attempt to move the provost, but found him inexorable.—'The collector of the customs had already threatened,' he said, 'to inform against him for entering into treaty, or, as he called it, packing and peeling with those strangers, even when it seemed the only means of preventing a bloody affray in the town; and should he now forego the advantage afforded by the imprisonment of Cleveland and the escape of the factor, he might incur something worse than censure.' The burden of the whole was, 'that he was sorry for the Udaller, he was sorry even for the lad Cleveland, who had some sparks of honour about him; but his duty was imperious, and must be obeyed.' The provost then precluded further argument, by observing, that another affair from Zetland called for his immediate attention. A gentleman named Mertoun, residing at Yarlshof, had made complaint against Snailsfoot, the yagger, for having assisted a domestic of his in embezzling some valuable articles which had been deposited in his custody, and he was about to take examination on the subject, and cause them to be restored to Mr. Mertoun, who was accountable for them to the right owner.

In all this information, there was nothing which seemed interesting to the sisters excepting the word Mertoun, which went like a dagger to the heart of Minna, when she recollected the circumstances under which Mordaunt Mertoun had disappeared; and which, with an emotion less painful, though still of a melancholy nature, called a faint blush into Brenda's cheek, and a slight degree of moisture into her eye. But it was soon evident that the magistrate spoke not of Mordaunt, but of his father; and the daughters of Magnus, little interested in his detail, took leave of the provost to go to their own lodgings.

When they arrived at their relation's, Minna made it her business to learn, by such inquiries as she could make without exciting suspicion, what was the situation of the unfortunate Cleveland, which she soon discovered to be exceedingly precarious. The provost had not, indeed, committed him to close custody, as Claud Halcro had anticipated, recollecting, perhaps, the favourable circumstances under which he had surrendered himself, and loath, till the moment of the last necessity, altogether to break faith with him. But although left apparently at large, he was strictly watched by persons well armed and appointed for the purpose, who had directions to detain him by force, if he attempted to pass certain narrow precincts which were allotted to him. He was quartered in a strong room within what is called the King's Castle, and at night his chamber door was locked on the outside, and a sufficient guard mounted to prevent his escape. He therefore enjoyed only the degree of liberty which the cat, in her cruel sport, is sometimes pleased to permit to the mouse which she has clutched; and yet, such was the terror of the resources, the courage, and ferocity of the pirate captain, that the provost was blamed by the collector, and many other sage citizens of Kirkwall, for permitting him to be at large upon any conditions.

It may be well believed that, under such circumstances, Cleveland had no desire to seek any place of public resort, conscious that he was the object of a mixed feeling of curiosity and terror. His favourite place of exercise, therefore, was the external aisles of the cathedral of Saint Magnus, of which the eastern end alone is fitted up for public worship. This solemn old edifice, having escaped the ravage which attended the first convulsion of the Reformation, still retains some appearance of episcopal dignity. This place of worship is separated by a screen from the nave and western limb of the cross, and the whole is preserved in a state of cleanliness and decency, which might be well proposed as an example to the proud piles of Westminster and Saint Paul's.

It was in this exterior part of the cathedral that Cleveland was permitted to walk, the rather that his guards, by watching the single open entrance, had the means, with very little inconvenience to themselves, of preventing any possible attempt at escape. The place itself was well suited to his melancholy circumstances. The lofty and vaulted roof rises upon ranges of Saxon pillars, of massive size, four of which, still larger than the rest, once supported the lofty spire, which, long since destroyed by accident, has been rebuilt upon a disproportioned and truncated plan. The light is admitted at the eastern end through a lofty, well-proportioned, and richly-ornamented Gothic window, and the pavement is covered with inscriptions, in different languages, distinguishing the graves of noble Orcadians, who have at different times been deposited within the sacred precincts.

Here walked Cleveland, musing over the events of a misspent life, which, it seemed probable, might be brought to a violent and shameful close, while he was yet in the prime of youth.—'With these dead,' he said, looking on the pavement, 'shall I soon be numbered—but no holy man will speak a blessing; no friendly hand register an inscription; no proud descendant sculpture armorial bearings over the grave of the pirate Cleveland. My whitening bones,

will swing in the gibbet irons on some wild beach or lonely cape, that will be esteemed fatal and accursed for my sake. The old mariner, as he passes the Sound, will shake his head, and tell of my name and actions, as a warning to his younger comrades.—But, Minna! Minna! what will be thy thoughts when the news reaches thee?—Would to God the tidings were drowned in the deepest whirlpool betwixt Kirkwall and Burgh Westra, ere they came to her ear!—and O! would to Heaven that we had never met, since we never can meet again!'

He lifted up his eyes as he spoke, and Minna Troil stood before him. Her face was pale, and her hair dishevelled; but her look was composed and firm, with its usual expression of high-minded melancholy. She was still shrouded in the large mantle which she had assumed on leaving the vessel. Cleveland's first emotion was astonishment; his next was joy, not unmixed with awe. He would have exclaimed—he would have thrown himself at her feet—but she imposed at once silence and composure on him, by raising her finger, and saying, in a low but commanding accent,—'Be cautious—we are observed—there are men without—they let me enter with difficulty. I dare not remain long—they would think—they might believe—O, Cleveland! I have hazarded everything to save you!'

'To save me?—Alas! poor Minna!' answered Cleveland, 'to save me is impossible.—Enough that I have seen you once more, were it but to say, for ever farewell!'

'We must, indeed, say farewell,' said Minna; 'for fate and your guilt have divided us for ever.—Cleveland, I have seen your associates—need I tell you more—need I say that I know now what a pirate is?'

'You have been in the ruffians' power!' said Cleveland, with a start of agony. 'Did they presume——'

'Cleveland,' replied Minna, 'they presumed nothing—your name was a spell over them. By the power of that spell over these ferocious banditti, and by that alone, I was reminded of the qualities I once thought my Cleveland's!'

'Yes,' said Cleveland proudly, 'my name has and shall have power over them, when they are at the wildest; and, had they harmed you by one rude word, they should have found—Yet what do I rave about?—I am a prisoner!'

'You shall be so no longer,' said Minna—'Your safety—the safety of my dear father—all demand your instant freedom. I have formed a scheme for your liberty, which, boldly executed, cannot fail. The light is fading without—muffle yourself in my cloak, and you will easily pass the guards—I have given them the means of carousing, and they are deeply engaged. Haste to the Loch of Stennis, and hide yourself till day dawns, then make a smoke on the point where the land, stretching into the lake on each side, divides it nearly in two at the Bridge of Broisgar. Your vessel, which lies not far distant, will send a boat ashore.—Do not hesitate an instant.'

'But you, Minna!—Should this wild scheme succeed,' said Cleveland, 'what is to become of you?'

'For my share in your escape,' answered the maiden, 'the honesty of my own intention will vindicate me in the sight of Heaven; and the safety of my father, whose fate depends on yours, will be my excuse to man.'

In a few words, she gave him the history of their capture and its consequences. Cleveland cast up his eyes and raised his hands to Heaven, in thankfulness for the escape of the sisters from his evil companions, and then hastily added,—'But you are right, Minna, I must fly at all rates—for your father's sake, I must fly.—Here, then, we part—yet not, I trust, for ever.'

'For ever!' answered a voice, that sounded as from a sepulchral vault.

They started, looked around them, and then gazed on each other. It seemed as if the echoes of the building had returned Cleveland's last words, but the pronunciation was too emphatically accented.

'Yes, for ever!' said Norna of the Fitful Head, stepping forward from behind one of the massive Saxon pillars which support the roof of the cathedral. 'Here meet the crimson foot and the crimson hand. Well for both that the wound is healed whence that crimson was derived—well for both, but best for him who shed it.—Here, then, you meet—and meet for the last time!'

'Not so,' said Cleveland, as if about to take Minna's hand; 'to separate me from Minna, while I have life, must be the work of herself alone.'

'Away!' said Norna, stepping betwixt them, 'away with such idle folly! Nourish no vain dreams of future meetings—you part here, and you part for ever. The hawk pairs not with the dove; guilt matches not with innocence.—Minna Troil, you look for the last time on this bold and criminal man—Cleveland, you behold Minna for the last time!'

'And dream you,' said Cleveland indignantly, 'that your mummery imposes on me, and that I am among the fools that see more than trick in your pretended art?'

'Forbear, Cleveland, forbear!' said Minna, her hereditary awe of Norna augmented by the circumstance of her sudden appearance. 'O, forbear! she is powerful—she is but too powerful.—And do you, O Norna, remember my father's safety is linked with Cleveland's.'

'And it is well for Cleveland that I do remember it,' replied the Pythoness—'and that, for the sake of one, I am here to aid both. You, with your childish purpose of passing one of his bulk and stature under the disguise of a few paltry folds of wadmaal—what would your device have procured him but instant restraint with bolt and shackle?—I will save him—I will place him in security on board his bark. But let him renounce these shores for ever, and carry elsewhere the terrors of his sable flag, and his yet blacker name; for if the sun rises twice, and finds him still at anchor, his blood be on his own head.—Ay, look to each other—look the last look that I permit to frail affection—and say, if you *can* say it, Farewell for ever!'

'Obey her,' stammered Minna; 'remonstrate not, but obey her.'

Cleveland, grasping her hand, and kissing it ardently, said, but so low that she only could hear it, 'Farewell, Minna, but *not* for ever.'

'And now, maiden, begone,' said Norna, 'and leave the rest to the Reimkennar.'

'One word more,' said Minna, 'and I obey you. Tell me but if I have caught aright your meaning—is Mordaunt Mertoun safe and recovered?'

'Recovered and safe,' said Norna; 'else woe to the hand that shed his blood!'

Minna slowly sought the door of the cathedral, and turned back from time to time to look at the shadowy form of Norna, and the stately and military figure of Cleveland, as they stood together in the deepening gloom of the ancient cathedral. When she looked back a second time, they were in motion, and Cleveland followed the matron, as, with a slow and solemn step, she glided towards one of the side aisles. When Minna looked back a third time, their figures were no longer visible. She collected herself, and walked on to the eastern door, by which she had entered, and listened for an instant to the guard, who talked together on the outside.

'The Zetland girl stays a long time with this pirate fellow,' said one. 'I wish they have not more to speak about than the ransom of her father.'

'Ay, truly,' answered another; 'the wenches will have more sympathy with a handsome young pirate, than an old bedridden burgher.'

Their discourse was here interrupted by her of whom they were speaking; and, as if taken in the manner, they pulled off their hats, made their awkward obeisances, and looked not a little embarrassed and confused.

Minna returned to the house where she lodged, much affected, yet, on the whole, pleased with the result of her expedition, which seemed to put her father out of danger, and assured her at once of the escape of Cleveland, and of the safety of young Mordaunt. She hastened to communicate both pieces of intelligence to Brenda, who joined her in thankfulness to Heaven, and was herself well-nigh persuaded to believe in Norna's supernatural pretensions, so much was she pleased with the manner in which they had been employed. Some time was spent in exchanging their mutual congratulations, and mingling tears of hope, mixed with apprehension; when, at a late hour in the evening, they were interrupted by Claud Halcro, who, full of a fidgeting sort of importance, not unmingled with fear, came to acquaint them that the prisoner Cleveland had disappeared from the cathedral, in which he had been permitted to walk, and that the provost, having been informed that Minna was accessary to his flight, was coming, in a mighty quandary, to make inquiry into the circumstances.

When the worthy magistrate arrived, Minna did not conceal from him her own wish that Cleveland should make his escape, as the only means which she saw of redeeming her father from imminent danger. But that she had any actual accession to his flight, she positively denied; and stated 'that she had parted from Cleveland in the cathedral, more than two hours since, and then left him in company with a third person, whose name she did not conceive herself obliged to communicate.'

'It is not needful, Miss Minna Troil,' answered Provost Torfe; 'for although no person but this Captain Cleveland and yourself was seen to enter the kirk of Saint Magnus this day, we know well enough your cousin, old Ulla Troil, whom you Zetlanders call Norna of Fitful Head, has been cruising up and down, upon sea and land, and air, for what I know, in boats and on ponies, and it may be on broomsticks; and here has been her dumb drow, too, coming and going, and playing the spy on every one—and a good spy he is, for he can hear everything, and tells nothing again, unless to his mistress. And we know, besides, that she can enter the kirk when all the doors are fast, and has been seen there more than once, God save us from the Evil One!—and so, without further questions asked, I conclude it was old Norna whom you left in the kirk with this slashing blade—and if so, they may catch them again that can. I cannot but say, however, pretty Mistress Minna, that you Zetland folks seem to forget both law and gospel, when you use the help of witchcraft to fetch delinquents out of a legal prison; and the least that you, or your cousin, or your father, can do, is to use influence with this wild fellow to go away as soon as possible, without hurting the town or trade, and then there will be little harm in what has chanced; for Heaven knows, I did not seek the poor lad's life, so I could get my hands free of him without blame; and far less did I wish that, through his imprisonment, any harm should come to worthy Magnus Troil of Burgh-Westra.'

'I see where the shoe pinches you, Mr. Provost,' said Claud Halcro; 'and I am sure I can answer for my friend Mr. Troil, as well as for myself, that we will say and do all in our power with this man, Captain Cleveland, to make him leave the coast directly.'

'And I,' said Minna, 'am so convinced that what you recommend is best for all parties, that my sister and I will set off early to-morrow morning to the House of Stennis, if Mr. Halcro will give us his escort, to receive my father when he comes ashore, that we may acquaint him with your wish, and to use every influence to induce this unhappy man to leave the country.'

Provost Torfe looked upon her with some surprise. 'It is not every young woman,' he said, 'would wish to move eight miles nearer to a band of pirates.'

'We run no risk,' said Claud Halcro, interfering. 'The House of Stennis is strong; and my cousin, whom it belongs to, has men and arms within it. The young ladies are as safe there as in Kirkwall; and much good may arise from an early communication between Magnus Troil and his daughters. And, happy am I to see that, in your case, my good old friend,—as glorious John says,—

> —After much debate,
> The man prevail above the magistrate.'

The provost smiled, nodded his head, and indicated, as far as he thought he could do with decency, how happy he should be if the Fortune's Favourite, and her disorderly crew, would leave Orkney without further interference or violence on either side. He could not authorise their being supplied from the shore, he said; but, either for fear or favour, they were [illegible] to get provisions at Stromness. This pa[illegible]

trate then took leave of Halcro and the two ladies, who proposed, the next morning, to transfer their residence to the House of Stennis, situated upon the banks of the salt water lake of the same name, and about four miles by water from the Road of Stromness, where the rover's vessel was lying

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Fly, Fleance, fly!—Thou mayest escape
MACBETH

IT was one branch of the various arts by which Norna endeavoured to maintain her pretensions to supernatural powers, that she made herself familiarly and practically acquainted with all the secret passes and recesses, whether natural or artificial, which she could hear of, whether by tradition or otherwise, and was, by such knowledge, often enabled to perform feats which were otherwise unaccountable Thus, when she escaped from the tabernacle at Burgh Westra, it was by a sliding board which covered a secret passage in the wall known to none but herself and Magnus, who she was well assured would not betray her The profusion, also, with which she lavished a considerable income, otherwise of no use to her enabled her to procure the earliest intelligence respecting whatever she desired to know, and at the same time to secure all other assistance necessary to carry her plans into effect Cleveland, upon the present occasion, had reason to admire both her sagacity and her resources

Upon her applying a little forcible pressure a door which was concealed under some rich wooden sculpture in the screen which divides the eastern aisle from the rest of the cathedral, opened, and disclosed a dark narrow, winding passage, into which she entered, telling Cleveland, in a whisper, to follow, and be sure he shut the door behind him He obeyed, and followed her in darkness and silence, sometimes descending steps, of the number of which she always apprised him, sometimes ascending and often turning at short angles The air was more free than he could have expected, the passage being ventilated at different parts by unseen and ingeniously contrived spiracles, which communicated with the open air At length their long course ended, by Norna drawing aside a sliding panel, which, opening behind a wooden, or box bed, as it is called in Scotland, admitted them into an ancient, but very mean apartment, having a latticed window and a groined roof The furniture was much dilapidated, and its only ornaments were, on the one side of the wall, a garland of faded ribbons, such as are used to decorate whale vessels, and on the other, an escutcheon, bearing an earl's arms and coronet, surrounded with the usual emblems of mortality The mattock and spade, which lay in one corner, together with the appearance of an old man, who, in a rusty black coat and slouched hat, sat reading by a table, announced that they were in the habitation of the church beadle, or ——— and in the presence of that respectable ary.

When his attention was attracted ! of the sliding panel, he arose, and testifying much respect, but no surprise, took his shadow hat from his thin grey locks, and stood uncovered in the presence of Norna, with an air of profound humility

'Be faithful,' said Norna to the old man, 'and beware you show not any living mortal the secret path to the sanctuary'

The old man bowed in token of obedience and of thanks, for she put money in his hand as she spoke With a faltering voice, he expressed his hope that she would remember his son, who was on the Greenland voyage, that he might return fortunate and safe, as he had done last year, when he brought back the garland, pointing to that upon the wall

'My cauldron shall boil, and my rhyme shall be said, in his behalf,' answered Norna 'Waits Pacolet without with the horses?'

The old sexton assented, and the Pythoness, commanding Cleveland to follow her, went through a back door of the apartment into a small garden, corresponding, in its desolate appearance, to the habitation they had just quitted. The low and broken wall easily permitted them to pass into another and larger garden, though not much better kept, and a gate, which was upon the latch, let them into a long and winding lane, through which Norna having whispered to her companion that it was the only dangerous place on their road, they walked with a hasty pace It was now nearly dark, and the inhabitants of the poor dwellings on either hand, had betaken themselves to their houses They saw only one woman, who was looking from her door, but blessed herself and retired into her house with precipitation, when she saw the tall figure of Norna stalk past her with long strides The lane conducted them into the country, where the dumb dwarf waited with three horses, ensconced behind the wall of a deserted shed On one of these Norna instantly seated herself, Cleveland mounted another, and followed by Pacolet on the third, they moved sharply on through the darkness, the active and spirited animals on which they rode being of a breed rather taller than those reared in Zetland

After more than an hour's smart riding, in which Norna acted as guide, they stopped before a hovel, so utterly desolate in appearance, that it resembled rather a cattle shed than a cottage.

'Here you must remain till dawn, when your signal can be seen from your vessel,' said Norna, consigning the horses to the care of Pacolet, and leading the way into the wretched hovel, which she presently illuminated by lighting the small iron lamp which she usually carried along with her. 'It is a poor, she said, 'but a safe place of refuge, for were we pursued hither, the earth would yawn and admit us into its recesses ere you were taken For know that this ground is sacred to the gods of old Valhalla —And now say, man of mischief and of blood, are you friend or foe to Norna, the sole priestess of these disowned deities?'

'How is it possible for me to be your enemy?' said Cleveland —'Common gratitude'——

'Common gratitude,' said Norna, interrupting him, 'is a common word—and words are the

common pay which fools accept at the hands of knaves; but Norna must be requited by actions—by sacrifices.

'Well, mother, name your request.'

'That you never seek to see Minna Troil again, and that you leave this coast in twenty-four hours,' answered Norna.

'It is impossible,' said the captain; 'I cannot be soon enough found in the sea-stores which the sloop must have.'

'You can. I will take care you are fully supplied; and Caithness and the Hebrides are not far distant—you can depart if you will.'

'And why should I,' said Cleveland, 'if I will not?'

'Because your stay endangers others,' said Norna, 'and will prove your own destruction. Hear me with attention. From the first moment I saw you lying senseless on the sand beneath the cliffs of Sumburgh, I read that in your countenance which linked you with me and those who were dear to me; but whether for good or evil, was hidden from mine eyes. I aided in saving your life, in preserving your property. I aided in doing so the very youth whom you have crossed in his dearest affections—crossed by tale-bearing and slander.'

'*I* slander Mertoun!' exclaimed the captain. 'By Heaven, I scarce mentioned his name at Burgh-Westra, if it is that which you mean. The peddling fellow Bryce, meaning, I believe, to be my friend, because he found something could be made by me, did, I have since heard, carry tattle, or truth, I know not which, to the old man, which was confirmed by the report of the whole island. But for me, I scarce thought of him as a rival, else I had taken a more honourable way to rid myself of him.'

'Was the point of your double-edged knife, directed to the bosom of an unarmed man, intended to carve out that more honourable way?' said Norna sternly.

Cleveland was conscience-struck, and remained silent for an instant, ere he replied, 'There, indeed, I was wrong; but he is, I thank Heaven, recovered, and welcome to an honourable satisfaction.'

'Cleveland,' said the Pythoness, 'no! The fiend who employs you as his implement is powerful; but with me he shall not strive. You are of that temperament which the dark Influences desire as the tools of their agency; bold, haughty, and undaunted, unrestrained by principle, and having only in its room a wild sense of indomitable pride, which such men call honour. Such you are, and as such your course through life has been onward and unrestrained, bloody and tempestuous. By me, however, it shall be controlled,' she concluded, stretching out her staff, as if in the attitude of determined authority—'ay, even although the demon who presides over it should even now arise in his terrors.'

Cleveland laughed scornfully. 'Good mother,' he said, 'reserve such language for the rude sailor that implores you to bestow on him fair wind, or the poor fisherman that asks success to his nets and lines. I have been long inaccessible both to fear and to superstition. Call forth your demon, if you command one, and place him before me. The man that has spent years in company with incarnate devils, can scarce dread the presence of a disembodied fiend.'

This was said with a careless and desperate bitterness of spirit, which proved too powerfully energetic even for the delusions of Norna's insanity; and it was with a hollow and tremulous voice that she asked Cleveland—'For what, then, do you hold me, if you deny the power that I have bought so dearly?'

'You have wisdom, mother,' said Cleveland; 'at least you have art, and art is power. I hold you for one who knows how to steer upon the current of events, but I deny your power to change its course. Do not, therefore, waste words in quoting terrors for which I have no feeling, but tell me at once, wherefore you would have me depart?'

'Because I will have you see Minna no more,' answered Norna—'Because Minna is the destined bride of him whom men call Mordaunt Mertoun—Because, if you depart not within twenty-four hours, utter destruction awaits you. In these plain words there is no metaphysical delusion—Answer me as plainly.'

'In as plain words, then,' answered Cleveland, 'I will *not* leave these islands—not at least, till I have seen Minna Troil; and never shall your Mordaunt possess her while I live.'

'Hear him,' said Norna—'hear a mortal man spurn at the means of prolonging his life!—hear a sinful—a most sinful being, refuse the time which fate yet affords for repentance, and for the salvation of an immortal soul!—Behold him, how he stands erect, bold and confident in his youthful strength and courage! My eyes, unused to tears—even my eyes, which have so little cause to weep for him, are blinded with sorrow, to think what so fair a form will be ere the second sun set!'

'Mother,' said Cleveland firmly, yet with some touch of sorrow in his voice, 'I in part understand your threats. You know more than we do of the course of the Halcyon—perhaps have the means (for I acknowledge you have shown wonderful skill of combination in such affairs) of directing her cruise our way. Be it so—I will not depart from my purpose for that risk. If the frigate comes hither, we have still our shoal water to trust to; and I think they will scarce cut us out with boats, as if we were a Spanish xebeck. I am therefore resolved I will hoist once more the flag under which I have cruised, avail ourselves of the thousand chances which have helped us in greater odds, and, at the worst, fight the vessel to the very last; and when mortal man can do no more, it is but snapping a pistol in the powder-room, and, as we have lived, so will we die.'

There was a dead pause as Cleveland ended; and it was broken by his resuming, in a softer tone—'You have heard my answer, mother; let us debate it no further, but part in peace. I would willingly leave you a remembrance, that you may not forget a poor fellow to whom your services have been useful, and who parts with you in no unkindness, however unfriendly you are to his dearest interests.—Nay, do not shun to accept such a trifle,' he said, forcing upon Norna the little silver enchased box which had been once the subject of strife betwixt Mertoun

and him; 'it is not for the sake of the metal, which I know you value not, but simply as a memorial that you have met him of whom many a strange tale will hereafter be told in the seas which he has traversed.'

'I accept your gift,' said Norna, 'in token that, if I have in aught been accessary to your fate, it was as the involuntary and grieving agent of other powers. Well did you say we direct not the current of the events which hurry us forward, and render our utmost efforts unavailing; even as the wells of Tuftiloe* can wheel the stoutest vessel round and round, in despite of either sail or steerage.—Pacolet!' she exclaimed in a louder voice, 'what ho! Pacolet!'

A large stone which lay at the side of the wall of the hovel, fell as she spoke, and, to Cleveland's surprise, if not somewhat to his fear, the mis-shapen form of the dwarf was seen, like some overgrown reptile, extricating himself out of a subterranean passage, the entrance to which the stone had covered.

Norna, as if impressed by what Cleveland had said on the subject of her supernatural pretensions, was so far from endeavouring to avail herself of this opportunity to enforce them, that she hastened to explain the phenomenon he had witnessed.

'Such passages,' she said, 'to which the entrances are carefully concealed, are frequently found in these islands—the places of retreat of the ancient inhabitants, where they sought refuge from the rage of the Normans, the pirates of that day. It was that you might avail yourself of this, in case of need, that I brought you hither. Should you observe signs of pursuit, you may either lurk in the bowels of the earth until it has passed by, or escape, if you will, through the farther entrance near the lake, by which Pacolet entered but now.—And now, farewell! Think on what I have said; for as sure as you now move and breathe a living man, so surely is your doom fixed and sealed, unless, within four-and-twenty hours, you have doubled the Burgh Head.'

'Farewell, mother!' said Cleveland, as she departed, bending a look upon him, in which, as he could perceive by the lamp, sorrow was mingled with displeasure.

The interview, which thus concluded, left a strong effect even upon the mind of Cleveland, accustomed as he was to imminent dangers and to hairbreadth escapes. He in vain attempted to shake off the impression left by the words of Norna, which he felt the more powerful, because they were in a great measure divested of her wonted mystical tone, which he contemned. A thousand times he regretted that he had from time to time delayed the resolution, which he had long adopted, to quit his dreadful and dangerous trade; and as often he firmly determined that, could he but see Minna Troil once more, were it but for a last farewell, he would leave the sloop, as soon as his comrades were extricated from their perilous situation, endeavour to obtain the benefit of the king's pardon, and distinguish himself, if possible, in some more honourable course of warfare.

This resolution, to which he again and again pledged himself, had at length a sedative effect on his mental perturbation, and, wrapped in his cloak, he enjoyed, for a time, that imperfect repose which exhausted nature demands as her tribute, even from those who are situated on the verge of the most imminent danger. But how far soever the guilty may satisfy his own mind, and stupefy the feelings of remorse, by such a conditional repentance, we may well question whether it is not, in the sight of Heaven, rather a presumptuous aggravation, than an expiation of his sins.

When Cleveland awoke, the grey dawn was already mingling with the twilight of an Orcadian night. He found himself on the verge of a beautiful sheet of water, which, close by the place where he had rested, was nearly divided by two tongues of land that approach each other from the opposing sides of the lake, and are in some degree united by the Bridge of Broisgar, a long causeway, containing openings to permit the flow and reflux of the tide. Behind him, and fronting to the bridge, stood that remarkable semicircle of huge upright stones, which has no rival in Britain, excepting the inimitable monument at Stonehenge. These immense blocks of stone, all of them above twelve feet, and several being even fourteen or fifteen feet in height, stood around the pirate in the grey light of the dawning, like the phantom forms of antediluvian giants, who, shrouded in the habiliments of the dead, came to revisit, by this pale light, the earth which they had plagued by their oppression and polluted by their sins, till they brought down upon it the vengeance of long-suffering Heaven.†

Cleveland was less interested by this singular monument of antiquity, than by the distant view of Stromness, which he could as yet scarce discover. He lost no time in striking a light, by the assistance of one of his pistols, and some wet fern supplied him with fuel sufficient to make the appointed signal. It had been earnestly watched for on board the sloop; for Goffe's incapacity became daily more apparent; and even his most steady adherents agreed that it would be best to submit to Cleveland's command till they got back to the West Indies.

Bunce, who came with the boat to bring off his favourite commander, danced, cursed, shouted, and spouted for joy, when he saw him once more at freedom. 'They had already,' he said, 'made some progress in victualling the sloop, and they might have made more, but for that drunken old swab Goffe, who minded nothing but splicing the main-brace.'

The boat's crew were inspired with the same enthusiasm, and rowed so hard, that, although the tide was against them, and the air of wind failed, they soon placed Cleveland once more on the quarter-deck of the vessel which it was his misfortune to command.

The first exercise of the captain's power was to

* A *well*, in the language of those seas, denotes one of the whirlpools, or circular eddies, which wheel and boil with astonishing strength, and are very dangerous. Hence the distinction, in old English, betwixt *wells* and *waves*, the latter signifying the direct onward course of the tide, and the former the smooth, glassy, oily-looking whirlpools, whose strength seems to the eye almost irresistible.

† Note BB. Standing Stones of St

make known to Magnus Troil that he was at full freedom to depart—that he was willing to make him any compensation in his power, for the interruption of his voyage to Kirkwall; and that Captain Cleveland was desirous, if agreeable to Mr. Troil, to pay his respects to him on board his brig—thank him for former favours, and apologise for the circumstances attending his detention.

To Bunce, who, as the most civilised of the crew, Cleveland had entrusted this message, the old plain-dealing Udaller made the following answer:—'Tell your captain that I should be glad to think he had never stopped any one upon the high sea, save such as have suffered as little as I have. Say, too, that if we are to continue friends, we shall be most so at a distance; for I like the sound of his cannon-balls as little by sea, as he would like the whistle of a bullet by land from my rifle-gun. Say, in a word, that I am sorry I was mistaken in him, and that he would have done better to have reserved for the Spaniard the usage he is bestowing on his countrymen.'

'And so that is your message, old Snapcholerick?' said Bunce—'Now, stap my vitals if I have not a mind to do your errand for you over the left shoulder, and teach you more respect for gentlemen of fortune! But I won't, and chiefly for the sake of your two pretty wenches, not to mention my old friend Claud Halcro, the very visage of whom brought back all the old days of scene-shifting and candle-snuffing. So good-morrow to you, Gaffer Seal's-cap, and all is said that need pass between us.'

No sooner did the boat put off with the pirates, who left the brig, and now returned to their own vessel, than Magnus, in order to avoid reposing unnecessary confidence in the honour of these gentlemen of fortune, as they called themselves, got his brig under way; and, the wind coming favourably round, and increasing as the sun rose, he crowded all sail for Scalpa-flow, intending there to disembark and go by land to Kirkwall, where he expected to meet his daughters and his friend Claud Halcro.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Now, Emma, now the last reflection make,
What thou wouldst follow, what thou must forsake.
By our ill-omen'd stars and adverse Heaven,
No middle object to thy choice is given.
HENRY AND EMMA.

THE sun was high in heaven, the boats were busily fetching off from the shore the promised supply of provisions and water, which, as many fishing-skiffs were employed in the service, were got on board with unexpected speed, and stowed away by the crew of the sloop, with equal despatch. All worked with good will; for all, save Cleveland himself, were weary of a coast, where every moment increased their danger, and where, which they esteemed a worse misfortune, there was no booty to be won. Bunce and Derrick took the immediate direction of this duty, while Cleveland, walking the deck alone, and in silence, only interfered from time to time, to give some order which circumstances required, and then relapsed into his own sad reflections.

There are two sorts of men whom situations of guilt, and terror, and commotion, bring forward as prominent agents. The first are spirits so naturally moulded and fitted for deeds of horror, that they stalk forth from their lurking-places like actual demons, to work in their native element, as the hideous apparition of the Bearded Man came forth at Versailles, on the memorable 5th October 1789, the delighted executioner of the victims delivered up to him by a bloodthirsty rabble. But Cleveland belonged to the second class of these unfortunate beings, who are involved in evil rather by the concurrence of external circumstances than by natural inclination, being, indeed, one in whom his first engaging in this lawless mode of life, as the follower of his father, nay, perhaps, even his pursuing it as his father's avenger, carried with it something of mitigation and apology;—one also who often considered his guilty situation with horror, and had made repeated, though ineffectual efforts to escape from it.

Such thoughts of remorse were now rolling in his mind, and he may be forgiven if recollections of Minna mingled with and aided them. He looked around, too, on his mates, and, profligate and hardened as he knew them to be, he could not think of their paying the penalty of his obstinacy. 'We shall be ready to sail with the ebb tide,' he said to himself—'why should I endanger these men, by detaining them till the hour of danger, predicted by that singular woman, shall arrive? Her intelligence, howsoever acquired, has been always strangely accurate; and her warning was as solemn as if a mother were to apprise an erring son of his crimes, and of his approaching punishment. Besides, what chance is there that I can again see Minna? She is at Kirkwall, doubtless, and to hold my course thither would be to steer right upon the rocks. No, I will not endanger these poor fellows—I will sail with the ebb tide. On the desolate Hebrides, or on the north-west coast of Ireland, I will leave the vessel, and return hither in some disguise—yet why should I return, since it will perhaps be only to see Minna the bride of Mordaunt? No—let the vessel sail with this ebb tide without me. I will abide and take my fate.'

His meditations were here interrupted by Jack Bunce, who, hailing him noble captain, said they were ready to sail when he pleased.

'When *you* please, Bunce; for I shall leave the command with you, and go ashore at Stromness,' said Cleveland.

'You shall do no such matter, by Heaven!' answered Bunce. 'The command with me, truly! and how the devil am I to get the crew to obey me? Why, even Dick Fletcher rides rusty on me now and then. You know well enough that, without you, we shall be all at each other's throats in half-an-hour; and if you desert us, what a rope's end does it signify whether we are destroyed by the king's cruisers, or by each other? Come, come, noble captain, there are black-eyed girls enough in the world, but where will you find so tight a sea-boat as the little Favourite here, manned as she is with a set of tearing lads,

Fit to disturb the peace of all the world,
And rule it when 'tis wildest?'

'You are a precious fool, Jack Bunce,' said Cleveland, half angry, and, in despite of himself, half diverted by the false tones and exaggerated gesture of the stage struck pirate

'It may be so, noble captain,' answered Bunce, 'and it may be that I have my comrades in my folly. Here are you, now, going to play All for Love, and the World well Lost, and yet you cannot bear a harmless bounce in blank verse—Well, I can talk prose for the matter, for I have news enough to tell,—and strange news, too,—ay, and stirring news to boot

'Well, prithee deliver them (to speak thy own cant) like a man of this world

'The Stromness fishers will accept nothing for their provisions and trouble, said Bunce—'there is a wonder for you!

'And for what reason, I pray?' said Cleveland, 'it is the first time I have ever heard of cash being refused at a seaport

'True—they commonly lay the charges on as thick as if they were caulking But here is the matter The owner of the brig yonder, the father of your fair Imoinda stands paymaster by way of thanks for the civility with which we treated his daughters, and that we may not meet our due, as he calls it, on these shores

'It is like the frank hearted old Udaller!' said Cleveland, 'but is he then at Stromness? I thought he was to have crossed the island for Kirkwall

'He did so purpose, said Bunce, 'but more folks than King Duncan change the course of their voyage He was no sooner ashore than he was met with by a meddling old witch of these parts, who has her finger in every man's pie, and by her counsel he changed his purpose of going to Kirkwall, and lies at anchor for the present in yonder white house, that you may see with your glass up the lake yonder I am told the old woman clubbed also to pay for the sloop's stores Why she should shell out the boards I cannot conceive an idea, except that she is said to be a witch, and may befriend us as so many devils'

'But who told you all this?' said Cleveland without using his spy glass, or seeming so much interested in the news as his comrade had expected

'Why,' replied Bunce, 'I made a trip ashore this morning to the village and had a can with an old acquaintance, who had been sent by Master Troil to look after matters, and I fished it all out of him, and more, too, than I am desirous of telling you, noble captain'

'And who is your intelligencer?' said Cleveland, 'has he got no name?

'Why, he is an old fiddling foppish acquaintance of mine, called Halcro, if you must know, said Bunce

'Halcro!' echoed Cleveland, his eyes sparkling with surprise—'Claud Halcro!—why, he went ashore at Inganess with Minna and her sister—Where are they?'

'Why, that is just what I did not want to tell you,' replied the confidant—'yet hang me if I can help it, for I cannot baulk a fine situation.—That start had a fine effect—O, ay, and the spy-glass is turned on the House of Stennis now!—Well, yonder they are, it must be confessed—indifferently well guarded, too. Some of the old witch's people are come over from that mountain of an island—Hoy, as they call it, and the old gentleman has got some fellows under arms himself But what of all that, noble captain?—give you but the word, and we snap up the wenches to night—clap them under hatches—man the capstern by day break—up top sails—and sail with the morning tide'

'You sicken me with your villany,' said Cleveland, turning away from him.

'Umph!—villany, and sicken you!' said Bunce—'Now, pray, what have I said but what has been done a thousand times by gentlemen of fortune like ourselves?

'Mention it not again,' said Cleveland, then took a turn along the deck, in deep meditation, and, coming back to Bunce, took him by the hand, and said, 'Jack, I will see her once more'

'With all my heart,' said Bunce sullenly

'Once more will I see her, and it may be to abjure at her feet this cursed trade, and expiate my offences'——

'At the gallows!' said Bunce, completing the sentence—'With all my heart!—confess and be hanged is a most reverend proverb'

'Nay—but, dear Jack!' said Cleveland.

'Dear Jack!' answered Bunce, in the same sullen tone—'a dear sight you have been to dear Jack But hold your own course—I have done with caring for you for ever—I should but sicken you with my villanous counsels'

'Now must I soothe this silly fellow as if he were a spoiled child, said Cleveland, speaking at Bunce, but not to him, 'and yet he has sense enough and bravery enough, too, and, one would think, kindness enough to know that men don't pick their words during a gale of wind'

'Why, that's true, Clement,' said Bunce, 'and there is my hand upon it—And, now I think upon't you shall have your last interview, for it's out of my line to prevent a parting scene, and what signifies a tide?—we can sail by to-morrow's ebb as well as by this'

Cleveland sighed, for Norna's prediction rushed on his mind, but the opportunity of a last meeting with Minna was too tempting to be resigned either for presentiment or prediction

'I will go presently ashore to the place where they all are, said Bunce, 'and the payment of these stores shall serve me for a pretext, and I will carry any letters or message from you to Minna with the dexterity of a valet de chambre'

'But they have armed men—you may be in danger,' said Cleveland

'Not a whit—not a whit,' replied Bunce 'I protected the wenches when they were in my power, I warrant their father will neither wrong me, nor see me wronged'

'You say true said Cleveland, 'it is not in his nature I will instantly write a note to Minna' And he ran down to the cabin for that purpose, where he wasted much paper, ere, with a trembling hand and throbbing heart, he achieved such a letter as he hoped might prevail on Minna to permit him a farewell meeting on the succeeding morning

His adherent Bunce, in the meanwhile, sought out Fletcher, of whose support to second any motion whatever he accounted himself

sure; and, followed by this trusty satellite, he intruded himself on the awful presence of Hawkins the boatswain and Derrick the quartermaster, who were regaling themselves with a can of rumbo, after the fatiguing duty of the day.

'Here comes he can tell us,' said Derrick. – 'So, Master Lieutenant, for so we must call you now, I think, let us have a peep into your counsels.—When will the anchor be a-trip?'

'When it pleases Heaven, Master Quartermaster,' answered Bunce, 'for I know no more than the stern-post.'

'Why, d—n my buttons,' said Derrick, 'do we not weigh this tide?'

'Or to morrow's tide, at farthest?' said the boatswain.—'Why, what have we been slaving the whole company for, to get all these stores aboard?'

'Gentlemen,' said Bunce, 'you are to know that Cupid has laid our captain on board, carried the vessel, and nailed down his wits under hatches.'

'What sort of play-stuff is all this?' said the boatswain gruffly. 'If you have anything to tell us, say it in a word, like a man.'

'Howsomdever,' said Fletcher, 'I always think Jack Bunce speaks like a man, and acts like a man—too—and so, d'ye see'——

'Hold your peace, dear Dick; best of bully-backs, be silent,' said Bunce.—'Gentlemen, in one word, the captain is in love.'

'Why, now, only think of that!' said the boatswain; 'not but that I have been in love as often as any man, when the ship was laid up.'

'Well, but,' continued Bunce, 'Captain Cleveland is in love—Yes—Prince Volscius is in love; and though that's the cue for laughing on the stage, it is no laughing matter here. He expects to meet the girl to-morrow, for the last time; and that, we all know, leads to another meeting, and another, and so on till the Halcyon is down on us, and then we may look for more kicks than halfpence.'

'By——,' said the boatswain, with a sounding oath, 'we'll have a mutiny, and not allow him to go ashore,—eh, Derrick?'

'And the best way, too,' said Derrick.

'What d'ye think of it, Jack Bunce?' said Fletcher, in whose ears this counsel sounded very sagely, but who still bent a wistful look upon his companion.

'Why, look ye, gentlemen,' said Bunce, 'I will mutiny none, and stap my vitals if any of you shall!'

'Why, then, I won't, for one,' said Fletcher; 'but what are we to do, since howsomdever'—

'Stopper your jaw, Dick, will you?' said Bunce.—'Now, boatswain, I am partly of your mind, that the captain must be brought to reason by a little wholesome force. But you all know he has the spirit of a lion, and will do nothing unless he is allowed to hold on his own course. Well, I'll go ashore and make this appointment. The girl comes to the rendezvous in the morning, and the captain goes ashore—we take a good boat's crew with us, to row against tide and current, and we will be ready at the signal, to jump ashore and bring off the captain and the girl, whether they will or no. The pet-child will not quarrel with us, since we bring off his whirligig alongst with him; and if he is still fractious, why, we will weigh anchor without his orders, and let him come to his senses at leisure, and know his friends another time.'

'Why, this has a face with it, Master Derrick,' said Hawkins.

'Jack Bunce is always right,' said Fletcher; 'howsomdever, the captain will shoot some of us, that is certain.'

'Hold your jaw, Dick,' said Bunce; 'pray, who the devil cares, do you think, whether you are shot or hanged?'

'Why, it don't much argufy for the matter of that,' replied Dick; 'howsomdever'——

'Be quiet, I tell you,' said his inexorable patron, 'and hear me out.—We will take him at unawares, so that he shall neither have time to use cutlass nor pops; and I myself, for the dear love I bear him, will be the first to lay him on his back. There is a nice tight-going bit of a pinnace, that is a consort of this chase of the captain's—if I have an opportunity, I'll snap her up on my own account.'

'Yes, yes,' said Derrick; 'let you alone for keeping on the look-out for your own comforts.'

'Faith, nay,' said Bunce; 'I only snatch at them when they come fairly in my way, or are purchased by dint of my own wit; and none of you could have fallen on such a plan as this. We shall have the captain with us, head, hand, and heart, and all, besides making a scene fit to finish a comedy. So I will go ashore to make the appointment, and do you possess some of the gentlemen who are still sober, and fit to be trusted, with the knowledge of our intentions.'

Bunce, with his friend Fletcher, departed accordingly, and the two veteran pirates remained looking at each other in silence, until the boatswain spoke at last. 'Blow me, Derrick, if I like these two daffadandilly young fellows; they are not the true breed. Why, they are no more like the rovers I have known, than this sloop is to a first-rate. Why, there was old Sharpe that read prayers to his ship's company every Sunday, what would he have said to have heard it proposed to bring two wenches on board?'

'And what would tough old Black Beard have said,' answered his companion, 'if they had expected to keep them to themselves? They deserve to be made to walk the plank for their impudence; or to be tied back to back and set a diving; and I care not how soon.'

'Ay, but who is to command the ship then?' said Hawkins.

'Why, what ails you at old Goffe?' answered Derrick.

'Why, he has sucked the monkey so long and so often,' said the boatswain, 'that the best of him is buffed. He is little better than an old woman when he is sober, and he is roaring mad when he is drunk—we have had enough of Goffe.'

'Why, then, what d'ye say to yourself or to me, boatswain?' demanded the quartermaster. 'I am content to toss up for it.'

'Rot it, no,' answered the boatswain [illegible] moment's consideration; 'if we [illegible] ourite here, of the trade-winds, we mig[illegible] roaring lads, shift; but it will take al[illegible] of all the world, to get us there; and so, [illegible] ildest?'

like Bunce's project for the present. Hark, he calls for the boat—I must go on deck and have her lowered for his honour, d—n his eyes!'

The boat was lowered accordingly, made its voyage up the lake with safety, and landed Bunce within a few hundred yards of the old mansion-house of Stennis. Upon arriving in front of the house, he found that hasty measures had been taken to put it in a state of defence, the lower windows being barricaded, with places left for use of musketry, and a ship-gun being placed so as to command the entrance, which was besides guarded by two sentinels. Bunce demanded admission at the gate, which was briefly and unceremoniously refused to him, with an exhortation to him, at the same time, to be gone about his business before worse came of it. As he continued, however, importunately to insist on seeing some one of the family, and stated his business to be of the most urgent nature, Claud Halcro at length appeared, and, with more peevishness than belonged to his usual manner, that admirer of glorious John expostulated with his old acquaintance upon his pertinacious folly.

'You are,' he said, 'like foolish moths fluttering about a candle, which is sure at last to consume you.'

'And you,' said Bunce, 'are a set of stingless drones, whom we can smoke out of your defences at our pleasure, with half-a-dozen of hand-grenades.'

'Smoke a fool's head!' said Halcro; 'take my advice, and mind your own matters, or there will be those upon you will smoke you to purpose. Either begone, or tell me in two words what you want; for you are like to receive no welcome here save from a blunderbuss. We are men enough of ourselves; and here is young Mordaunt Mertoun come from Hoy, whom your captain so nearly murdered.'

'Tush, man,' said Bunce, 'he did but let out a little malapert blood.'

'We want no such phlebotomy here,' said Claud Halcro; 'and besides, your patient turns out to be nearer allied to us than either you or we thought of; so you may think how little welcome the captain or any of his crew are like to be here.'

'Well; but what if I bring money for the stores sent on board?'

'Keep it till it is asked of you,' said Halcro. 'There are two bad pay-masters—he that pays too soon, and he that does not pay at all.'

'Well, then, let me at least give our thanks to the donor,' said Bunce.

'Keep them, too, till they are asked for,' answered the poet.

'So this is all the welcome I have of you for old acquaintance' sake?' said Bunce.

'Why, what can I do for you, Master Altamont?' said Halcro, somewhat moved. — 'If young Mordaunt had had his own will, he would have welcomed you with "the red Burgundy, Number a thousand." For God's sake begone, else the stage direction will be, Enter guard, and seize Altamont.'

if I can help, give you the trouble,' said Bunce, tion.—That start my exit instantly. — Stay a the spy-glass is turnst forgot that I have a slip Vell, yonder tst of your girls there—Minna, ay, Minna is her name. It is a farewell from Captain Cleveland—you cannot refuse to give it her?'

'Ah, poor fellow!' said Halcro—'I comprehend—I comprehend—Farewell, fair Armida—

'Mid pikes and 'mid bullets, 'mid tempests and fire,
The danger is less than in hopeless desire.

Tell me but this—is there poetry in it?'

'Chokeful to the seal, with song, sonnet, and elegy,' answered Bunce; but let her have it cautiously and secretly.'

'Tush, man! teach me to deliver a billet-doux!—me, who have been in the Wits' Coffee-house, and have seen all the toasts of the Kit-Cat Club!—Minna shall have it, then, for old acquaintance' sake, Mr. Altamont, and for your captain's sake, too, who has less of the core of devil about him than his trade requires. There can be no harm in a farewell letter.'

'Farewell, then, old boy, for ever and a day!' said Bunce; and, seizing the poet's hand, gave it so hearty a grip, that he left him roaring and shaking his fist, like a dog when a hot cinder has fallen on his foot.

Leaving the rover to return on board the vessel, we remain with the family of Magnus Troil, assembled at their kinsman's mansion of Stennis, where they maintained a constant and careful watch against surprise.

Mordaunt Mertoun had been received with much kindness by Magnus Troil, when he came to his assistance, with a small party of Norna's dependents, placed by her under his command. The Udaller was easily satisfied that the reports instilled into his ears by the yagger, zealous to augment his favour towards his more profitable customer, Cleveland, by diminishing that of Mertoun, were without foundation. They had, indeed, been confirmed by the good Lady Glowrowrum, and by common fame, both of whom were pleased to represent Mordaunt Mertoun as an arrogant pretender to the favour of the sisters of Burgh-Westra, who only hesitated, sultan-like, on whom he should bestow the handkerchief. But common fame, Magnus considered, was a common liar, and he was sometimes disposed (where scandal was concerned) to regard the good Lady Glowrowrum as rather an uncommon specimen of the same genus. He therefore received Mordaunt once more into full favour, listened with much surprise to the claim which Norna laid to the young man's duty, and with no less interest to her intention of surrendering to him the considerable property which she had inherited from her father. Nay, it is even probable that, though he gave no immediate answer to her hints concerning a union betwixt his eldest daughter and her heir, he might think such an alliance recommended, as well by the young man's personal merits, as by the chance it gave of reuniting the very large estate which had been divided betwixt his own father and that of Norna. At all events, the Udaller received his young friend with much kindness, and he and the proprietor of the mansion joined in entrusting to him, as the youngest and most active of the party, the charge of commanding the night-watch, and relieving the sentinels around the House of Stennis.

CHAPTER XL.

Of an outlawe, this is the lawe—
That men him take and bind,
Without pitie hang'd to be,
And waive with the wind.
THE BALLAD OF THE NUT-BROWN MAID.

MORDAUNT had caused the sentinels who had been on duty since midnight to be relieved ere the peep of day, and, having given directions that the guard should be again changed at sunrise, he had retired to a small parlour, and, placing his arms beside him, was slumbering in an easy-chair, when he felt himself pulled by the watch-cloak in which he was enveloped.

'Is it sunrise,' said he, 'already?' as, starting up, he discovered the first beams lying level upon the horizon.

'Mordaunt!' said a voice, every note of which thrilled to his heart.

He turned his eyes on the speaker, and Brenda Troil, to his joyful astonishment, stood before him. As he was about to address her eagerly, he was checked by observing the signs of sorrow and discomposure in her pale cheeks, trembling lips, and brimful eyes.

'Mordaunt,' she said, 'you must do Minna and me a favour—you must allow us to leave the house quietly, and without alarming any one, in order to go as far as the Standing Stones of Stennis.'

'What freak can this be, dearest Brenda?' said Mordaunt, much amazed at the request—'Some Orcadian observance of superstition, perhaps; but the time is too dangerous, and my charge from your father too strict, that I should permit you to pass without his consent. Consider, dearest Brenda, I am a soldier on duty, and must obey orders.'

'Mordaunt,' said Brenda, 'this is no jesting matter—Minna's reason, nay, Minna's life, depends on your giving us this permission.'

'And for what purpose?' said Mordaunt; 'let me at least know that.'

'For a wild and a desperate purpose,' replied Brenda—'It is that she may meet Cleveland.'

'Cleveland!' said Mordaunt—'Should the villain come ashore, he shall be welcomed with a shower of rifle-balls. Let me within a hundred yards of him,' he added, grasping his piece, 'and all the mischief he has done me shall be balanced with an ounce bullet!'

'His death will drive Minna frantic,' said Brenda; 'and him who injures Minna, Brenda will never again look upon.'

'This is madness—raving madness!' said Mordaunt.—'Consider your honour—consider your duty.'

'I can consider nothing but Minna's danger,' said Brenda, breaking into a flood of tears; 'her former illness was nothing to the state she has been in all night. She holds in her hand his letter, written in characters of fire, rather than of ink, imploring her to see him for a last farewell, as she would save a mortal body and an immortal soul; pledging himself for her safety; and declaring no power shall force him from the coast till he has seen her.—You *must* let us pass.'

'It is impossible!' replied Mordaunt, in great perplexity.—'This ruffian has imprecations enough, doubtless, at his fingers' ends—but what better pledge has he to offer?—I cannot permit Minna to go.'

'I suppose,' said Brenda, somewhat reproachfully, while she dried her tears, yet still continued sobbing, 'that there is something in what Norna spoke of betwixt Minna and you; and that you are too jealous of this poor wretch, to allow him even to speak with her an instant before his departure.'

'You are unjust,' said Mordaunt, hurt, and yet somewhat flattered by her suspicions,—'you are as unjust as you are imprudent. You know—you cannot but know—that Minna is chiefly dear to me as *your* sister. Tell me, Brenda—and tell me truly—if I aid you in this folly, have you no suspicion of the pirate's faith?'

'No, none,' said Brenda; 'if I had any, do you think I would urge you thus? He is wild and unhappy, but I think we may in this trust him.'

'Is the appointed place the Standing Stones, and the time daybreak?' again demanded Mordaunt.

'It is, and the time is come,' said Brenda,—'for Heaven's sake, let us depart!'

'I will myself,' said Mordaunt, 'relieve the sentinel at the front door for a few minutes, and suffer you to pass.—You will not protract this interview, so full of danger?'

'We will not,' said Brenda; 'and you, on your part, will not avail yourself of this unhappy man's venturing hither, to harm or to seize him?'

'Rely on my honour,' said Mordaunt—'He shall have no harm, unless he offers any.'

'Then I go to call my sister,' said Brenda, and quickly left the apartment.

Mordaunt considered the matter for an instant, and then, going to the sentinel at the front door, he desired him to run instantly to the main-guard, and order the whole to turn out with their arms—to see the order obeyed, and to return when they were in readiness. Meantime, he himself, he said, would remain upon the post.

During the interval of the sentinel's absence, the front door was slowly opened, and Minna and Brenda appeared, muffled in their mantles. The former leaned on her sister, and kept her face bent on the ground, as one who felt ashamed of the step she was about to take. Brenda also passed her lover in silence, but threw back upon him a look of gratitude and affection, which doubled, if possible, his anxiety for their safety.

The sisters in the meanwhile passed out of sight of the house; when Minna, whose step, till that time, had been faint and feeble, began to erect her person, and to walk with a pace so firm and so swift, that Brenda, who had some difficulty to keep up with her, could not forbear remonstrating on the imprudence of hurrying her spirits, and exhausting her force, by such unnecessary haste.

'Fear not, my dearest sister,' said Minna; 'the spirit which I now feel will and must sustain me through the dreadful interview. I could not but move with a drooping head and a dejected pace, while I was in view of one who must necessarily deem me deserving of his pity, or his scorn. But you know, my dearest Brenda,

and Mordaunt shall also know, that the love I bore to that unhappy man was as pure as the rays of that sun, that is now reflected on the waves. And I dare attest that glorious sun, and yonder blue heaven, to bear me witness, that, but to urge him to change his unhappy course of life, I had not, for all the temptations this round world holds, ever consented to see him more.'

As she spoke thus, in a tone which afforded much confidence to Brenda, the sisters attained the summit of a rising ground, whence they commanded a full view of the Orcadian Stonehenge, consisting of a huge circle and semicircle of the Standing Stones, as they are called, which already glimmered a greyish white in the rising sun, and projected far to the westward their long, gigantic shadows. At another time the scene would have operated powerfully on the imaginative mind of Minna, and interested the curiosity at least of her sensitive sister. But, at this moment, neither was at leisure to receive the impressions which this stupendous monument of antiquity is so well calculated to impress on the feelings of those who behold it; for they saw in the lower lake, beneath what is termed the Bridge of Broisgar, a boat well manned and armed, which had disembarked one of its crew, who advanced alone, and wrapped in a naval cloak, towards that monumental circle which they themselves were about to reach from another quarter.

'They are many, and they are armed,' said the startled Brenda, in a whisper to her sister.

'It is for precaution's sake,' answered Minna, 'which, alas! their condition renders but too necessary. Fear no treachery from him—that, at least, is not his vice.'

As she spoke, or shortly afterwards, she attained the centre of the circle, on which, in the midst of the tall erect pillars of rude stone that are raised around, lies one flat and prostrate, supported by short stone pillars, of which some relics are still visible, that had once served, perhaps, the purpose of an altar.

'Here,' she said, 'in heathen times (if we may believe legends, which have cost me but too dear) our ancestors offered sacrifices to heathen deities—and here will I, from my soul, renounce, abjure, and offer up to a better and a more merciful God than was known to them, the vain ideas with which my youthful imagination has been seduced.'

She stood by the prostrate table of stone, and saw Cleveland advance towards her, with a timid pace and a downcast look, as different from his usual character and bearing, as Minna's high air and lofty demeanour, and calm, contemplative posture, were distant from those of the love-lorn and broken-hearted maiden whose weight had almost borne down the support of her sister as she left the House of Stennis. If the belief of those is true, who assign these singular monuments exclusively to the Druids, Minna might have seemed the Haxa, or high priestess of the order, from whom some champion of the tribe expected inauguration. Or if we hold the circles of Gothic and Scandinavian origin, she might have seemed a descended vision of Freya, the spouse of the Thundering Deity, before whom some bold sea-king or champion bent with an awe, which no mere mortal terror could have inflicted upon him. Brenda, overwhelmed with inexpressible fear and doubt, remained a pace or two behind, anxiously observing the motions of Cleveland, and attending to nothing around, save to him and to her sister.

Cleveland approached within two yards of Minna, and bent his head to the ground. There was a dead pause, until Minna said, in a firm but melancholy tone, 'Unhappy man, why didst thou seek this aggravation of our woe? Depart in peace, and may Heaven direct thee to a better course than that which thy life has yet held!'

'Heaven will not aid me,' said Cleveland, 'excepting by your voice. I came hither rude and wild, scarce knowing that my trade, my desperate trade, was more criminal in the sight of man or of Heaven than that of those privateers whom your law acknowledges. I was bred in it, and, but for the wishes you have encouraged me to form, I should have perhaps died in it, desperate and impenitent. O, do not throw me from you! let me do something to redeem what I have done amiss, and do not leave your own work half finished!'

'Cleveland,' said Minna, 'I will not reproach you with abusing my inexperience, or with availing yourself of those delusions which the credulity of early youth had flung around me, and which led me to confound your fatal course of life with the deeds of our ancient heroes. Alas! when I saw your followers, that illusion was no more!—but I do not upbraid you with its having existed. Go, Cleveland; detach yourself from those miserable wretches with whom you are associated, and believe me, that if Heaven yet grants you the means of distinguishing your name by one good or glorious action, there are eyes left in these lonely islands, that will weep as much for joy, as—as—they must now do for sorrow.'

'And is this all?' said Cleveland; 'and may not I hope that, if I extricate myself from my present associates—if I can gain my pardon by being as bold in the right as I have been too often in the wrong cause—if, after a term, I care not how long, but still a term which may have an end, I can boast of having redeemed my fame—may I not—may I not hope that Minna may forgive what my God and my country shall have pardoned?'

'Never, Cleveland, never,' said Minna, with the utmost firmness; 'on this spot we part, and part for ever, and part without longer indulgence. Think of me as of one dead, if you continue as you now are; but if—which may Heaven grant!—you change your fatal course, think of me then as one whose morning and evening prayers will be for your happiness, though she has lost her own.—Farewell, Cleveland!'

He kneeled, overpowered by his own bitter feelings, to take the hand which she held out to him, and in that instant his confidant Bunce, starting from behind one of the large upright pillars, his eyes wet with tears, exclaimed,—

'Never saw such a parting scene on any stage! But I'll be d—d if you make your exit as you expect!'

And so saying, ere Cleveland could employ

either remonstrance or resistance, and indeed before he could get upon his feet, he easily secured him by pulling him down on his back, so that two or three of the boat's crew seized him by the arms and legs, and began to hurry him towards the lake. Minna and Brenda shrieked and attempted to fly; but Derrick snatched up the former with as much ease as a falcon pounces on a pigeon, while Bunce, with an oath or two which were intended to be of a consolatory nature, seized on Brenda; and the whole party, with two or three of the other pirates, who, stealing from the water-side, had accompanied them on the ambuscade, began hastily to run towards the boat, which was left in charge of two of their number. Their course, however, was unexpectedly interrupted, and their criminal purpose entirely frustrated.

When Mordaunt Mertoun had turned out his guard in arms, it was with the natural purpose of watching over the safety of the two sisters. They had accordingly closely observed the motions of the pirates, and when they saw so many of them leave the boat and steal towards the place of rendezvous assigned to Cleveland, they naturally suspected treachery, and by cover of an old hollow way or trench, which perhaps had anciently been connected with the monumental circle, they had thrown themselves unperceived between the pirates and their boat. At the cries of the sisters, they started up and placed themselves in the way of the ruffians, presenting their pieces, which, notwithstanding, they dared not fire, for fear of hurting the young ladies, secured as they were in the rude grasp of the marauders. Mordaunt, however, advanced with the speed of a wild deer on Bunce, who, loath to quit his prey, yet unable to defend himself otherwise, turned to this side and that alternately, exposing Brenda to the blows which Mordaunt offered at him. This defence, however, proved in vain against a youth possessed of the lightest foot and most active hand ever known in Zetland, and, after a feint or two, Mordaunt brought the pirate to the ground with a stroke from the butt of the carabine, which he dared not use otherwise. At the same time firearms were discharged on either side by those who were liable to no such cause of forbearance, and the pirates who had hold of Cleveland dropped him, naturally enough, to provide for their own defence or retreat. But they only added to the numbers of their enemies; for Cleveland, perceiving Minna in the arms of Derrick, snatched her from the ruffian with one hand, and with the other shot him dead on the spot. Two or three more of the pirates fell or were taken, the rest fled to their boat, pushed off, then turned their broadside to the shore, and fired repeatedly on the Orcadian party, which they returned, with little injury on either side. Meanwhile Mordaunt, having first seen that the sisters were at liberty and in full flight towards the house, advanced on Cleveland with his cutlass drawn. The pirate presented a pistol, and calling out at the same time,—'Mordaunt, I never missed my aim,' he fired into the air, and threw it into the lake; then drew his cutlass, brandished it round his head, and flung that also, as far as his arm could send it, in the same direction. Yet such was the universal belief of his personal strength and resources, that Mordaunt still used precaution, as, advancing on Cleveland, he asked if he surrendered.

'I surrender to no man,' said the pirate captain, 'but you may see I have thrown away my weapons.'

He was immediately seized by some of the Orcadians, without his offering any resistance; but the instant interference of Mordaunt prevented his being roughly treated or bound. The victors conducted him to a well-secured upper apartment in the House of Stennis, and placed a sentinel at the door. Bunce and Fletcher, both of whom had been stretched on the field during the skirmish, were lodged in the same chamber; and two prisoners, who appeared of lower rank, were confined in a vault belonging to the mansion.

Without pretending to describe the joy of Magnus Troil, who, when awakened by the noise and firing, found his daughters safe, and his enemy a prisoner, we shall only say, it was so great, that he forgot, for the time at least, to inquire what circumstances were those which had placed them in danger; and that he hugged Mordaunt to his breast a thousand times, as their preserver; and swore as often by the bones of his sainted namesake, that if he had a thousand daughters, so tight a lad, and so true a friend, should have the choice of them, let Lady Glowrowrum say what she would.

A very different scene was passing in the prison-chamber of the unfortunate Cleveland and his associates. The captain sat by the window, his eyes bent on the prospect of the sea which it presented, and was seemingly so intent on it as to be insensible of the presence of the others. Jack Bunce stood meditating some ends of verse, in order to make his advances towards a reconciliation with Cleveland; for he began to be sensible, from the consequences, that the part he had played towards his captain, however well intended, was neither lucky in its issue, nor likely to be well taken. His admirer and adherent Fletcher lay half asleep, as it seemed, on a truckle-bed in the room, without the least attempt to interfere in the conversation which ensued.

'Nay, but speak to me, Clement,' said the penitent lieutenant, 'if it be but to swear at me for my stupidity.

What! not an oath?—Nay, then, the world goes hard,
If Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.'

'I prithee peace, and begone!' said Cleveland; 'I have one bosom friend left yet, and you will make me bestow its contents on you, or on myself.'

'I have it,' said Bunce, 'I have it!' and on he went in the vein of Jaffier,—

'Then, by the hell I merit, I'll not leave thee,
Till to thyself at least thou'rt reconciled,
However thy resentment deal with me!'

'I pray you once more to be silent,' said Cleveland.—'Is it not enough that you have undone me with your treachery, but you must stun me with your silly buffoonery?—I would not have believed *you* would have lifted a finger

against me, Jack, of any man or devil in yonder unhappy ship.'

'Who, I?' exclaimed Bunce, 'I lift a finger against you!—and if I did it was in pure love, and to make you the happiest fellow that ever trod a deck, with your mistress beside you, and fifty fine fellows at your command. Here is Dick Fletcher can bear witness I did all for the best, if he would but speak, instead of lolloping there like a Dutch dogger laid up to be careened.—Get up, Dick, and speak for me, won't you?'

'Why, yes, Jack Bunce,' answered Fletcher, raising himself with difficulty, and speaking feebly, 'I will if I can—and I always knew you spoke and did for the best—but howsomdever, d'ye see, it has turned out for the worst for me this time, for I am bleeding to death, I think.'

'You cannot be such an ass!' said Jack Bunce, springing to his assistance, as did Cleveland. But human aid came too late—he sank back on the bed, and, turning on his face, expired without a groan.

'I always thought him a d—d fool,' said Bunce, as he wiped a tear from his eye, 'but never such a consummate idiot as to hop the perch so sillily. I have lost the best follower'—and he again wiped his eye.

Cleveland looked on the dead body, the rugged features of which had remained unaltered by the death pang.—'A bull-dog,' he said, 'of the true British breed, and with a better counsellor, would have been a better man.'

'You may say that of some other folks too, captain, if you are minded to do them justice,' said Bunce.

'I may indeed, and especially of yourself,' said Cleveland in reply.

'Why, then, say, *Jack, I forgive you*,' said Bunce; 'it's but a short word, and soon spoken.'

'I forgive you from all my soul, Jack,' said Cleveland, who had resumed his situation at the window; 'and the rather that your folly is of little consequence—the morning is come that must bring ruin on us all.'

'What! you are thinking of the old woman's prophecy you spoke of?' said Bunce.

'It will be soon accomplished,' answered Cleveland. 'Come hither; what do you take yon large square-rigged vessel for, that you see doubling the headland on the east, and opening the bay of Stromness?'

'Why, I can't make her well out,' said Bunce, 'but yonder is old Goffe takes her for a West Indiaman loaded with rum and sugar, I suppose; for d—n me if he does not slip cable, and stand out to her!'

'Instead of running into the shoal water, which was his only safety,' said Cleveland.—'The fool! the dotard! the drivelling, drunken idiot!—he will get his flip hot enough, for yon is the Halcyon—See, she hoists her colours and fires a broadside! and there will soon be an end of the Fortune's Favourite! I only hope they will fight her to the last plank. The boatswain used to be staunch enough, and so is Goffe, though an incarnate demon.—Now she shoots away, with all the sail she can spread, and that shows some sense.'

'There goes the Jolly Hodge, the old black flag, with the death's head and hour-glass, and that shows some spunk,' added his comrade.

'The hour-glass is turned for us, Jack, for this bout—our sand is running fast.—Fire away yet, my roving lads! The deep sea or the blue sky rather than a rope and a yard-arm.'

There was a moment of anxious and dead silence; the sloop, though hard pressed, maintaining still a running fight, and the frigate continuing in full chase, but scarce returning a shot. At length the vessels neared each other, so as to show that the man-of-war intended to board the sloop, instead of sinking her, probably to secure the plunder which might be in the pirate vessel.

'Now, Goffe—now, boatswain!' exclaimed Cleveland, in an ecstasy of impatience, and as if they could have heard his commands, 'stand by sheets and tacks—rake her with a broadside when you are under her bows, then about ship, and go off on the other tack like a wild goose. The sails shiver—the helm's a-lee—Ah!—deep-sea sink the lubbers!—they miss stays, and the frigate runs them aboard!'

Accordingly the various manœuvres of the chase had brought them so near, that Cleveland, with his spy-glass, could see the man-of-war's men boarding by the yards and bowsprits in irresistible numbers, their naked cutlasses flashing in the sun, when, at that critical moment, both ships were enveloped in a cloud of thick black smoke, which suddenly arose on board the captured pirate.

'Exeunt omnes,' said Bunce, with clasped hands.

'There went the Fortune's Favourite, ship and crew,' said Cleveland, at the same instant.

But the smoke, immediately clearing away, showed that the damage had only been partial, and that, from want of a sufficient quantity of powder, the pirates had failed in their desperate attempt to blow up their vessel with the Halcyon.

Shortly after the action was over, Captain Weatherport of the Halcyon sent an officer and party of marines to the House of Stennis, to demand from the little garrison the pirate seamen who were then prisoners, and, in particular, Cleveland and Bunce, who acted as captain and lieutenant of the gang.

This was a demand which was not to be resisted, though Magnus Troil could have wished sincerely that the roof under which he lived had been allowed as an asylum at least to Cleveland. But the officer's orders were peremptory; and he added, it was Captain Weatherport's intention to land the other prisoners, and send the whole, with a sufficient escort, across the island to Kirkwall, in order to undergo an examination there before the civil authorities, previous to their being sent off to London for trial at the High Court of Admiralty. Magnus could therefore only intercede for good usage to Cleveland, and that he might not be stripped or plundered, which the officer, struck by his good mien, and compassionating his situation, readily promised. The honest Udaller would have said something in the way of comfort to Cleveland himself, but he could not find words to express it, and only shook his head.

'Old friend,' said Cleveland, 'you may have much to complain of—yet you pity instead of exulting over me—for the sake of you and yours, I will never harm human being more. Take this from me—my last hope, but my last temptation also,'—he drew from his bosom a pocket pistol, and gave it to Magnus Troil. 'Remember me to—But no—let every one forget me.—I am your prisoner, sir,' said he to the officer.

'And I also,' said poor Bunce; and, putting on a theatrical countenance, he ranted, with no very perceptible faltering in his tone, the words of Pierre,—

'Captain, you should be a gentleman of honour;
Keep off the rabble, that I may have room
To entertain my fate and die with decency.'

CHAPTER XII

Joy, joy, in London now!
SOUTHEY.

THE news of the capture of the rover reached Kirkwall about an hour before noon, and filled all men with wonder and with joy. Little business was that day done at the fair, whilst people of all ages and occupations streamed from the place to see the prisoners as they were marched towards Kirkwall, and to triumph in the different appearance which they now bore, from that which they had formerly exhibited when ranting, swaggering, and bullying in the streets of that town. The bayonets of the marines were soon seen to glisten in the sun, and then came on the melancholy troop of captives, handcuffed two and two together. Their finery had been partly torn from them by their captors, partly hung in rags about them; many were wounded and covered with blood, many blackened and scorched with the explosion, by which a few of the most desperate had in vain striven to blow up the vessel. Most of them seemed sullen and impenitent; some were more becomingly affected with their condition; and a few braved it out, and sung the same ribald songs to which they had made the streets of Kirkwall ring when they were in their frolics.

The boatswain and Goffe, coupled together, exhausted themselves in threats and imprecations against each other; the former charging Goffe with want of seamanship, and the latter alleging that the boatswain had prevented him from firing the powder that was stowed forward, and sending them all to the other world together. Last came Cleveland and Bunce, who were permitted to walk unshackled; the decent, melancholy, yet resolved manner of the former contrasting strongly with the stage strut and swagger which poor Jack thought it fitting to assume, in order to conceal some less dignified emotions. The former was looked upon with compassion, the latter with a mixture of scorn and pity; while most of the others inspired horror, and even fear, by their looks and their language.

There was one individual in Kirkwall who was so far from hastening to see the sight which attracted all eyes, that he was not even aware of the event which agitated the town. This was the elder Mertoun, whose residence in Kirkwall had been for two or three days, part of which had been spent in attending to some judicial proceedings, undertaken at the instance of the procurator fiscal, against that grave professor, Bryce Snailsfoot. In consequence of an inquisition into the proceedings of this worthy trader, Cleveland's chest, with his papers and other matters therein contained, had been restored to Mertoun, as the lawful custodier thereof, until the right owner should be in a situation to establish his right to them. Mertoun was at first desirous to throw back upon justice the charge which she was disposed to intrust with him; but on perusing one or two of the papers, he hastily changed his mind, in broken words requested the magistrate to let the chest be sent to his lodgings, and, hastening homeward, bolted himself into the room, to consider and digest the singular information which chance had thus conveyed to him, and which increased, in a tenfold degree, his impatience for an interview with the mysterious Norna of the Fitful Head.

It may be remembered that she had required of him, when they met in the churchyard of Saint Ninian, to attend in the outer aisle of the cathedral of Saint Magnus, at the hour of noon, on the fifth day of the fair of Saint Olla, there to meet a person by whom the fate of Mordaunt would be explained to him.—'It must be herself,' he said, 'and that I should see her at this moment is indispensable. How to find her sooner I know not; and better lose a few hours even in this exigence than offend her by a premature attempt to force myself on her presence.'

Long therefore, before noon—long before the town of Kirkwall was agitated by the news of the events on the other side of the island, the elder Mertoun was pacing the deserted aisle of the cathedral, awaiting, with agonising eagerness, the expected communication from Norna. The bell tolled twelve—no door opened—no one was seen to enter the cathedral; but the last sounds had not ceased to reverberate through the vaulted roof, when, gliding from one of the interior side aisles, Norna stood before him. Mertoun, indifferent to the apparent mystery of her sudden approach (with the secret of which the reader is acquainted) went up to her at once, with the earnest ejaculation—'Ulla—Ulla Troil—aid me to save our unhappy boy!'

'To Ulla Troil,' said Norna, 'I answer not—I gave that name to the winds on the night that cost me a father.'

'Speak not of that night of horror,' said Mertoun; 'we have need of our reason—let us not think on recollections which may destroy it; but aid me, if thou canst, to save our unfortunate child!'

'Vaughan,' answered Norna, 'he is already saved—long since saved; think you a mother's hand—and that of such a mother as I am—would await your crawling, tardy, ineffectual assistance? No, Vaughan—I make myself known to you but to show my triumph over you—it is the only revenge which the powerful Norna permits herself to take for the wrongs of Ulla Troil.'

'Have you indeed saved him—saved him from the murderous crew?' said Mertoun or Va—

—speak!—and speak truth!—I will believe everything,—all you would require me to assent to!—prove to me only he is escaped and safe!'

'Escaped and safe by my means,' said Norna—'safe, and in assurance of an honoured and happy alliance. Yes, great unbeliever!—yes, wise and self-opinioned infidel!—these were the works of Norna! I knew you many a year since, but never had I made myself known to you, save with the triumphant consciousness of having controlled the destiny that threatened my son. All combined against him—planets which threatened drowning—combinations which men saed blood—but my skill was superior to all.—I arranged—I combined—I found means—I made them—each disaster has been averted,—and what infidel on earth, or stubborn demon beyond the bounds of earth, shall hereafter deny my power?'

The wild ecstasy with which she spoke so much resembled triumphant insanity, that Mertoun answered—'Were your pretensions less lofty, and your speech more plain, I should be better assured of my son's safety.'

'Doubt on, vain sceptic!' said Norna—'And yet know, that not only is our son safe, but vengeance is mine, though I sought it not—vengeance on the powerful implement of the darker Influences by whom my schemes were so often thwarted, and even the life of my son endangered.—Yes, take it as a guarantee of the truth of my speech, that Cleveland!—the pirate Cleveland—even now enters Kirkwall as a prisoner, and will soon expiate with his life the having shed blood which is of kin to Norna's.'

'Who didst thou say was prisoner?' exclaimed Mertoun, with a voice of thunder. '*Who*, woman, didst thou say should expiate his crimes with his life?'

'Cleveland—the pirate Cleveland!' answered Norna; 'and by me, whose counsel he scorned, he has been permitted to meet his fate.'

'Thou most wretched of women!' said Mertoun, speaking from between his clenched teeth—'thou hast slain thy son as well as thy father!'

'My son!—what son?—What mean you?—Mordaunt is your son—your only son!' exclaimed Norna—'is he not?—tell me quickly—is he not?'

'Mordaunt is indeed *my* son,' said Mertoun—'the laws, at least, gave him to me as such—But, O unhappy Ulla! Cleveland is your son as well as mine—blood of our blood, bone of our bone; and if you have given him to death, I will end my wretched life along with him!'

'Stay—hold—stop, Vaughan!' said Norna; 'I am not yet overcome—prove but to me the truth of what you say, I would find help, if I should evoke hell!—But prove your words, else believe them I cannot.'

'*Thou* help? wretched overweening woman!—in what have thy combinations and thy stratagems—the legerdemain of lunacy—the mere quackery of insanity—in what have these involved thee?—and yet I will speak to thee as reasonable—nay, I will admit thee as powerful—Hear, then, Ulla, the proofs which you demand, and find a remedy if thou canst.—

'When I fled from Orkney,' he continued, after a pause—'it is now five-and-twenty years since—I bore with me the unhappy [illegible] to whom you had given light. It was sent to me by one of your kinswomen, with an account of your illness, which was soon followed by a generally received belief of your death. It avails not to tell in what misery I left Europe. I found refuge in Hispaniola, wherein a fair young Spaniard undertook the task of comforter. I married her—she became mother of the youth called Mordaunt Mertoun.'

'You married her!' said Norna, in a tone of deep reproach.

'I did, Ulla,' answered Mertoun; 'but you were avenged. She proved faithless, and her infidelity left me in doubts whether the child she bore had a right to call me father—But I also was avenged.'

'You murdered her!' said Norna, with a dreadful shriek.

'I did that,' said Mertoun, without a more direct reply, 'which made an instant flight from Hispaniola necessary. Your son I carried with me to Tortuga, where we had a small settlement. Mordaunt Vaughan, my son by marriage, about three or four years younger, was residing in Port-Royal for the advantages of an English education. I resolved never to see him again, but I continued to support him. Our settlement was plundered by the Spaniards when Clement was but fifteen—Want came to aid despair and a troubled conscience. I became a corsair, and involved Clement in the same desperate trade. His skill and bravery, though then a mere boy, gained him a separate command, and after a lapse of two or three years, while we were on different cruises, my crew rose on me, and left me for dead on the beach of one of the Bermudas. I recovered, however, and my first inquiries, after a tedious illness, were after Clement. He, I heard, had been also marooned by a rebellious crew, and put ashore on a desert islet, to perish with want—I believed he had so perished.'

'And what assures you that he did not?' said Ulla; 'or how comes this Cleveland to be identified with Vaughan?'

'To change a name is common with such adventurers,' answered Mertoun, 'and Clement had apparently found that of Vaughan had become too notorious—and this change, in his case, prevented me from hearing any tidings of him. It was then that remorse seized me, and that, detesting all nature, but especially the sex to which Louisa belonged, I resolved to do penance in the wild islands of Zetland for the rest of my life. To subject myself to fasts and to the scourge was the advice of the holy Catholic priests whom I consulted. But I devised a nobler penance—I determined to bring with me the unhappy boy Mordaunt, and to keep always before me the living memorial of my misery and my guilt. I have done so, and I have thought over both till reason has often trembled on her throne. And now, to drive me to utter madness, my Clement—my own, my undoubted son, revives from the dead to be consigned to an infamous death by the machinations of his own mother!'

'Away, away!' said Norna, with a laugh, when she had heard the story to an end, 'this is a legend framed by the old corsair to interest

my aid in favour of a guilty comrade. How could I mistake Mordaunt for my son, their ages being so different?'

'The dark complexion and manly stature may have done much,' said Basil Mertoun; 'strong imagination must have done the rest.'

'But give me proofs--give me proofs that this Cleveland is my son, and, believe me, this sun shall sooner sink in the east, than they shall have power to harm a hair of his head.'

'These papers, these journals,' said Mertoun, offering the pocket-book.

'I cannot read them,' she said, after an effort; 'my brain is dizzy.'

'Clement had also tokens which you may remember, but they must have become the booty of his captors. He had a silver box with a Runic inscription, with which, in far other days, you presented me—a golden chaplet.'

'A box,' said Norna hastily; 'Cleveland gave me one but a day since—I have never looked at it till now.'

Eagerly she pulled it out—eagerly examined the legend around the lid, and as eagerly exclaimed—'They may now indeed call me Reimkennar, for by this rhyme, I know myself murderess of my son, as well as of my father!'

The conviction of the strong delusion under which she had laboured was so overwhelming, that she sunk down at the foot of one of the pillars.—Mertoun shouted for help, though in despair of receiving any; the sexton, however, entered, and, hopeless of all assistance from Norna, the distracted father rushed out, to learn, if possible, the fate of his son.

CHAPTER XLII.

Go, some of you, cry a reprieve!
BEGGAR'S OPERA.

CAPTAIN WEATHERPORT had, before this time, reached Kirkwall in person, and was received with great joy and thankfulness by the magistrates, who had assembled in council for the purpose. The provost, in particular, expressed himself delighted with the providential arrival of the Halcyon, at the very conjuncture when the pirate could not escape her. The captain looked a little surprised, and said—'For that, sir, you may thank the information you yourself supplied.'

'That I supplied?' said the provost, somewhat astonished.

'Yes, sir,' answered Captain Weatherport; 'I understand you to be George Torfe, chief magistrate of Kirkwall, who subscribes this letter.'

The astonished provost took the letter, addressed to Captain Weatherport of the Halcyon, stating the arrival, force, etc., of the pirates' vessel; but adding, that they had heard of the Halcyon being on the coast, and that they were on their guard and ready to baffle her, by going among the shoals, and through the islands and holms, where the frigate could not easily follow; and, at the worst, they were desperate enough to propose running the sloop ashore and blowing her up, by which much booty and treasure would be lost to the captors. The letter, therefore, suggested, that the Halcyon should cruise betwixt Duncansbay Head and Cape Wrath for two or three days, to relieve the pirates of the alarm her neighbourhood occasioned, and lull them into security, the more especially as the letter-writer knew it to be their intention, if the frigate left the coast, to go into Stromness Bay, and there put their guns ashore for some necessary repairs, or even for careening their vessel, if they could find means. The letter concluded by assuring Captain Weatherport that, if he could bring his frigate into Stromness Bay on the morning of the 24th of August, he would have a good bargain of the pirates—if sooner, he was not unlikely to miss them.

'This letter is not of my writing or subscribing, Captain Weatherport,' said the provost; 'nor would I have ventured to advise any delay in your coming hither.'

The captain was surprised in his turn. 'All I know is, that it reached me when I was in the bay of Thurso, and that I gave the boat's crew that brought it five dollars for crossing the Pentland Firth in very rough weather. They had a dumb dwarf as cockswain, the ugliest urchin my eyes ever opened upon. I give you much credit for the accuracy of your intelligence, Mr. Provost.'

'It is lucky as it is,' said the provost; 'yet I question whether the writer of this letter would not rather that you had found the nest cold and the bird flown.'

So saying, he handed the letter to Magnus Troil, who returned it with a smile, but without any observation, aware, doubtless, with the sagacious reader, that Norna had her own reasons for calculating with accuracy on the date of the Halcyon's arrival.

Without puzzling himself further concerning a circumstance which seemed inexplicable, the captain requested that the examinations might proceed; and Cleveland and Altamont, as he chose to be called, were brought up the first of the pirate crew, on the charge of having acted as captain and lieutenant. They had just commenced the examination, when, after some expostulation with the officers who kept the door, Basil Mertoun burst into the apartment, and exclaimed, 'Take the old victim for the young one! I am Basil Vaughan, too well known on the windward station—take my life, and spare my son's!'

All were astonished, and none more than Magnus Troil, who hastily explained to the magistrates and Captain Weatherport, that this gentleman had been living peaceably and honestly on the Mainland of Zetland for many years.

'In that case,' said the captain, 'I wash my hands of the poor man, for he is safe, under two proclamations of mercy; and, by my soul, when I see them, the father and his offspring, hanging on each other's neck, I wish I could say as much for the son.'

'But how is it—how can it be?' said the provost: 'we always called the old man Mertoun, and the young, Cleveland, and now it seems they are both named Vaughan.'

'Vaughan,' answered Magnus, 'is a name which I have some reason to remember; and,

from what I have lately heard from my cousin Norna, that old man has a right to bear it.'

'And, I trust, the young man also,' said the captain, who had been looking over a memorandum. 'Listen to me a moment,' added he, addressing the younger Vaughan, whom we have hitherto called Cleveland. 'Hark you, sir, your name is said to be Clement Vaughan—are you the same who, then a mere boy, commanded a party of rovers, who, about eight or nine years ago, pillaged a Spanish village called Quempoa, on the Spanish Main, with the purpose of seizing some treasure?'

'It will avail me nothing to deny it,' answered the prisoner.

'No,' said Captain Weatherport, 'but it may do you service to admit it.—Well, the muleteers escaped with the treasure, while you were engaged in protecting, at the hazard of your own life, the honour of two Spanish ladies against the brutality of your followers. Do you remember anything of this?'

'I am sure *I* do,' said Jack Bunce; 'for our captain here was marooned for his gallantry, and I narrowly escaped flogging and pickling for having taken his part.'

'When these points are established,' said Captain Weatherport, 'Vaughan's life is safe. The women he saved were persons of quality, daughters to the governor of the province, and application was long since made, by the grateful Spaniard, to our government, for favour to be shown to their preserver. I had special orders about Clement Vaughan, when I had a commission for cruising upon the pirates, in the West Indies, six or seven years since. But Vaughan was gone then as a name amongst them; and I heard enough of Cleveland in his room. However, captain, be you Cleveland or Vaughan, I think that, as the Quempoa hero, I can assure you a free pardon when you arrive in London.'

Cleveland bowed, and the blood mounted to his face. Mertoun fell on his knees, and exhausted himself in thanksgiving to Heaven. They were removed, amidst the sympathizing sobs of the spectators.

'And now, good Master Lieutenant, what have you got to say for yourself?' said Captain Weatherport to the ci-devant Roscius.

'Why, little or nothing, please your honour; only that I wish your honour could find my name in that book of mercy you have in your hand; for I stood by Captain Clement Vaughan in that Quempoa business.'

'You call yourself Frederick Altamont?' said Captain Weatherport. 'I can see no such name here; one John Bounce, or Bunce, the lady put on her tablets.'

'Why, that is me—that is I myself, captain—I can prove it; and I am determined, though the sound be something plebeian, rather to live Jack Bunce, than to hang as Frederick Altamont.'

'In that case,' said the captain, 'I can give you some hopes as John Bunce.'

'Thank your noble worship!' shouted Bunce; then, changing his tone, he said, 'Ah, since an alias has such virtue, poor Dick Fletcher might have come off as Timothy Tugmutton; but howsomdever, d'ye see, to use his own phrase'——

'Away with the lieutenant,' said the captain, 'and bring forward Goffe and the other fellows; there will be ropes reeved for some of them, I think.' And this prediction promised to be amply fulfilled, so strong was the proof which was brought against them.

The Halcyon was accordingly ordered round to carry the whole prisoners to London, for which she set sail in the course of two days.

During the time that the unfortunate Cleveland remained at Kirkwall, he was treated with civility by the captain of the Halcyon; and the kindness of his old acquaintance, Magnus Troil, who knew in secret how closely he was allied to his blood, pressed on him accommodations of every kind, more than he could be prevailed on to accept.

Norna, whose interest in the unhappy prisoner was still more deep, was at this time unable to express it. The sexton had found her lying on the pavement in a swoon, and when she recovered, her mind for the time had totally lost its equipoise, and it became necessary to place her under the restraint of watchful attendants.

Of the sisters of Burgh-Westra, Cleveland only heard that they remained ill, in consequence of the fright to which they had been subjected, until the evening before the Halcyon sailed, when he received, by a private conveyance, the following billet:—'Farewell, Cleveland—we part for ever, and it is right that we should—Be virtuous and be happy. The delusions which a solitary education and limited acquaintance with the modern world had spread around me, are gone and dissipated for ever. But in you, I am sure, I have been thus far free from error—that you are one to whom good is naturally more attractive than evil, and whom only necessity, example, and habit have forced into your late course of life. Think of me as one who no longer exists, unless you should become as much the object of general praise, as now of general reproach; and then think of me as one who will rejoice in your reviving fame, though she must never see you more!'—The note was signed M. T.; and Cleveland, with a deep emotion, which he testified even by tears, read it an hundred times over, and then clasped it to his bosom.

Mordaunt Mertoun heard by letter from his father, but in a very different style. Basil bade him farewell for ever, and acquitted him henceforward of the duties of a son, as one on whom he, notwithstanding the exertions of many years, had found himself unable to bestow the affections of a parent. The letter informed him of a recess in the old house of Yarlshof, in which the writer had deposited a considerable quantity of specie and of treasure, which he desired Mordaunt to use as his own. 'You need not fear,' the letter bore, 'either that you lay yourself under obligation to me, or that you are sharing the spoils of piracy. What is now given over to you is almost entirely the property of your deceased mother, Louisa Gonzago, and is yours by every right. Let us forgive each other,' was the conclusion, 'as they who must meet no more.'—And they never met more; for the elder Mertoun, against whom no charge was ever preferred,

disappeared after the fate of Cleveland was determined, and was generally believed to have retired into a foreign convent.

The fate of Cleveland will be most briefly expressed in a letter, which Minna received within two months after the Halcyon left Kirkwall. The family were then assembled at Burgh-Westra, and Mordaunt was a member of it for the time, the good Udaller thinking he could never sufficiently repay the activity which he had shown in the defence of his daughters. Norna, then beginning to recover from her temporary alienation of mind, was a guest in the family, and Minna, who was sedulous in her attention upon this unfortunate victim of mental delusion, was seated with her, watching each symptom of returning reason, when the letter we allude to was placed in her hands.

'Minna,' it said—'dearest Minna!—farewell, and for ever!—Believe me, I never meant you wrong—never. From the moment I came to know you, I resolved to detach myself from my hateful comrades, and had framed a thousand schemes, which have proved as vain as they deserved to be—for why, or how, should the fate of her that is so lovely, pure, and innocent, be involved with that of one so guilty?—Of these dreams I will speak no more. The stern reality of my situation is much milder than I either expected or deserved; and the little good I did has outweighed, in the minds of honourable and merciful judges, much that was evil and criminal. I have not only been exempted from the ignominious death to which several of my compeers are sentenced, but Captain Weatherport, about once more to sail for the Spanish Main, under the apprehension of an immediate war with that country, has generously solicited and obtained permission to employ me, and two or three more of my less guilty associates, in the same service—a measure recommended to himself by his own generous compassion, and to others by our knowledge of the coast, and of local circumstances, which, by whatever means acquired, we now hope to use for the service of our country. Minna, you will hear my name pronounced with honour, or you will never hear it again. If virtue can give happiness, I need not wish it to you, for it is yours already.—Farewell, Minna.'

Minna wept so bitterly over this letter, that it attracted the attention of the convalescent Norna. She snatched it from the hand of her kinswoman, and read it over at first with the confused air of one to whom it conveyed no intelligence—then with a dawn of recollection—then with a burst of mingled joy and grief, in which she dropped it from her hand. Minna snatched it up, and retired with her treasure to her own apartment.

From that time Norna appeared to assume a different character. Her dress was changed to one of a more simple and less imposing appearance. Her dwarf was dismissed, with ample provision for his future comfort. She showed no desire of resuming her erratic life; and directed her observatory, as it might be called, on Fitful Head, to be dismantled. She refused the name of Norna, and would only be addressed by her real appellation of Ulla Troil. But the most important change remained behind. Formerly, from the dreadful dictates of spiritual despair, arising out of the circumstances of her father's death, she seemed to have considered herself as an outcast from divine grace; besides that, enveloped in the vain occult sciences which she pretended to practise, her study, like that of Chaucer's physician, had been 'but little in the Bible.' Now, the sacred volume was seldom laid aside; and, to the poor ignorant people who came as formerly to invoke her power over the elements, she only replied—'*The winds are in the hollow of His hand.*'—Her conversion was not, perhaps, altogether rational; for this, the state of a mind disordered by such a complication of horrid incidents probably prevented. But it seemed to be sincere, and was certainly useful. She appeared deeply to repent of her former presumptuous attempts to interfere with the course of human events, superintended as they are by far higher powers, and expressed bitter compunction when such her former pretensions were in any manner recalled to her memory. She still showed a partiality to Mordaunt, though, perhaps, arising chiefly from habit; nor was it easy to know how much or how little she remembered of the complicated events in which she had been connected. When she died, which was about four years after the events we have commemorated, it was found that, at the special and earnest request of Minna Troil, she had conveyed her very considerable property to Brenda. A clause in her will specially directed that all the books, implements of her laboratory, and other things connected with her former studies, should be committed to the flames.

About two years before Norna's death, Brenda was wedded to Mordaunt Mertoun. It was some time before old Magnus Troil, with all his affection for his daughter and all his partiality for Mordaunt, was able frankly to reconcile himself to this match. But Mordaunt's accomplishments were peculiarly to the Udaller's taste, and the old man felt the impossibility of supplying his place in his family so absolutely, that at length his Norse blood gave way to the natural feeling of the heart, and he comforted his pride while he looked around him, and saw what he considered as the encroachments of the Scottish gentry upon the COUNTRY (so Zetland is fondly termed by its inhabitants), that as well 'his daughter married the son of an English pirate, as of a Scottish thief,' in scornful allusion to the Highland and Border families, to whom Zetland owes many respectable landholders; but whose ancestors were generally esteemed more renowned for ancient family and high courage than for accurately regarding the trifling distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*. The jovial old man lived to the extremity of human life, with the happy prospect of a numerous succession in the family of his younger daughter; and having his board cheered alternately by the minstrelsy of Claud Halcro, and enlightened by the lucubrations of Mr. Triptolemus Yellowley, who, laying aside his high pretensions, was, when he became better acquainted with the manners of the islanders, and remembered the various misadventures which had attended his premature attempts at reform-

ation, an honest and useful representative of his principal, and never so happy as when he could escape from the spare commons of his sister Barbara, to the genial table of the Udaller. Barbara's temper also was much softened by the unexpected restoration of the horn of silver coins (the property of Norna), which she had concealed in the mansion of old Stourburgh, for achieving some of her mysterious plans, but which she now restored to those by whom it had been accidentally discovered, with an intimation, however, that it would again disappear unless a reasonable portion was expended on the sustenance of the family, a precaution to which Tronda Dronsdaughter (probably an agent of Norna's) owed her escape from a slow and wasting death by inanition.

Mordaunt and Brenda were as happy as our mortal condition permits us to be. They admired and loved each other—enjoyed easy circumstances—had duties to discharge which they did not neglect, and clear in conscience as light of heart, laughed, sung, danced, daffed the world aside, and bade it pass.

But Minna—the high-minded and imaginative Minna—she, gifted with such depth of feeling and enthusiasm, yet doomed to see both blighted in early youth, because, with the inexperience of a disposition equally romantic and ignorant, she had built the fabric of her happiness on a quicksand instead of a rock,—was she, could she be happy? Reader, she was happy; for, whatever may be alleged to the contrary by the sceptic and the scorner, to each duty performed there is assigned a degree of mental peace and high consciousness of honourable exertion, corresponding to the difficulty of the task accomplished. That rest of the body which succeeds to hard and industrious toil, is not to be compared to the repose which the spirit enjoys under similar circumstances. Her resignation, however, and the constant attention which she paid to her father, her sister, the afflicted Norna, and to all who had claims on her, were neither Minna's sole nor her most precious source of comfort. Like Norna, but under a more regulated judgment, she learned to exchange the visions of wild enthusiasm, which had exalted and misled her imagination, for a truer and purer connection with the world beyond us, than could be learned from the sagas of heathen bards, or the visions of later rhymers. To this she owed the support by which she was enabled, after various accounts of the honourable and gallant conduct of Cleveland, to read with resignation, and even with a sense of comfort, mingled with sorrow, that he had at length fallen, leading the way in a gallant and honourable enterprise, which was successfully accomplished by those companions to whom his determined bravery had opened the road. Bunce, his fantastic follower in good, as formerly in evil, transmitted an account to Minna of this melancholy event, in terms which showed that, though his head was weak, his heart had not been utterly corrupted by the lawless life which he had for some time led, or at least that it had been amended by the change; and that he himself had gained credit and promotion in the same action, seemed to be of little consequence to him, compared with the loss of his old captain and comrade.* Minna read the intelligence, and thanked Heaven, even while the eyes which she lifted up were streaming with tears, that the death of Cleveland had been in the bed of honour; nay, she even had the courage to add to her gratitude, that he had been snatched from a situation of temptation ere circumstances had overcome his new-born virtue; and so strongly did this reflection operate, that her life, after the immediate pain of this event had passed away, seemed not only as resigned, but even more cheerful than before. Her thoughts, however, were detached from the world, and only visited it with an interest like that which guardian spirits take for their charge, in behalf of those friends with whom she lived in love, or of the poor whom she could serve and comfort. Thus passed her life, enjoying from all who approached her an affection enhanced by reverence; insomuch, that when her friends sorrowed for her death, which arrived at a late period of her existence, they were comforted by the fond reflection, that the humanity which she then laid down was the only circumstance which had placed her in the words of Scripture, 'a little lower than the angels!'

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* We have been able to learn nothing with certainty of Bunce's fate, but our friend Dr Dryasdust believes he may be identified with a certain old gentleman, who, in the beginning of the reign of George I., attended the Rose Coffeehouse regularly, went to the theatre every night, told mercilessly long stories about the Spanish Main, controlled reckonings, bullied waiters, and was generally known by the name of Captain Bounce.

NOTES TO THE PIRATE.

NOTE A, p 360 — WILLIAM ERSKINE OF KINEDDER

[William Erskine of Kinedder son of an Episcopal minister in Perthshire was educated for the legal profession and passed advocate 31 July 1790 He was appointed Sheriff Depute of Orkney 6th June 1809 and in that capacity was accompanied by Scott in the light house voyage round the coast He was raised to the bench, and took his seat as Lord Kinedder 29th January 1822 Unfortunately he did not long enjoy this honour, as he died, unexpectedly on the 14th of August following, to the great grief of Sir Walter who at this very time was wholly occupied with the arrangements connected with George IV's visit to Edinburgh Lord Kinedder to whom Scott had from boyhood been deeply attached, was a most amiable and accomplished man

In 1783 when the Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands was first published (which the Wartons thought superior to the other works of Collins but which Dr Johnson says no search has yet found) Mr Erskine wrote several supplementary stanzas intended to commemorate some Scottish superstitions omitted by Collins These verses first appeared in the *Edinburgh Magazine* for April 1788]

NOTE B p 366 — PLANTIE CRUIVE

A patch of ground for vegetables The liberal custom of the country permits any person who has occasion for such convenience to select out of the uninclosed moorland a small patch which he surrounds with a drystone wall and cultivates as a kail yard till he exhausts the soil with cropping and then he deserts it and encloses another This liberty is so far from inferring an invasion of the right of proprietor and tenant that the last degree of contempt is inferred of an avaricious man when a Zetlander says, he would not hold a *plantie cruive* of him

NOTE C p 369 — NORSE FRAGMENTS

Mr Baikie of Tankerness a most respectable inhabitant of Kirkwall, and an Orkney proprietor, assured me of the following curious fact

A clergyman, who was not long deceased remembered well when some remnants of the Norse were still spoken in the island called North Ronaldsha When Gray's Ode, entitled the Fatal Sisters, was first published or at least first reached that remote island the reverend gentleman had the well judged curiosity to read it to some of the old persons of the isle as a poem which regarded the history of their own country They listened with great attention to the preliminary stanzas —

> Now the storm begins to lour
>   Haste the loom of hell prepare
> Iron sleet of arrowy shower
>   Hurtles in the darken'd air

But when they heard a verse or two more they interrupted the reader telling him they knew the song well in the Norse language, and had often sung it to him when he asked them for an old song They called it the Magicians, or the Enchantresses It would have been singular news to the elegant translator, when executing his version from the text of Bartholine, to have learned that the Norse original was still preserved by tradition in a remote corner of the British dominions The circumstance will probably justify what is said in the text concerning the traditions of the inhabitants of those remote isles, at the beginning of the eighteenth century

Even yet, though the Norse language is entirely disused, except in so far as particular words and phrases are still retained these fishers of the Ultima Thule are a generation much attached to these ancient legends Of this the Author learned a singular instance

About twenty years ago, a missionary clergyman had taken the resolution of traversing those wild islands, where he supposed there might be a lack of religious instruction, which he believed himself capable of supplying After being some days at sea in an open boat, he arrived at North Ronaldsha where his appearance excited great speculation He was a very little man, dark complexioned, and from the fatigue he had sustained in removing from one island to another, he appeared before them ill dressed and unshaved so that the inhabitants set him down as one of the Ancient Picts or, as they call them with the usual strong guttural Peghts How they might have received the poor preacher in this character, was at least dubious and the schoolmaster of the parish, who had given quarters to the fatigued traveller set off to consult with Mr Stevenson the able and ingenious engineer of the Scottish Lighthouse Service who chanced to be on the island As his skill and knowledge were in the highest repute it was conceived that Mr S could decide at once whether the stranger was a Peght or ought to be treated as such Mr S was so good natured as to attend the summons with the view of rendering the preacher some service The poor missionary who had watched for three nights, was now fast asleep little dreaming what odious suspicions were current respecting him The inhabitants were assembled round the door Mr S, understanding the traveller's condition, declined disturbing him, upon which the islanders produced a pair of very little uncouth looking boots with prodigiously thick soles and appealed to him whether it was possible such articles of raiment could belong to any one but a Peght Mr S, finding the prejudices of the natives so strong, was induced to enter the sleeping apartment of the traveller, and was surprised to recognise in the supposed Peght a person whom he had known in his worldly profession of an Edinburgh shopkeeper, before he had assumed his present profession Of course he was enabled to refute all suspicions of Peghtism.

NOTE D, p 369 — MONSTERS OF THE NORTHERN SEAS.

I have said, in the text that the wondrous tales told by Pontoppidan the Archbishop of Upsal, still find believers in the Northern Archipelago It is in vain they are cancelled even in the later editions of Guthrie's Grammar, of which instructive work they used to form the chapter far most attractive to juvenile readers But the same causes which probably gave birth to the legends concerning Mermaids, sea snakes, krakens, and other marvellous inhabitants of the Northern Ocean, are still alive in those climates where they took their rise Th[...] but whose probably from the eagerness of curiosity [...] e renowned elegant poetess, Mrs Hemans [...] e than for

> What hid st thou in thy treasure caves [...] nctions of
>   Thou ever sounding and mysterious [...]

lived to

The additional mystic gloom which [...] he happy northern billows for half the year, joined [...] the family glance obtained of occasional objects, en[...] his board or the fanciful to give way to imaginatio[...] of Claud to shape out a distinct story from some obj[...] imperfectly examined Thus, some ye[...] brations of object was seen in the beautiful b[...] Zetland, so much in vulgar opinion r[...] laying aside that though it might be distinguishe[...] became better the exchange of darkness to twili[...] the islanders, yet the hardy boatmen shuddered [...] dventures which of being drawn down by the suctio[...] mpts at reform-

sinking. It was probably the hull of some vessel which had foundered at sea

The belief in Mermaids, so fanciful and pleasing in itself, is ever and anon refreshed by a strange tale from the remote shores of some solitary islet

The Author heard a mariner of some reputation in his class vouch for having seen the celebrated sea serpent It appeared, so far as could be guessed, to be about a hundred feet long, with the wild mane and fiery eyes which old writers ascribe to the monster, but it is not unlikely the spectator might, in the doubtful light, be deceived by the appearance of a good Norway log floating on the waves I have only to add, that the remains of an animal supposed to belong to this latter species, were driven on shore in the Zetland Isles, within the recollection of man Part of the bones were sent to London, and pronounced by Sir Joseph Banks to be those of a basking shark, yet it would seem that an animal so well known ought to have been immediately distinguished by the northern fishermen

NOTE F p 38? —THE RANZELMAN

[The Ranzelman or Rancellor was a kind of parish constable, whose chief duties were to *rancel* or search for stolen goods, to inform against all contraveners of the County Acts and to settle such disputes as were beneath the notice of the local tribunal]

NOTE F, p 383 —SAINT RONALD

[Rögnvald, Earl and Saint, the hero of the Orkneyinga Saga, is one of the most attractive characters in old Norse history and legend He was a famous poet skilled in Runic lore, an expert in all athletic sports and games, and an accomplished musician He built Saint Magnus Cathedral in Orkney, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and died about 1158]

NOTE G, p 390 —SALE OF WINDS

The King of Sweden the same I it quoted by Mr drunt 'was says Olaus Magnus 'in his time held second to none in the magical art, and he was so familiar with the evil spirits whom he worshipped that what way soever he turned his cap the wind would presently blow that way For this he was called Windy cap —*Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* Roma 1555 It is well known that the Laplanders drive a profitable trade in selling *winds*, but it is perhaps less notorious that within these few years such a commodity might be purchased on British ground, where it was likely to be in great request At the village of Stromness on the Orkney Main island called Pomona, lived, in 1814 an aged dame, called Bessie Millie, who helped out her subsistence by selling favourable winds to mariners He was a venturous master of a vessel who left the roadstead of Stromness without paying his offering to propitiate Bessie Millie, her fee was extremely moderate being exactly sixpence, for which, as she explained herself she boiled her kettle and gave the bark advantage of her prayers, for she disclaimed all unlawful arts The wind thus petitioned for was sure, she said, to arrive, though sometimes the mariners had to wait some time for it The woman's dwelling and appearance were not unbecoming her pretensions her house which was on the brow of the steep hill on which Stromness is founded, was only accessible by a series of dirty and precipitous lanes and for exposure might have been the abode of Eolus himself, in whose commodities the inhabitant dealt She herself was, as she told us, nearly one hundred years old, withered and dried up like a mummy A clay coloured kerchief, folded round her head, corresponded in colour to her corpse like complexion Two light blue eyes, that gleamed with a lustre like that of insanity, an utterance of astonishing rapidity, a nose and chin that almost met together, and a ghastly expression of cunning, gave her the effect of Hecate She remembered [illegible]

[illegible] Such was Bessie Millie, to whom the mariners paid a sort of tribute, with a feeling betwixt jest and earnest [She died about 1825]

T

RELUCTANCE TO SAVE DROWNING MEN

[illegible] hat in an archipelago where so many [illegible] essarily endangered by the waves, so [illegible] a maxim should have ingrafted itself [illegible] people otherwise kind, moral, and hospitable But all with whom I have spoken agree, that it was almost general in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and was with difficulty weeded out by the sedulous instructions of the clergy, and the rigorous injunctions of the proprietors There is little doubt it had been originally introduced as an excuse for suffering those who attempted to escape from the wreck to perish unassisted, so that there being no survivor, she might be considered as lawful plunder A story was told me, I hope an untrue one, that a vessel having got ashore among the breakers on one of the remote Zetland islands, five or six men, the whole or greater part of the unfortunate crew, endeavoured to land by assistance of a hawser, which they had secured to a rock the inhabitants were assembled, and looked on with some uncertainty, till an old man said, 'Sirs, if these men come ashore, the additional mouths will eat all the meal we have in store for winter, and how are we to get more?' A young fellow moved with this argument struck the rope asunder with his axe, and all the poor wretches were immersed among the breakers, and perished

NOTE I, p 394 —'MAIR WRECKS ERE WINTER'

The ancient Zetlander looked upon the sea as the provider of his living not only by the plenty produced by the fishings, but by the spoil of wrecks Some particular islands have fallen off very considerably in their rent, since the Commissioners of the Lighthouses have ordered lights on the Isle of Sanda, and the Pentland Skerries A gentleman, familiar with those seas expressed surprise at seeing the farmer of one of the isles in a boat with a very old pair of sails 'Had it been His will' said the man, with an affected deference to Providence very inconsistent with the sentiment of his speech—'Had it been *His* will that light had not been placed yonder, I would have had enough of new sails last winter

NOTE J p 395 —EARL PATRICK

[Patrick Stewart Earl of Orkney son of Robert, Earl of Orkney the illegitimate uncle of James VI, and of his wife Janet Kennedy, daughter of Gilbert Earl of Cassillis, succeeded his father in 1591, and was executed in Edinburgh on 6th February 1615 He was a grievous oppressor of the Orcadians and Shetlanders]

NOTE K p 396 —THE FOWD

[An officer who presided over the Law Thing, or court of petty sessions and small debt court of the parish or district He was subordinate to the Fowd of Zetland, who presided over the *Althing* or supreme court and parliament of the islands, which, until quite recent years, was held on a holm or islet in the Loch of Tingwall and whose duties were, in some respects, analogous to those of the sheriff]

NOTE L, p 40? THE DROWS

The Drows or Trows, the legitimate successors of the northern *duergar* and somewhat allied to the fairies, reside like them in the interior of green hills and caverns, and are most powerful at midnight They are curious artificers in iron as well as in the precious metals, and are sometimes propitious to mortals but more frequently capricious and malevolent Among the common people of Zetland their existence still forms an article of universal belief In the neighbouring isles of Feroe, they are called Foddenske Folk, or subterranean people and Lucas Jacobson Debes, well acquainted with their nature, assures us that they inhabit those places which are polluted with the effusion of blood or the practice of any crying sin They have a government, which seems to be monarchical

NOTE, M, p 408 – ZETLAND CORN MILLS

There is certainly something very extraordinary to a stranger in Zetland corn mills They are of the smallest possible size the wheel which drives them is horizontal, and the cogs are turned diagonally to the water The beam itself stands upright, and is inserted in a stone quern of the old fashioned construction, which it turns round, and thus performs its duty Had Robinson Crusoe ever been in Zetland, he would have had no difficulty in contriving a machine for grinding corn in his desert island These mills are thatched over in a little hovel, which has much the air of a pig sty There may be five hundred such

mills on one island, not capable any one of them of grinding above a sackful of corn at a time

NOTE N, p 409 — THE TWISCAR.

[The *twiscar*, or *tuscar*, or more correctly *torfskar* that is, 'turf cutter,' has thus been described —'The shaft is rather longer than that of a common spade, whilst to the bottom of it is affixed a sharp iron plate, called a *feather*, which projects from one place seven inches, and from another a little more than an inch —Hibbert's *Shetland Isles*, p 430.]

NOTE O, p 423 — SIR JOHN URRY

Here, as afterwards remarked in the text, the Zetlander's memory deceived him grossly Sir John Urry, a brave soldier of fortune was at that time in Montrose's army, and made prisoner along with him He had changed so often that the mistake is pardonable After the action, he was executed by the Covenanters, and

Wind changing Warwick then could change no more

Strachan commanded the body by which Montrose was routed

NOTE P, p 423 — THE SWORD DANCE

The sword dance is celebrated in general terms by Olaus Magnus He seems to have considered it as peculiar to the Norwegians, from whom it may have passed to the Orkneymen and Zetlanders, with other northern customs —

'OF THEIR DANCING IN ARMS

'Moreover, the northern Goths and Swedes had another sport to exercise youth withall that they will dance and skip amongst naked swords and dangerous weapons and this they do after the manner of masters of defence, as they are taught from their youth by skilful teachers, that dance before them, and sing to it And this play is showed especially about Shrovetide, called in Italian *Maschararum* For, before carnivals, all the youth dance for eight days together, holding their swords up, but within the scabbards, for three times turning about, and then they do it with their naked swords lifted up After this, turning more moderately, taking the points and pummels one of the other they change ranks and place themselves in a triagonal figure, and this they call *Rosam*, and presently they dissolve it by drawing back their swords and lifting them up, that upon every one's head there may be made a square Rosa, and then by a most nimbly whisking their swords about collaterally, they quickly leap back, and end the sport, which they guide with pipes or songs or both together first by a more heavy, then by a more vehement, and lastly, by a most vehement dancing But this speculation is scarce to be understood but by those who look on, how comely and decent it is, when at one word or one commanding, the whole armed multitude is directed to fall to fight, and clergymen may exercise themselves and mingle themselves among others at this sport, because it is all guided by most wise reason

To the Primate's account of the sword dance, I am able to add the words sung or chanted, on occasion of this dance, as it is still performed in Papa Stour, a remote island of Zetland, where alone the custom keeps its ground It is, it will be observed by antiquaries a species of play or mystery, in which the Seven Champions of Christendom make their appearance, as in the interlude presented in 'All's Well that ends Well' This dramatic curiosity was most kindly procured for my use by Dr Scott of Haslar Hospital, [died 1875,] son of my friend Mr Scott of Melbie, Zetland Dr Hibbert has, in his *Description of the Zetland Islands*, given an account of the sword dance, but somewhat less full than the following —

'WORDS USED AS A PRELUDE TO THE SWORD DANCE, A DANISH OR NORWEGIAN BALLET, COMPOSED SOME CENTURIES AGO, AND PRESERVED IN PAPA STOUR, ZETLAND

PERSONÆ DRAMATIS *

(*Enter* MASTER, *in the character of* SAINT GEORGE)

Brave gentles all within this boor †
If ye delight in any sport
Come see me dance upon this floor
Which to you all shall yield comfort
Then shall I dance in such a sort,
As possible I may or can;
You minstrel man play me a Porte,‡
That I on this floor may prove a man

(*He bows and dances in a line*)

Now have I danced with heart and hand,
Brave gentles all as you may see,
For I have been tried in many a land,
As yet the truth can testify,
In England Scotland Ireland France Italy and Spain,
Have I been tried with that good sword of steel

(*Draws and flourishes*)

Yet I deny that ever a man did make me yield
For in my body there is strength
As by my manhood may be seen
And I with that good sword of length,
Have oftentimes in perils been
And over champions I was king
And by the strength of this right hand
Once on a day I killed fifteen
And left them dead upon the land
Therefore brave minstrel do not care
But play to me a Porte most light
That I no longer do forbear
But dance in all these gentles sight
Although my strength makes you abased
Brave gentles all be not afraid
For here are six champions with me staid
All by my manhood I have raised

(*He dances*)

Since I have danced I think it best
To call my brethren in your sight
That I may have a little rest
And they may dance with all their might
With heart and hand as they are knights
And shake their swords of steel so bright
And show their main strength on this floor
For we shall have another bout
Before we pass out of this boor
Therefore brave minstrel do not care
To play to me a Porte most light
That I no longer do forbear
But dance in all these gentles sight

(*He dances and then introduces his knights as under*)

Stout James of Spain both tried and stour §
Thine acts are known full well indeed
And champion Dennis a French knight
Who stout and bold is to be seen
And David a Welshman born
Who is come of noble blood
And Patrick also who blew the horn
An Irish knight amongst the wood
Of Italy brave Anthony the good
And Andrew of Scotland King
Saint George of England brave indeed
Who to the Jews wrought muckle tinte ||
Away with this —Let us come to sport,
Since that ye have a mind to war
Since that ye have this bargain sought
Come let us fight and do not fear
Therefore brave minstrel do not care
To play to me a Porte most light
That I no longer do forbear
But dance in all these gentles sight

(*He dances and advances to* JAMES *of Spain*)

Stout James of Spain both tried and stour
Thine acts are known full well indeed
Present thyself within our sight
Without either fear or dread
Count not for favour or for feid
Since of thy acts thou hast been sure
Brave James of Spain I will thee lead
To prove thy manhood on this floor

(JAMES *dances*)

Brave champion Dennis a French knight
Who stout and bold is to be seen
Present thyself here in our sight
Thou brave French knight,
Who bold hast been
Since thou such valiant acts hast done
Come let us see some of them now
With courtesy thou brave French knight,
Draw out thy sword of noble hue

(DENNIS *dances while the others retire to a side*)

Brave David a bow must string and with awe
Set up a wand upon a stand
And that brave David will cleave in twa ¶

(DAVID *dances solus*)

Here is I think an Irish knight
Who does not fear or does not fright
To prove thyself a valiant man
As thou hast done full often bright,
Brave Patrick dance if that thou can

(*He dances*)

Thou stout Italian come thou here,
Thy name is Anthony most stout
Draw out thy sword that is most clear
And do thou fight without any doubt,

* So placed in the old MS

† *Boor*—so spelt to accord with the vulgar pronunciation of the word *bower*

‡ *Porte*—so spelt in the original The word is known as indicating a piece of music on the bagpipe to which ancient instrument, which is of Scandinavian origin, the sword dance may have been originally composed

§ *Stour*—great

|| *Muckle tinte*—much loss or harm, so in MS

¶ Something is evidently amiss or omitted here David probably exhibited some feat of archery

Thy leg thou shake, thy neck thou lout,*
And show some courtesy on this floor
For we shall have another bout
Before we pass out of this boor
Thou kindly Scotsman, come thou here
Thy name is Andrew of Fair Scotland,
Draw out thy sword that is most clear
Fight for thy king with thy right hand
And aye as long as thou canst stand
Fight for thy king with all thy heart
And then for to confirm his band
Make all his enemies for to smart

(He dances —Music begins)

'Figuir †

'The six stand in rank with their swords reclining on their shoulders The Master (Saint George) dances and then strikes the sword of James of Spain who follows George, then dances, strikes the sword of Dennis, who follows behind James In like manner the rest—the music playing—swords as before After the six are brought out of rank, they and the Master form a circle and hold the swords point and hilt This circle is danced round twice The whole, headed by the Master pass under the swords held in a vaulted manner They jump over the swords This naturally places the swords across which they disentangle by passing under their right sword They take up the seven swords and form a circle, in which they dance round

'The Master runs under the sword opposite which he jumps over backwards The others do the same He then passes under the right hand sword which the others follow, in which position they dance, until commanded by the Master, when they form into a circle and dance round as before They then jump over the right hand sword, by which means their backs are to the circle and their hands across their backs They dance round in that form until the Master calls Loose when they pass under the right sword, and are in a perfect circle

'The Master lays down his sword and lays hold of the point of James s sword He then turns himself, James and the others, into a clew When so formed he passes under out of the midst of the circle the others follow, they vault as before After several other evolutions they throw themselves into a circle with their arms across the breast They afterwards form such figures as to form a shield of their swords and the shield is so compact that the Master and his knights dance alternately with this shield upon their heads It is then laid down upon the floor Each knight lays hold of their former points and hilts with their hands across which disentangle by figures directly contrary to those that formed the shield This finishes the ballet

Epilogue

Mars does rule he bends his brows
He makes us all agast ‡
After the few hours that we stay here
Venus will rule at last
Farewell farewell brave gentles all
That herein do remain
I wish you health and happiness
Till we return again [Exeunt

The manuscript from which the above was copied was transcribed from a very old one by Mr William Henderson, jun, of Papa Stour, in Zetland Mr Henderson's copy is not dated but bears his own signature, and from various circumstances, it is known to have been written about the year 1788

Note Q, p 440 —The Dwarfie Stone

This is one of the wonders of the Orkney Islands though it has been rather undervalued by their late historian, Mr Barry The island of Hoy rises abruptly, starting as it were out of the sea which is contrary to the gentle and flat character of the other isles of Orkney It consists of a mountain, having different eminences or peaks It is very steep, furrowed with ravines, and placed so as to catch the mists of the western ocean, and has a noble and picturesque effect from all points of view The highest peak is divided from another eminence, called the Ward Hill, by a long swampy valley full of peat bogs Upon the slope of this last hill, and just where the principal mountain of Hoy opens into a hollow swamp, or corrie, lies what is called the Dwarfie Stone It is a great fragment of sandstone, composing one solid mass, which has long since been detached from a belt of the same materials, cresting the eminence above the spot where it now lies, and which has slid down till it reached its present situation. The rock is about seven feet high, twenty-two feet long, and seventeen feet broad The upper end of it is hollowed by iron tools, of which the marks are evident, into a sort of apartment, containing two beds of stone, with a passage between them The uppermost and largest bed is five feet eight inches long, by two feet broad, which was supposed to be used by the dwarf himself, the lower couch is shorter, and rounded off, instead of being squared at the corners There is an entrance of about three feet and a half square and a stone lies before it calculated to fit the opening A sort of skylight window gives light to the apartment We can only guess at the purpose of this monument, and different ideas have been suggested Some have supposed it the work of some travelling mason, but the *cui bono* would remain to be accounted for The Rev Mr Barry conjectures it to be a hermit s cell, but it displays no symbol of Christianity, and the door opens to the westward The Orcadian traditions allege the work to be that of a dwarf, to whom they ascribe supernatural powers and a malevolent disposition the attributes of that race in Norse mythology Whoever inhabited this singular den certainly enjoyed

Pillow cold and sheets not warm

I observed that, commencing just opposite to the Dwarfie Stone and extending in a line to the sea beach, there are a number of small barrows or cairns, which seem to connect the stone with a very large cairn where we landed This curious monument may therefore have been intended as a temple of some kind to the northern Dii Manes, to which the cairns might direct worshippers

[Dr Clouston, in his *Guide to the Orkney Islands*, adopts the suggestion of an antiquarian friend, that the Dwarfie Stone was originally a heathen altar, afterwards converted into a cell by some Christian anchorite and this opinion is corroborated from the fact that in former days the natives were in the habit of laying offerings upon it Its dimensions are length from north to south, 28 feet, breadth from 14 feet 6 inches to 11 feet, height at southern end, 6½ feet at northern, about 2 feet]

Note R, p 440 —Carbuncle on the Ward Hill.

'At the west end of this stone (*i e* the Dwarfie Stone) stands an exceeding high mountain of a steep ascent, called the Ward Hill of Hoy, near the top of which in the months of May, June, and July about midnight, is seen something that shines and sparkles admirably, and which is often seen a great way off It hath shined more brightly before than it does now, and though many have climbed up the hill and attempted to search for it, yet they could find nothing The vulgar talk of it as some enchanted carbuncle but I take it rather to be some water sliding down the face of a smooth rock which, when the sun, at such a time shines upon the reflection causeth that admirable splendour Dr Wallace s *Description of the Islands of Orkney*, 12mo, 1700, p 5.

Note S, p 449 —The Armada

[The publication in 1829, by the Bannatyne Club, of the Diary of James Melville, the minister of Anstruther, has put it beyond the reach of doubt that the Spanish admiral whose ship was wrecked on the Fair Isle in 1588, was not the Duke of Medina Sidonia, but Don Juan Gomez de Medina, commander of the 8th Division of the Invincible Armada His flagship, *El gran Grifon*, having got separated from the rest, was wrecked on the Fair Isle. The admiral, with his crew, which numbered about two hundred men, suffered great privations during their stay on the island, and much persecution at the hands of the islanders They were taken off, after a six or seven weeks' residence on it, in a small vessel sent to their assistance by Andrew Umphray of Berry, then tacksman of the island Landing at Quendale, in the extreme south of Shetland, they were hospitably entertained till a vessel could be procured to take them to Dunkirk. During their stay on Fair Isle, they taught the islanders the art of knitting the brilliantly variegated hosiery, for the manufacture of which the island has long been famous Many of the patterns are characteristically Moorish, and are said to be identical with those worn by Spanish fishermen to this day]

* *Lout*—to bend or bow down, pronounced *loot* as *doubt* is *doot* in Scotland.
† *Figuir*—so spelt in MS
‡ *Agast*—so spelt in MS

NOTE T, p. 450.—FORTUNE-TELLING RHYMES.

The Author has in Chapter xx. supposed that a very ancient northern custom, used by those who were accounted soothsaying women, might have survived, though in jest rather than earnest, among the Zetlanders, their descendants. The following original account of such a scene will show the ancient importance and consequence of such a prophetic character as was assumed by Norna:—

'There lived in the same territory (Greenland) a woman named Thorbiorga, who was a prophetess, and called the Little Vola (or fatal sister), the only one of nine sisters who survived. Thorbiorga during the winter used to frequent the festivities of the season, invited by those who were desirous of learning their own fortune, and the future events which impended. Torquil being a man of consequence in this country, it fell to his lot to inquire how long the dearth was to endure with which the country was then afflicted; he therefore invited the prophetess to his house, having made liberal preparation, as was the custom, for receiving a guest of such consequence. The seat of the soothsayer was placed in an eminent situation, and covered with pillows filled with the softest eider down. In the evening she arrived, together with a person who had been sent to meet her, and show her the way to Torquil's habitation. She was attired as follows:—She had a sky-blue tunic, having the front ornamented with gems from the top to the bottom, and wore around her throat a necklace of glass beads.* Her head-gear was of black lambskin, the lining being the fur of a white wild-cat. She leant on a staff having a ball at the top.† The staff was ornamented with brass, and the ball or globe with gems or pebbles. She wore a Hunland (or Hungarian) girdle, to which was attached a large pouch, in which she kept her magical implements. Her shoes were of sealskin, dressed with the hair outside, and secured by long and thick straps, fastened by brazen clasps. She wore gloves of the wild-cat's skin with the fur inmost. As this venerable person entered the hall, all saluted her with due respect. But she only returned the compliments of such as were agreeable to her. Torquil conducted her with reverence to the seat prepared for her, and requested she would purify the apartment and company assembled by casting her eyes over them. She was by no means sparing of her words. The table being at length covered, such viands were placed before Thorbiorga as suited her character of a soothsayer. These were a preparation of goat's milk and a mess composed of the hearts of various animals; the prophetess made use of a brazen spoon and a pointless knife, the handle of which was composed of a whale's tooth, and ornamented with two rings of brass. The table being removed, Torquil addressed Thorbiorga, requesting her opinion of his house and guests, at the same time intimating the subjects on which he and the company were desirous to consult her.

'Thorbiorga replied, it was impossible for her to answer their inquiries until she had slept a night under his roof. The next morning, therefore, the magical apparatus necessary for her purpose was prepared, and she then inquired, as a necessary part of the ceremony, whether there was any female present who could sing a magical song called *Vardlokur*. When no songstress such as she desired could be found, Gudrida, the daughter of Torquil, replied, "I am no sorceress or soothsayer; but my nurse Haldisa taught me, when in Iceland, a song called *Vardlokur*."—"Then thou knowest more than I was aware of," said Torquil. "But as I am a Christian," continued Gudrida, "I consider these rites as matters which it is unlawful to promote, and the song itself as unlawful."—"Nevertheless," answered the soothsayer, "thou mayest help us in this matter without any harm to thy religion, since the task must remain with Torquil to provide everything necessary for the present purpose." Torquil also earnestly entreated Gudrida, till she consented to grant his request. The females then surrounded Thorbiorga, who took her place on a sort of elevated stage; Gudrida then sung the magic song, with a voice so sweet and tuneful, as to excel anything that had been heard by any present. The soothsayer, delighted with the melody, returned thanks to the singer, and then said, "Much I have now learned of dearth and disease approaching the country, and many things are now clear to me which before were hidden as well from me as others. Our present dearth of substance shall not long endure for the present, and plenty will in the spring succeed to scarcity. The contagious diseases, also, with which the country has been for some time afflicted, will in a short time take their departure. To thee, Gudrida, I can, in recompense for thy assistance on this occasion, announce a fortune of higher import than any one could have conjectured. You shall be married to a man of name here in Greenland; but you shall not long enjoy that union; for your fate recalls you to Iceland, where you shall become the mother of a numerous and honourable family, which shall be enlightened by a luminous ray of good fortune. So, my daughter, wishing thee health, I bid thee farewell." The prophetess, having afterwards given answers to all queries which were put to her, either by Torquil or his guests, departed, to show her skill at another festival to which she had been invited for that purpose. But all which she presaged, either concerning the public or individuals, came truly to pass.'

The above narrative is taken from the Saga of Erick Randa, as quoted by the learned Bartholine in his curious work. He mentions similar instances, particularly of one Heida, celebrated for her predictions, who attended festivals, for the purpose, as a modern Scotsman might say, of *spaeing* fortunes, with a gallant *tail* or retinue of thirty male and fifteen female attendants.—See *De Causis Contemptæ a Danis adhuc Gentilibus Mortis*, lib. iii. cap. 4 [Hafniæ, 1689, 4to].

* We may suppose the beads to have been of the potent adder-stone, to which so many virtues were ascribed.

† Like those anciently borne by porters at the gates of distinguished persons as a badge of office.

NOTE U, p. 451.—ZETLAND FISHERMEN.

Dr. Arthur Edmondston, the ingenious author of *A View of the Ancient and Present State of the Zetland Islands*, has placed this part of the subject in an interesting light. 'It is truly painful to witness the anxiety and distress which the wives of these poor men suffer on the approach of a storm. Regardless of fatigue, they leave their homes, and fly to the spot where they expect their husbands to land, or ascend the summit of a rock, and look for them on the bosom of the deep. Should they get a glimpse of a sail, they watch with trembling solicitude its alternate rise and disappearance on the waves, and though often tranquillized by the safe arrival of the objects of their search, yet it is sometimes their lot "to hail the bark that never can return." Subject to the influence of a variable climate, and engaged on a sea naturally tempestuous, with rapid currents, scarcely a season passes over without the occurrence of some fatal accident or hair-breadth escape.'—*A View of the Ancient and Present State of the Zetland Islands*, 1809, vol. i. pp. 238-39. Many interesting particulars respecting the fisheries and agriculture of Zetland, as well as its antiquities, may be found in the work we have quoted.

NOTE V, p. 454.—PROMISE OF ODIN.

Although the Father of Scandinavian mythology has been as a deity long forgotten in the archipelago, which was once a very small part of his realm, yet even at this day his name continues to be occasionally attested as security for a promise.

It is curious to observe that the rites with which such attestations are still made in Orkney correspond to those of the ancient Northmen. It appears from several authorities that in the Norse ritual, when an oath was imposed, he by whom it was pledged passed his hand, while pronouncing it, through a massive ring of silver kept for that purpose.‡ In like manner, two persons, generally lovers, desirous to take the promise of Odin, which they considered as peculiarly binding, joined hands through a circular hole in a sacrificial stone, which lies in the Orcadian Stonehenge, called the Circle of Stennis, of which we shall speak more hereafter. The ceremony is now confined to the troth-plighting of the lower classes, but at an earlier period may be supposed to have influenced a character like Minna in the higher ranks.

NOTE W, p. 472.—PICTISH BURGH.

The Pictish Burgh, a fort which Norna is supposed to have converted into her dwelling-house, has been fully described in the Notes upon Ivanhoe, vol. ix. p. 477, of this edition. An account of the celebrated castle of Mousa is there given, to afford an opportunity of comparing it

‡ See the Eyrbiggia Saga.

with the Saxon Castle of Coningsburgh. It should, however, have been mentioned, that the castle of Mousa underwent considerable repairs at a comparatively recent period. Accordingly, Torfæus assures us that even this ancient pigeon-house, composed of dry stones, was fortification enough, not indeed to hold out a ten years' siege, like Troy in similar circumstances, but to wear out the patience of the besiegers. Erland, the son of Harold the Fairspoken, had carried off a beautiful woman, the mother of a Norwegian earl, also called Harold, and sheltered himself with his fair prize in the castle of Mousa. Earl Harold followed with an army, and, finding the place too strong for assault, endeavoured to reduce it by famine; but such was the length of the siege, that the offended earl found it necessary to listen to a treaty of accommodation, and agreed that his mother's honour should be restored by marriage. This transaction took place in the beginning of the thirteenth century, in the reign of William the Lion of Scotland.* It is probable that the improvements adopted by Erland on this occasion were those which finished the parapet of the castle, by making it project outwards, so that the tower of Mousa rather resembles the figure of a dicebox, whereas others of the same kind have the form of a truncated cone. It is easy to see how the projection of the highest parapet would render the defence more easy and effectual. [In 1859, the Society of Antiquaries exerted themselves in effecting repairs on the tower, and it is now included among the buildings protected by the Ancient Monument Protection Act, 1882.]

NOTE X, p. 482.—ANTIQUE COINS FOUND IN ZETLAND.

While these sheets were passing through the press, I received a letter from an honourable and learned friend, containing the following passage, relating to a discovery in Zetland:—'Within a few weeks, the workmen taking up the foundation of an old wall, came on a hearthstone, under which they found a horn, surrounded with massive silver rings, like bracelets, and filled with coins of the Heptarchy, in perfect preservation. The place of finding is within a very short distance of the supposed residence of Norna of the Fitful Head.'—Thus one of the very improbable fictions of the tale is verified by a singular coincidence.

NOTE Y, p. 496.—CHARACTER OF NORNA.

The character of Norna is meant to be an instance of that singular kind of insanity, during which the patient, while she or he retains much subtlety and address for the power of imposing upon others, is still more ingenious in endeavouring to impose upon themselves. Indeed, maniacs of this kind may be often observed to possess a sort of double character, in one of which they are the being whom their distempered imagination shapes out, and in the other, their own natural self, as seen to exist by other people. This species of double consciousness makes wild work with the patient's imagination, and, judiciously used, is perhaps a frequent means of restoring sanity of intellect. Exterior circumstances striking the senses, often have a powerful effect in undermining or battering the airy castles which the disorder has excited.

A late medical gentleman, my particular friend, told me the case of a lunatic patient confined in the Edinburgh Infirmary. He was so far happy that his mental alienation was of a gay and pleasant character, giving a kind of joyous explanation to all that came in contact with him. He considered the large house, numerous servants, etc., of the hospital, as all matters of state and consequence belonging to his own personal establishment, and had no doubt of his own wealth and grandeur. One thing alone puzzled this man of wealth. Although he was provided with a first rate cook and proper assistants, although his table was regularly supplied with every delicacy of the season, yet he confessed to my friend, that, by some uncommon depravity of the palate, everything which he ate *tasted of porridge*. This peculiarity of course, arose from the poor man being fed upon nothing else, and because his stomach was not so easily deceived as his other senses.

NOTE Z, p. 497.—BIRDS OF PREY.

So favourable a retreat does the island of Hoy afford for birds of prey, that instances of their ravages, which seldom occur in other parts of the country, are not unusual there. An individual was living in Orkney not long since, whom, while a child in its swaddling clothes, an eagle actually transported to its nest in the hill of Hoy. Happily, the eyrie being known, and the bird instantly pursued, the child was found uninjured, playing with the young eagles. A story of a more ludicrous transportation was told me by the reverend clergyman who is minister of the island. Hearing one day a strange grunting, he suspected his servants had permitted a sow and pigs, which were tenants of his farm-yard, to get among his barley crop. Having in vain looked for the transgressors upon solid earth, he at length cast his eyes upwards, when he discovered one of the litter in the talons of a large eagle, which was soaring away with the unfortunate pig (squeaking all the while with terror) towards her nest in the crest of Hoy.

NOTE AA, p. 507.—THE BICKER OF SCAPA.

[Wallace, in his account of the Islands of Orkney, London 1700, quoting from George Buchanan, states that 'there was kept at Scapa' a large cup, and when any new bishop landed there, they filled it with strong ale, and offered it to him to drink, and if he happened to drink it off cheerfully, they promised to themselves a noble bishop, and many good years in his time. A wooden bowl in shape like a huge rummer, made of dark walnut, formerly silver-rimmed, measuring 7 inches in breadth and 5½ in depth inside, and holding about two quarts, is now in the possession of Mr. Robert Hodson, a descendant of Bishop Murdoch Mackenzie, who was practically the last Bishop of Orkney, and is supposed to be the drinking vessel referred to in the text.—JUDSON'S *Orkneys and Shetland*, p. 78.]

NOTE BB, p. 517.—THE STANDING STONES OF STENNIS.

The Standing Stones of Stennis, as by a little pleonasm this remarkable monument is termed, furnishes an irresistible refutation of the opinion of such antiquaries as hold that the circles usually called Druidical were peculiar to that race of priests. There is every reason to believe that the custom was as prevalent in Scandinavia as in Gaul or Britain, and as common to the mythology of Odin as to Druidical superstition. There is every reason to think that the Druids never occupied any part of the Orkneys, and tradition, as well as history, ascribes the Stones of Stennis to the Scandinavians. Two large sheets of water, communicating with the sea, are connected by a causeway, with openings permitting the tide to rise and recede, which is called the Bridge of Broisgar. Upon the eastern tongue of land appear the Standing Stones, arranged in the form of a half-circle, or rather a horseshoe, the height of the pillars being fifteen feet and upwards. Within this circle lies a stone, probably sacrificial. One of the pillars, a little to the westward, is perforated with a circular hole, through which loving couples are wont to join hands when they take the *Promise of Odin*, as has been repeatedly mentioned in the text. The enclosure is surrounded by barrows, and on the opposite isthmus, advancing towards the Bridge of Broisgar, there is another monument of Standing Stones, which, in this case, is completely circular. They are less in size than those on the eastern side of the lake, their height running only from ten or twelve to fourteen feet. This western circle is surrounded by a deep trench drawn on the outside of the pillars; and I remarked four tumuli, or mounds of earth, regularly disposed around it. Stonehenge excels this Orcadian monument, but that of Stennis is, I conceive, the only one in Britain which can be said to approach it in consequence. All the northern nations marked by those huge enclosures the places of popular meeting, either for religious worship or the transaction of public business of a temporal nature. The *Northern Popular Antiquities* contain, in an abstract of the Eyrbiggia Saga, a particular account of the manner in which the Helga Fels, or Holy Rock, was set apart by the Pontiff Thorolf for solemn occasions.

I need only add that, different from the monument on Salisbury Plain, the stones which were used in the Orcadian circle seem to have been raised from a quarry upon the spot, of which the marks are visible.

* See Thorm. *Torfæi Orcades*, p. 131.

GLOSSARY TO THE PIRATE.

A, all
Aboon, above
Adsum, I am present
Ae one
Aigre, sour
Aik, oak.
Air, an open sea beach
Airn iron
Al fresco in the open air
Alow ablaze
Anjus, lord of ...
Avoint, avaunt
Aver, a cart horse
Awmous, alms

Back spauld, the back of the shoulder
Bailie, a magistrate
Bee skep, bee hive
Burn, a burn, or child
Bicker, a wooden dish
Biggin, building
Bilboes irons
Bismar, a small steel yard
Bland, a drink made from butter milk.
Blate, modest
Blurt, to burst out speaking
Bodle, a small coin equal to one sixth of a penny sterling
Bole, a small aperture
Bonally, a parting drink
Bonnie wallies, good things gewgaws
Boobie, dunce
Bourasque, sudden squall.
Bowie, a wooden dish for milk.
Braid, broad
Braws, fine clothes
Breekless, trouserless
Brisket, breast

Callant, lad
Capa, a Spanish mantle
Caper, a Dutch privateer of the seventeenth century
Carles, farm servants
Carline a witch
Cart avers, cart horses
Cateran a Highland robber
Causeyed syver, causewayed sewer
Chapman, a small merchant or pedlar
Cheval de bataille battle horse
Chield a fellow
Clogged, clogged
Clishes and clavers scandal and nonsense
Clettering, chattering
Clog a billet of wood
Coal heugh, coal pit
Cogle, a small boat
Cog a wooden bowl
Cogfu the full of a wooden bowl
Commend me to you, seignior, I ... your leave sir
Coup to exchange
Coup to upset
Craig neck
Creel basket *in a creel* foolish
Crowdie meal and water stirred up together
Crummies, gossips
Curch, a kerchief for covering the head
Cusser, a stallion

Daffin larking
Daft crazy
Daikering sauntering
Dead thraw, the death throes
Deceptio visus a deception of sight
Deftly, handsomely
Deil, devil
De re rustica, concerning rural affairs
Die, a toy
Ding, knock
Divot thin turf used for roofing cottages
Dogger, a Dutch fishing boat
Donner und blitzen, thunder and lightning
Dour, sullen hard stubborn
Dowie, dark melancholy
Dowlas, a strong linen cloth
Drammock, raw meal and water
Duds, clothes
Dunt to knock

Een eyes
Embaye, enclose

Fa, fall
Factor, a land steward
Faicie on his face, a malediction
Fash, fashery, trouble
Feel the greatest part
Ferlies, unusual events or things
Ferlies make fools fain wonders make fools eager
Fey fated or predestined to speedy death
Fey folk, fated or unfortunate folk
Fish crazy, eccentric
Flichter, to flutter or tremble
Flinching a whale slicing the blubber from the bones
Flotsam and jetsam articles floated or cast away on the sea
Flummery, syllabub
Forbye, besides
Forpit, a measure the fourth part of a peck
Fowd, chief judge or magistrate
Freit, a charm or superstition

Gaberlunzie, a tinker or beggar
Gaed, went
Gait, way
Galdragon sorceress
Gane, gone
Gar, to oblige or force
Garland, a wreath of ribbon hung on the rigging of whaling vessels
Gascromh, an instrument for trenching ground, shaped like a currier's knife with a crooked handle
Gear, property
Generandi gloria mellis, the glory of producing honey
Gie, give
Gills the jaws.
Gin, if
Gio, a deep ravine which admits the sea
Glamour, a fascination or charm
Glebe, land belonging to the parish minister in right of his office
Glower, to gaze
Gob box, mouth
Gowk, fool
Goupen the full of both hands
Græcum est it is Greek
Graip, a three pronged pitchfork
Grew, to shiver
Grist, mill fee payable in kind
Guarda costa, coast guard
Gudeman and gude wife, the heads of the house
Gude save us! God bless us!
Gue, a two stringed violin
Guizards maskers or mummers
Gyre carline, the queen of the fairies, mother witch or great hag.

Haaf, the deep sea fishing
Haaf fish, a large kind of seal
Haena, have not
Haft to fix or settle.

Hagulef, payment for liberty to cast peats
Huld, hold
Halier or *helyer*, a cavern into which the tide flows
Hallanshaker, a vagabond or beggar
Halse, the throat
Hand-quern, hand mill
Havings, behaviour
Hawkhen, hens exacted by the royal falconer on his visits to the islands.
Hellicat, lightheaded extravagant, wicked
Heus tibi Dave! Hallo there, Davus!
Heus tu, inepte! Hallo there, you fool!
Hinny, honey
Hirpling, halting lame
Hirsel, to move or slide down
Hjaltland, the old name for Shetland
Housewifeskep, housewifery
Hout! tut!
Howf, a haunt haven

Ilka, each
Ill fa'ur'd, ill favoured
In a creel, foolish
In apicibus juris amongst the most difficult questions of law on the summits of the law
Infang and outfang the right of trying thieves
In town, land adjacent to the farmhouse

Jacta est alea the die is cast
Jagger pedlar
Jam neminem antepones Catoni you will prefer no one to Cato
Jarto, my dear
Jokul, yes sir
Jougs, pillory
Joul, Yule

Kailyard, cabbage garden
Kale pot, large pot for boiling broth
Ken'd folks, well known people
Kempe, a Norse champion
Kist, a chest
Kittle, difficult ticklish
Kittywake, a kind of seagull
Knapped Latin, spoke Latin.
Knaveship, a small due of meal paid to the miller
Kraken a fabulous sea monster
Kyloes, small black cattle

Lair learning
Lampits limpets
Langspiel an obsolete musical instrument
Lave, rest
Lawrightman, an officer whose chief duty was the regulation of weights and measures
Lawting, a court of law
Limmer, a woman of loose character
Lispund, the fifteenth part of a barrel formerly equal to 12 lbs Scots
Lock, a handful
Loon, lad, fellow
Lowe, flame
Lug, ear
Lum, chimney

Maen to moan
Mair, more
Mallard, wild duck
Markal the head of the plough
Marooned, abandoned on a desert island
Masking fat, a mashing vat
Maun, must
Mearns, Kincardineshire
Meed reward
Meltith food, a meal
Menseful, modest, discreet
Merk of land originally equal to 1600 square fathoms
Miching malicho, lurking mischief
Miseris succurrere disco I learn to succour the miserable
Mouldboard, the wooden board of the plough which turns over the ground
Muckle, much
Multures, dues paid for grinding grain
My certie! my faith!

Nacket, a portable refreshment or luncheon
Napery, household linen
Natheless nevertheless
Neist, next
Nemorum murmur, the murmur of the groves.
Nievefu', a handful.
Nixie, a water fairy
Noup, a headland precipitous to the sea and sloping inland
Nowt, black cattle

O fortunati nimium, O too fortunate!
Operam et oleum perdidi, I have lost my labour and my oil
Out taken, except
Out town, land at a distance from the farm house
Owerlay, a cravat
Owsen, oxen

Parritch porridge
Partan, a crab
Pellrie, trash
Petit maître, dandy
Pit, put
Pirie, a fairy
Plantie cruive a kail yard
Post meridiem after noon
Pro bono publico, for the public good
Puir, poor
Pund Scots, is 8d sterling
Pye holes, eye holes

Quadrupedumque putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum the hoofs of the horses shake the crumbling field
Quaigh, a small wooden cup
Quern hand mill
Quid faciunt lætas segetes, how joyful crops are made

Raddman, a councillor
Randy, a scold
Ranzelman a constable
Rape, rope
Redding kaim, a wide toothed comb for the hair
Reek, smoke
Reimkennar, one who knows mystic rhyme
Ritt, a scratch or incision
Riva, a cleft in a rock
Rock, a distaff
Rokelay a short cloak
Roose the ford, judge of the ford
Roost, a strong and boisterous current
Rotton, a rat.

Sain, bless
Sair, sore.
Sandie laverock, sand lark
Saunt, saint.
Saut, salt
Scald, bard or minstrel
Scart, a cormorant
Scat, a land tax paid to the Crown
Scathold, a common.
Sclate stanes, slate stones
Scouries, young seagulls
Scowrie, shabby, mean
Sealgh, a seal
Sharney peat, fuel made of cow's dung
Sheltie, a Shetland pony
Shogh (Gaelic), there
Shoupeltin or *Niogle*, a kind of water kelpie that takes the shape of a horse
Sic, such
Siccar, sure
Siever, sewer
Siller, money
Sillocks, the fry of the coal fish
Skelping, galloping
Skeoe, a stone hut for drying fish
Skeps, straw hives
Skerry, a flat insulated rock
Skirled, screamed
Skudler, the leader of a band of guizards
Slap a gap or pass
Slocken, to quench
Snack, a hasty meal
Sneck, the latch of the door
Sombrero, a large straw hat worn by Spaniards
Sonsy, stout and handsome
Sorner, one who lives upon his friends
Sorning, masterful begging
Sough a sigh
Spaed, foretold
Spargite nuces, pueri, scatter the nuts boys
Speirings, inquiries
Spreckerie, moveables
Spring, dance tune
Spunk, match
Stack, an insulated, precipitous rock
Staig, a young horse
Stilts of plough, handles
Studdy, anvil
Streek stretch
Striddle, straddle
Sucken, mill dues
Sui juris, in possession of full legal rights
Suld, should
Sumph, a lubberly fellow
Suum cuique tribuit give every one his due
Swatter, to swim quickly and awkwardly
Swap, to exchange.
Syne, since.

Taen, taken
Terra firma, dry land
Thairm, catgut
Thegither, together
Thigger, beggar
Thigging, begging
Thirl, the obligation on a tenant to have his flour ground at a certain mill
Thirled, bound to
Thole, endure
Thrawart, forward, perverse.
Tittie, little sister
Tocher, dowry, estate
Toom, empty
Tows, ropes
Toy, a linen or woollen head dress hanging down over the shoulders
Trindle, to trundle
Trock, to barter
Trow or *Drow*, a spirit or elf believed in by the Norse.
Twiscar or *tuskar*, a spade for cutting peats.

Udaller, a freehold proprietor
Ultima Thule, extreme Thule
Ulzie, oil
Umquhile, the late
Unce, ounce
Unco, particularly
Unhalsed, unhailed or unsaluted
Uno contextu, all of a piece
Ure, the eighth part of a merk of land
Usquebaugh, whisky
Ventis surgentibus, with rising winds
Vifda, beef dried without salt
Vivers, victual
Voe, an inlet of the sea
Volens nolens, whether he will or no

Wadmaal, a homespun woollen cloth
Wakerife, watchful, wakeful
Warlock, wizard
Wattle, an assessment for the salary of the Fowd
Waur, worse
Wick, an open bay
Well, a whirlpool
Wheen, few.
Whingers, hangers, knives.
Whittie-whattieing, shuffling or wheedling.
Whittle, a knife
Whomled, turned over
Wowf, crazy.

Yagger, a travelling merchant or pedlar.
Yarfa or *yarpha*, peat full of fibres and roots, land
Yarn windle, a yarn winder
Yarta, or yarto, my dear (from the Icelandic *Hiarta*, the heart)
Yelloched, screeched or yelled
Yestreen yesterday
Yett, a gate



ZETLAND FISHING BOATS

THE

FORTUNES OF NIGEL

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

Knife-grinder Story? God bless you! I have none to tell, Sir
POETRY OF THE ANTI-JACOBIN



JIN VIN AND DAME URSLEY *page* 637

LONDON ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
1891



NIGEL AND THE WATERMEN
PAGE 684

INTRODUCTION

But why should lordlings all our praise engross?
Rise, honest muse, and sing the Man of Ross.
POPE.

Having in the tale of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, *succeeded in some degree in creating an interest in behalf of one devoid of those accomplishments which belong almost by right to a heroine, I was next tempted to choose a hero upon the same unpromising plan; and as worth of character, goodness of heart, and rectitude of principle were necessary to one who laid no claim to high birth, romantic sensibility, or any of the usual accomplishments of those who strut through the pages of this sort of composition, I made free with the name of a person who has left the most magnificent proofs of his benevolence and charity that the capital of Scotland has to display.*

To the Scottish reader little more need be said than that the man alluded to is George Heriot. But for those south of the Tweed it may be necessary to add that the person so named was a wealthy citizen of Edinburgh, and the King's goldsmith, who followed James to the English capital, and was so successful in his profession as to die, in 1624, extremely wealthy for that period. He had no children; and, after making a full provision for such relations as might have claims upon him, he left the residue of his fortune to establish an hospital, in which the sons of Edinburgh freemen are gratuitously brought up and educated for the station to which their talents may recommend them, and are finally enabled to enter life under respectable auspices. The hospital in which this charity is maintained is a noble quadrangle of the Gothic order, and as ornamental to the city as a building as the manner in which the youths are provided for and educated renders it useful to the community as an institution. To the honour of those who have the management (the magistrates and clergy of Edinburgh), the funds of the hospital have increased so much under their care, that it now supports and educates one hundred and thirty youths annually, many of whom have done honour to their country in different situations.†*

The founder of such a charity as this may be reasonably supposed to have walked through life with a steady pace and an observant eye, neglecting no opportunity of assisting those who were not possessed of the experience necessary for their own guidance. In supposing his efforts directed to the benefit of a young nobleman, misguided by the aristocratic haughtiness of his own time, and the prevailing tone of selfish luxury which seems more peculiar to ours, as well as the seductions of pleasure which are predominant in all, some amusement, or even some advantage, might, I thought, be derived from the manner in which I might bring the exertions of this civic mentor to bear in his pupil's behalf. I am, I own, no great believer in the moral utility to be derived from fictitious compositions; yet, if in any case a word spoken in season may be of advantage to a young person, it must surely be when it calls upon him to attend to the voice of principle and

* Note A. George Heriot's Hospital.

† [Since 1885 the hospital has been changed into a day school, a technical institution, known as the Heriot Watt College, has been established, and numerous bursaries for the promotion of higher education have been provided out of the funds.]

self-denial, instead of that of precipitate passion. I could not, indeed, hope or expect to represent my prudent and benevolent citizen in a point of view so interesting as that of the peasant girl who nobly sacrificed her family affections to the integrity of her moral character. Still, however, something I hoped might be done not altogether unworthy the fame which George Heriot has secured by the lasting benefits he has bestowed on his country.

It appeared likely that out of this simple plot I might weave something attractive; because the reign of James I., in which George Heriot flourished, gave unbounded scope to invention in the fable, while at the same time it afforded greater variety and discrimination of character than could, with historical consistency, have been introduced if the scene had been laid a century earlier. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu has said, with equal truth and taste, that the most romantic region of every country is that where the mountains unite themselves with the plains or lowlands. For similar reasons, it may be in like manner said, that the most picturesque period of history is that when the ancient rough and wild manners of a barbarous age are just becoming innovated upon and contrasted by the illumination of increased or revived learning, and the instructions of renewed or reformed religion. The strong contrast produced by the opposition of ancient manners to those which are gradually subduing them, affords the lights and shadows necessary to give effect to a fictitious narrative; and while such a period entitles the author to introduce incidents of a marvellous and improbable character, as arising out of the turbulent independence and ferocity, belonging to old habits of violence, still influencing the manners of a people who had been so lately in a barbarous state; yet, on the other hand, the characters and sentiments of many of the actors may, with the utmost probability, be described with great variety of shading and delineation, which belongs to the newer and more improved period, of which the world has but lately received the light.

The reign of James I. of England possessed this advantage in a peculiar degree. Some beams of chivalry, although its planet had been for some time set, continued to animate and gild the horizon, and although probably no one acted precisely on its Quixotic dictates, men and women still talked the chivalrous language of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia; and the ceremonial of the tilt-yard was yet exhibited, though it now only flourished as a Place de Carrousel. *Here and there a high-spirited Knight of the Bath—witness the too-scrupulous Lord Herbert of Cherbury—was found devoted enough to the vows he had taken, to imagine himself obliged to compel, by the sword's point, a fellow-knight or squire to restore the top-knot of ribbon which he had stolen from a fair damsel;* but yet, while men were taking each other's lives on such punctilios of honour, the hour was already arrived when Bacon was about to teach the world that they were no longer to reason from authority to fact, but to establish truth by advancing from fact to fact, till they fixed an indisputable authority, not from hypothesis, but from experiment.*

The state of society in the reign of James I. was also strangely disturbed, and the licence of a part of the community was perpetually giving rise to acts of blood and violence. The bravo of the queen's day, of whom Shakespeare has given us so many varieties, as Bardolph, Nym, Pistol, Peto, and the other companions of Falstaff, men who had their humours, *or their particular turn of extravaganza, had, since the commencement of the Low Country wars, given way to a race of sworders, who used the rapier and dagger instead of the far less dangerous sword and buckler; so that a historian says on this subject, 'that private quarrels were nourished, but especially between the Scots and English; and duels in every street maintained; divers sects and peculiar titles passed unpunished and unregarded, as the sect of the Roaring Boys, Bonaventors, Bravadors, Quarterors, and such like, being persons prodigal, and of great expense, who, having run themselves into debt, were constrained to run next into factions to defend themselves from danger of the law. These received countenance from divers of the nobility; and the citizens, through lasciviousness consuming their estates, it was like that the number [of these desperadoes] would rather increase than diminish; and under these pretences they entered into many desperate enterprises, and scarce any durst walk in the street after nine at night.'†*

The same authority assures us further, that 'ancient gentlemen, who had left their inheritance whole and well furnished with goods and chattels (having thereupon kept good houses) unto their sons, lived to see part consumed in riot and excess, and the rest in possibility to be utterly lost; the holy state of matrimony made but a May-game, by which divers families had been subverted; brothel houses much frequented, and even great persons, prostituting their bodies to the intent to satisfy their lusts, consumed their substance in lascivious appetites. And of all sorts, such knights and gentlemen, as either through pride or prodigality had consumed their substance repairing to the city, and to the intent to consume their virtue also, lived dissolute lives; many of their ladies and daughters, to the intent to maintain themselves according to their dignity, prostituting their bodies in shameful manner. Alehouses, dicing-houses, taverns, and places of iniquity beyond manner abounding in most places.'

Nor is it only in the pages of a puritanical, perhaps a satirical writer, that we find so shocking and disgusting a picture of the coarseness of the beginning of the seventeenth century. On the contrary, in all the comedies of the age, the principal character for gaiety and wit is a young heir, who has totally altered the establishment of the father to whom he has succeeded, and, to use the old simile, who resembles a fountain which plays off in idleness and extravagance the wealth which its careful parents painfully had assembled in hidden reservoirs.

And yet, while that spirit of general extravagance seemed at work over a whole kingdom, another and very different sort of men were gradually forming the staid and resolved cha-

* See Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Memoirs.

† History of the First Fourteen Years of King James's Reign. See Somers's *Tracts*, edited by Scott, vol. ii. p. 266.

racters which afterwards displayed themselves during the civil wars, and powerfully regulated and affected the character of the whole English nation, until, rushing from one extreme to another, they sunk in a gloomy fanaticism the splendid traces of the reviving fine arts.

*From the quotations which I have produced, the selfish and disgusting conduct of Lord Dalgarno will not perhaps appear overstrained; nor will the scenes in Whitefriars and places of similar resort seem too highly coloured. This, indeed, is far from being the case. It was in James I.'s reign that vice first appeared affecting the better classes in its gross and undisguised depravity. The entertainments and amusements of Elizabeth's time had an air of that decent restraint which became the court of a maiden sovereign; and in that earlier period, to use the words of Burke, vice lost half its evil by being deprived of all its grossness. In James's reign, on the contrary, the coarsest pleasures were publicly and unlimitedly indulged, since, according to Sir John Harington, the men wallowed in beastly delights; and even ladies abandoned their sociely and rolled about in intoxication. After a ludicrous account of a mask, . . which the actors had got drunk, and behaved themselves accordingly, he adds, 'I have marvelled at these strange pageantries, and they bring to my recollection what passed of this sort in our Queen's days, in which I was sometimes an assistant and partaker; but never did I see such lack of good order and sobriety as I have now done. The gunpowder fright is got out of all our heads, and we are going on hereabout as if the devil was contriving every man should blow up himself by wild riot, excess, and devastation of time and temperance. The great ladies do go well masqued; and, indeed, it be the only show of their modesty to conceal their countenance; but, alack, they meet with such countenance to uphold their strange doings, that I marvel not at aught that happens.'**

Such being the state of the court, coarse sensuality brought along with it its ordinary companion, a brutal degree of undisguised selfishness, destructive alike of philanthropy and good breeding; both of which, in their several spheres, depend upon the regard paid by each individual to the interest as well as the feelings of others. It is in such a time that the heartless and shameless man of wealth and power may, like the supposed Lord Dalgarno, brazen out the shame of his villanies, and affect to triumph in their consequences, so long as they were personally advantageous to his own pleasures or profit.

Alsatia is elsewhere explained as a cant name for Whitefriars, which, possessing certain privileges of sanctuary, became for that reason a nest of those mischievous characters who were generally obnoxious to the law. These privileges were derived from its having been an establishment of the Carmelites, or White Friars, founded, says Stow, in his Survey of London, by Sir Richard Grey in 1241. Edward I. gave them a plot of ground in Fleet Street, to build their church upon. The edifice then erected was rebuilt by Courtney, Earl of Devonshire, in the reign of Edward. In the time of the Reformation the place retained its immunities as a sanctuary, and James I. confirmed and added to them by a charter in 1608. Shadwell was the first author who made some literary use of Whitefriars, in his play of the Squire of Alsatia, which turns upon the plot of the Adelphi of Terence.

In this old play, two men of fortune, brothers, educate two young men (sons to the one and nephews to the other) each under his own separate system of rigour and indulgence. The elder of the subjects of this experiment, who has been very rigidly brought up, falls at once into all the vices of the town, is debauched by the cheats and bullies of Whitefriars, and, in a word, becomes the Squire of Alsatia. The poet gives, as the natural and congenial inhabitants of the place, such characters as the reader will find in the note.† The play, as we learn from the dedication to the Earl of Dorset and Middlesex, was successful above the author's expectations, 'no comedy these many years having filled the theatre so long together. And I had the great honour,' continues Shadwell, 'to find so many friends, that the house was never so full since it was built as upon the third day of this play, and vast numbers went away that could not be admitted.'‡ From the Squire of Alsatia the Author derived some few hints, and learned the footing on which the bullies and thieves of the Sanctuary stood with their neighbours, the fiery young students of the Temple, of which some intimation is given in the dramatic piece.

Such are the materials to which the Author stands indebted for the composition of the Fortunes of Nigel, a novel which may be perhaps one of those that are more amusing on a second perusal, than when read a first time for the sake of the story, the incidents of which are few and meagre.§

The Introductory Epistle is written, in Lucio's phrase, 'according to the trick,' and would never have appeared had the writer meditated making his avowal of the work.‖ As it is the privilege of a mask or incognito to speak in a feigned voice and assumed character, the Author attempted, while in disguise, some liberties of the same sort; and while he continues to plead upon the various excuses which the introduction contains, the present acknowledgment must serve as an apology for a species of 'hoity toity, whisky frisky' pertness of manner, which, in his avowed character, the Author should have considered as a departure from the rules of civility and good taste.

ABBOTSFORD, 1st *July* 1831.

* Note B. Debauchery of the Period.

† Note C. Alsatian Characters.

‡ Dedication to the Squire of Alsatia, Shadwell's Works, vol. iv.

§ Note D. Composition of the Fortunes of Nigel.

‖ For Introductory Epistle, see Appendix, p. 720.



NIGEL AND DUKE HILDEBROD PAGE 888

CHAPTER I

Now Scot and English are agreed,
And Saunders hastes to cross the Tweed,
Where, such the splendours that attend him,
His very mother scarce had kend him.
His metamorphosis behold
From Glasgow frieze to cloth of gold,
His backsword, with the iron hilt,
For rapier fairly hatch'd and gilt,
Was ever seen a gallant braver?
His very bonnet's grown a beaver.

THE REFORMATION

THE long-continued hostilities which had for centuries separated the south and the north divisions of the island of Britain, had been happily terminated by the succession of the pacific James I to the English crown. But although the united crown of England and Scotland was worn by the same individual, it required a long lapse of time, and the succession of more than one generation, ere the inveterate national prejudices which had so long existed betwixt the sister kingdoms were removed, and the subjects of either side of the Tweed brought to regard those upon the opposite bank as friends and as brethren.

These prejudices were, of course, most inveterate during the reign of King James. The English subjects accused him of partiality to those of his ancient kingdom, while the Scots, with equal injustice, charged him with having forgotten the land of his nativity, and with neglecting those early friends to whose allegiance he had been so much indebted.

The temper of the king, peaceable even to timidity, inclined him perpetually to interfere as mediator between the contending factions, whose brawls disturbed the court. But, notwithstanding all his precautions, historians have recorded many instances, where the mutual hatred of two nations who, after being enemies for a thousand years, had been so very recently united, broke forth with a fury which threatened a general convulsion; and, spreading from the highest to the lowest class, as it occasioned debates in council and parliament, factions in the court, and duels among the gentry, was no less productive of riots and brawls amongst the lower orders.

While these heart-burnings were at the highest, there flourished in the city of London an ingenious but whimsical and self-opinioned mechanic, much devoted to abstract studies, David Ramsay by name, who, whether recommended by his great skill in his profession, as the courtiers alleged, or, as was murmured among his neighbours, by his birthplace, in the good town of Dalkeith, near Edinburgh, held in James's household the post of maker of watches and horologes to his Majesty. He scorned not, however, to keep open shop within Temple Bar, a few yards to the eastward of Saint Dunstan's Church.

The shop of a London tradesman at that time, as it may be supposed, was something very different from those we now see in the same locality. The goods were exposed to sale in

only defended from the weather by a covering of canvas, and the whole resembled the stalls and booths now erected for the temporary accommodation of dealers at a country fair, rather than the established emporium of a respectable citizen. But most of the shopkeepers of note, and David Ramsay amongst others, had their booth connected with a small apartment which opened backward from it, and bore the same resemblance to the front shop that Robinson Crusoe's cavern did to the tent which he erected before it. To this Master Ramsay was often accustomed to retreat to the labour of his abstruse calculations; for he aimed at improvement and discoveries in his own art, and sometimes pushed his researches, like Napier, and other mathematicians of the period, into abstract science. When thus engaged, he left the outer posts of his commercial establishment to be maintained by two stout-bodied and strong-voiced apprentices, who kept up the cry of, 'What d'ye lack? what d'ye lack?' accompanied with the appropriate recommendations of the articles in which they dealt. This direct and personal application for custom to those who chanced to pass by, is now, we believe, limited to Monmouth Street (if it still exists even in that repository of ancient garments), under the guardianship of the scattered remnant of Israel. But at the time we are speaking of, it was practised alike by Jew and Gentile, and served, instead of all our present newspaper puffs and advertisements, to solicit the attention of the public in general, and of friends in particular, to the unrivalled excellence of the goods, which they offered to sale upon such easy terms, that it might fairly appear that the vendors had rather a view to the general service of the public, than to their own particular advantage.

The verbal proclaimers of the excellence of their commodities had this advantage over those who, in the present day, use the public papers for the same purpose, that they could in many cases adapt their address to the peculiar appearance and apparent taste [illegible] passengers. [This, as we have said, was also [illegible] in Monmouth Street in our remembrance. [illegible] have ourselves been reminded of the deficiencies of our femoral habiliments, and exhorted upon that score to fit ourselves more becomingly; but this is a digression.] This direct and personal mode of invitation to customers became, however, a dangerous temptation to the young wags who were employed in the task of solicitation during the absence of the principal person interested in the traffic; and, confiding in their numbers and civic union, the 'prentices of London were often seduced into taking liberties with the passengers, and exercising their wit at the expense of those whom they had no hopes of converting into customers by their eloquence. If this were resented by any act of violence, the inmates of each shop were ready to pour forth in succour; and in the words of an old song which Dr. Johnson was used to hum,—

> Up then rose the 'prentices all,
> Living in London, both proper and tall.

Desperate riots often arose on such occasions, especially when the Templars, or other youths connected with the aristocracy, were insulted, or conceived themselves to be so. Upon such occasions, bare steel was frequently opposed to the clubs of the citizens, and death sometimes ensued on both sides. The tardy and inefficient police of the time had no other resource than by the alderman of the ward calling out the householders, and putting a stop to the strife by overpowering numbers, as the Capulets and Montagues are separated upon the stage.

At the period when such was the universal custom of the most respectable, as well as the most inconsiderable, shopkeepers in London, David Ramsay, on the evening to which we solicit the attention of the reader, retiring to more abstruse and private labours, left the administration of his outer shop, or booth, to the aforesaid sharp-witted, active, able-bodied, and well-voiced apprentices, namely, Jenkin Vincent and Frank Tunstall.

Vincent had been educated at the excellent foundation of Christ's Church Hospital, and was bred, therefore, as well as born, a Londoner, with all the acuteness, address, and audacity which belong peculiarly to the youth of a metropolis. He was now about twenty years old, short in stature, but remarkably strong made, eminent for his feats upon holidays at foot-ball, and other gymnastic exercises; scarce rivalled in the broadsword play, though hitherto only exercised in the form of single-stick. He knew every lane, blind-alley, and sequestered court of the ward, better than his Catechism; was alike active in his master's affairs, and in his own adventures of fun and mischief; and so managed matters, that the credit he acquired by the former bore him out, or at least served for his apology, when the latter propensity led him into scrapes, of which, however, it is but fair to state, that they had hitherto inferred nothing mean or discreditable. Some aberrations there were, which David Ramsay, his master, endeavoured to reduce to regular order when he discovered them, and others which he winked at—supposing them to answer the pur[illegible] the escapement of a watch, which di[illegible] a certain quantity of the extra po[illegible] of that mechanical impulse which puts the whole in motion.

The physiognomy of Jin Vin—by which abbreviation he was familiarly known through the ward—corresponded with the sketch we have given of his character. His head, upon which his 'prentice's flat cap was generally flung in a careless and oblique fashion, was closely covered with thick hair of raven black, which curled naturally and closely, and would have grown to great length, but for the modest custom enjoined by his state of life, and strictly enforced by his master, which compelled him to keep it short cropped—not unreluctantly, as he looked with envy on the flowing ringlets in which the courtiers and aristocratic students of the neighbouring Temple began to indulge themselves, as marks of superiority and of gentility. Vincent's eyes were deep set in his head, of a strong vivid black, full of fire, roguery, and intelligence, and conveying a humorous expression, even while he was uttering the usual small-talk of his trade, as if he ridiculed those who were disposed to

give any weight to his commonplaces. He had address enough, however, to add little touches of his own, which gave a turn of drollery even to this ordinary routine of the booth; and the alacrity of his manner—his ready and obvious wish to oblige—his intelligence and civility, when he thought civility necessary, made him a universal favourite with his master's customers. His features were far from regular, for his nose was flattish, his mouth tending to the larger size, and his complexion inclining to be more dark than was then thought consistent with masculine beauty. But, in despite of his having always breathed the air of a crowded city, his complexion had the ruddy and manly expression of redundant health; his turned-up nose gave an air of spirit and raillery to what he said, and seconded the laugh of his eyes; and his wide mouth was garnished with a pair of well-formed and well-coloured lips, which, when he laughed, disclosed a range of teeth strong and well set, and as white as the very pearl. Such was the elder apprentice of David Ramsay, Memory's Monitor, watchmaker, and constructor of horologes, to his most sacred Majesty James I.

Jenkin's companion was the younger apprentice, though, perhaps, he might be the elder of the two in years. At any rate, he was of a much more staid and composed temper. Francis Tunstall was of that ancient and proud descent who claimed the style of the 'unstained;' because, amid the various chances of the long and bloody wars of the Roses, they had, with undeviating faith, followed the House of Lancaster, to which they had originally attached themselves. The meanest sprig of such a tree attached importance to the root from which it derived itself; and Tunstall was supposed to nourish in secret a proportion of that family pride, which had extorted tears from his widowed and almost indigent mother, when she saw herself obliged to consign him to a line of life inferior, as her prejudices suggested, to the course held by his progenitors. Yet, with all this aristocratic prejudice, his master found the well-born youth more docile, regular, and strictly attentive to his duty, than his far more active and alert comrade. Tunstall also gratified his master by the particular attention which he seemed disposed to bestow on the abstract principles of science connected with the trade which he was bound to study, the limits of which were daily enlarged with the increase of mathematical science.

Vincent beat his companion beyond the distance post, in everything like the practical adaptation of thorough practice, in the dexterity of hand necessary to execute the mechanical branches of the art, and double-distanced him in all respecting the commercial affairs of the shop. Still David Ramsay was wont to say that, if Vincent knew how to do a thing the better of the two, Tunstall was much better acquainted with the principles on which it ought to be done; and he sometimes objected to the latter, that he knew critical excellence too well ever to be satisfied with practical mediocrity.

The disposition of Tunstall was shy, as well as studious; and, though perfectly civil and obliging, he never seemed to feel himself in his place while he went through the duties of the shop. He was tall and handsome, with fair hair, and well-formed limbs, good features, well opened light blue eyes, a straight Grecian nose, and a countenance which expressed both good-humour and intelligence, but qualified by a gravity unsuitable to his years, and which almost amounted to dejection. He lived on the best terms with his companion, and readily stood by him whenever he was engaged in any of the frequent skirmishes, which, as we have already observed, often disturbed the city of London about this period. But though Tunstall was allowed to understand quarter staff (the weapon of the north country) in a superior degree, and though he was naturally both strong and active, his interference in such affrays seemed always matter of necessity; and, as he never voluntarily joined either their brawls or their sports, he held a far lower place in the opinion of the youth of the ward than his hearty and active friend Jin Vin. Nay, had it not been for the interest made for his comrade by the intercession of Vincent, Tunstall would have stood some chance of being altogether excluded from the society of his contemporaries of the same condition, who called him, in scorn, the Cavaliero Cuddy, and the Gentle Tunstall. On the other hand, the lad himself, deprived of the fresh air in which he had been brought up, and foregoing the exercise to which he was formerly accustomed, while the inhabitant of his native mansion, lost gradually the freshness of his complexion, and, without showing any symptoms of disease, grew more thin and pale as he grew older, and at length exhibited the appearance of indifferent health, without anything of the habits and complaints of an invalid, excepting a disposition to avoid society, and to spend his leisure time in private study, rather than mingle in the sports of his companions, or even resort to the theatres, then the general rendezvous of his class; where, according to high authority, they fought for half-bitten apples, cracked nuts, and filled the upper gallery with their clamours.

Such were the two youths who called David Ramsay master; and with both of whom he used to fret from morning till night, as their peculiarities interfered with his own, or with the quiet and beneficial course of his traffic.

Upon the whole, however, the youths were attached to their master, and he, a good-natured, though an absent and whimsical man, was scarce less so to them; and, when a little warmed with wine at an occasional junketing, he used to boast, in his northern dialect, of his 'twa bonnie lads, and the looks that the court ladies threw at them, when visiting his shop in their caroches, when on a frolic into the city.' But David Ramsay never failed, at the same time, to draw up his own tall, thin, lathy skeleton, extend his lean jaws into an alarming grin, and indicate, by a nod of his yard-long visage, and a twinkle of his little grey eye, that there might be more faces in Fleet Street worth looking at than those of Frank and Jenkin. His old neighbour, Widow Simmons, the sempstress, who had served in her day the very tip-top revellers of the Temple with ruffs, cuffs, and bands, distinguished more deeply the sort of attention paid by the females of quality, who so regularly

visited David Ramsay's shop, to its inmates. 'The boy Frank,' she admitted, 'used to attract the attention of the young ladies, as having something gentle and downcast in his looks; but then he could not better himself, for the poor youth had not a word to throw at a dog. Now Jin Vin was so full of his gibes and his jeers, and so willing, and so ready, and so serviceable, and so mannerly all the while, with a step that sprung like a buck's in Epping Forest, and his eye that twinkled as black as a gipsy's, that no woman who knew the world would make a comparison betwixt the lads. As for poor neighbour Ramsay himself, the man,' she said, 'was a civil neighbour, and a learned man, doubtless, and might be a rich man, if he had common sense to back his learning; and doubtless, for a Scot, neighbour Ramsay was nothing of a bad man, but he was so constantly grimed with smoke, gilded with brass filings, and smeared with lamp-black and oil, that Dame Simmons judged it would require his whole shopful of watches to induce any feasible woman to touch the said neighbour Ramsay with anything save a pair of tongs.'

A still higher authority, Dame Ursula, wife to Benjamin Suddlechop, the barber, was of exactly the same opinion.

Such were, in natural qualities and public estimation, the two youths, who, in a fine April day, having first rem[illegible]ed their dutiful service and attendance on the table of their master and his daughter, at their dinner at one o'clock,—such, O ye lads of London, was the severe discipline undergone by your predecessors!—and, having regaled themselves upon the fragments, in company with two female domestics, one a cook and maid-of-all-work, the other called Mistress Margaret's maid, now relieved their master in the duty of the outward shop; and, agreeably to the established custom, were soliciting, by their entreaties and recommendations of their master's manufacture, the attention and [illegible]ngers.

In this species of service it may be easily supposed that Jenkin Vincent left his more reserved and [illegible] comra[illegible] in the background. The latter could only articulate with difficulty, and as an act of duty which he was rather ashamed of discharging, the established words of form—'What d'ye lack?—What d'ye lack?—Clocks—watches—barnacles?—What d'ye lack?—Watches—clocks—barnacles?—What d'ye lack, sir?—What d'ye lack, madam?—Barnacles—watches—clocks?'

But this dull and dry iteration, however varied by diversity of verbal arrangement, sounded flat when mingled with the rich and recommendatory oratory of the bold-faced, deep-mouthed, and ready-witted Jenkin Vincent.—'What d'ye lack, noble sir?—What d'ye lack, beauteous madam?'—he said, in a tone at once bold and soothing, which often was so applied as both to gratify the persons addressed, and to excite a smile from other hearers.—'God bless your reverence,' to a beneficed clergyman; 'the Greek and Hebrew have harmed your reverence's eyes—Buy a pair of David Ramsay's barnacles. The King—God bless his sacred Majesty!—never reads Hebrew or Greek without them.'

'Are you well avised of that?' said a fat parson from the Vale of Evesham. 'Nay, if the Head of the Church wears them,—God bless his sacred Majesty!—I will try what they can do for me; for I have not been able to distinguish one Hebrew letter from another, since—I cannot remember the time—when I had a bad fever. Choose me a pair of his most sacred Majesty's own wearing, my good youth.'

'This is a pair, and please your reverence,' said Jenkin, producing a pair of spectacles which he touched with an air of great deference and respect, 'which his most blessed Majesty placed this day three weeks on his own blessed nose; and would have kept them for his own sacred use, but that the setting being, as your reverence sees, of the purest jet, was, as his sacred Majesty was pleased to say, fitter for a bishop, than for a secular prince.'

'His sacred Majesty the King,' said the worthy divine, 'was ever a very Daniel in his judgment. Give me the barnacles, my go[illegible] youth, and who can say what nose they may bestride in two years hence? our reverend brother of Gloucester waxes in years.' He then pulled out his purse, paid for the spectacles, and left the shop with even a more important step than that which had paused to enter it.

'For shame!' said Tunstall to his companion; 'these glasses will never suit one of his years.'

'You are a fool, Frank,' said Vincent, in reply; 'had the good doctor wished glasses to read with, he would have tried them before buying. He does not want to look through them himself, and these will serve the purpose of being looked at by other folks, as well as the best magnifiers in the shop.—What d'ye lack?' he cried, resuming his solicitations. 'Mirrors for your toilette, my pretty madam; your head-gear is something awry—pity, since it is so well fancied.' The woman stopped and bought a mirror.—'What d'ye lack?—a watch, Master Sergeant—a watch that will go as long as a law-suit, as steady and true as your own eloquence?'

'Hold your peace, sir,' answered the knight of the coif, who was disturbed by Vin's address [illegible]sultation with an eminent [illegible] 'hold your peace! You are the [illegible]udest-tongued varlet betwixt the Devil's Tavern and Guildhall.'

'A watch,' reiterated the undaunted Jenkin, 'that shall not lose thirteen minutes in a thirteen years' lawsuit.—He's out of hearing.—A watch with four wheels and a bar-movement—a watch that shall tell you, Master Poet, how long the patience of the audience will endure your next piece at the Black Bull.' The bard laughed, and fumbled in the pocket of his slops till he chased into a corner, and fairly caught, a small piece of coin.

'Here is a tester to cherish thy wit, good boy,' he said.

'Gramercy,' said Vin; 'at the next play of yours I will bring down a set of roaring boys that shall make all the critics in the pit, and the gallants on the stage, civil, or else the curtain shall smoke for it.'

'Now, that I call mean,' said Tunstall, 'to take the poor rhymer's money, who has so little left behind.'

'You are an owl, once again,' said Vincent; 'if he has nothing left to buy cheese and radishes, he will only dine a day the sooner with some patron or some player, for that is his fate five days out of the seven. It is unnatural that a poet should pay for his own pot of beer; I will drink his tester for him, to save him from such shame; and when his third night comes round, he shall have pennyworths for his coin, I promise you.—But here comes another guess customer. Look at that strange fellow—see how he gapes at every shop, as if he would swallow the wares. —O! Saint Dunstan has caught his eye; pray God he swallow not the images. See how he stands astonished, as old Adam and Eve ply their ding dong! Come, Frank, thou art a scholar; construe me that same fellow, with his blue cap with a cock's feather in it, to show he's of gentle blood, God wot—his grey eyes, his yellow hair, his sword with a ton of iron in the handle—his grey threadbare cloak—his step like a Frenchman—his look like a Spaniard —a book at his girdle, and a broad dudgeon-dagger on the other side, to show him half pedant, half bully. How call you that pageant, Frank?'

'A raw Scotsman,' said Tunstall; 'just come up, I suppose, to help the rest of his countrymen to gnaw old England's bones; a palmerworm, I reckon, to devour what the locust has spared.'

'Even so, Frank,' answered Vincent; 'just as the poet sings sweetly,—

> In Scotland he was born and bred,
> And though a beggar, must be fed.'

'Hush!' said Tunstall, 'remember our master.'

'Pshaw!' answered his mercurial companion; 'he knows on which side his bread is buttered, and I warrant you has not lived so long among Englishmen, and by Englishmen, to quarrel with us for bearing an English mind. But see, our Scot has done gazing at Saint Dunstan's, and comes our way. By this light, a proper lad and a sturdy, in spite of freckles and sun-burning.—He comes nearer still; I will have at him.'

'And if you do,' said his comrade, 'you may get a broken head—he looks not as if he would carry coals.'

'A fig for your threat,' said Vincent, and instantly addressed the stranger. 'Buy a watch, most noble northern thane—buy a watch, to count the hours of plenty since the blessed moment you left Berwick behind you.—Buy barnacles, to see the English gold lies ready for your grip.—Buy what you will, you shall have credit for three days; for, were your pockets as bare as Father Fergus's, you are a Scot in London, and you will be stocked in that time.' The stranger looked sternly at the waggish apprentice, and seemed to grasp his cudgel in rather a menacing fashion. 'Buy physic,' said the undaunted Vincent, 'if you will buy neither time nor light—physic for a proud stomach, sir; —there is a 'pothecary's shop on the other side of the way.'

Here the probationary disciple of Galen, who stood at his master's door in his flat cap and canvas sleeves, with a large wooden pestle in his hand, took up the ball which was flung to him by Jenkin, with, 'What d'ye lack, sir—Buy a choice Caledonian salve, *Flos sulphur, cum butyro quant. suff.*'

'To be taken after a gentle rubbing down with an English oaken towel,' said Vincent.

The bonny Scot had given full scope to the play of this small artillery of city wit, by halting his stately pace, and viewing grimly, first the one assailant and then the other, as if menacing either repartee or more violent revenge. But phlegm or prudence got the better of his indignation, and, tossing his head as one who valued not the raillery to which he had been exposed, he walked down Fleet Street, pursued by the horse-laugh of his tormentors.

'The Scot will not fight till he see his own blood,' said Tunstall, whom his north of England extraction had made familiar with all manner of proverbs against those who lay yet farther north than himself.

'Faith, I know not,' said Jenkin; 'he looks dangerous, that fellow—he will hit some one over the noddle before he goes far. Hark!—hark!— they are rising.'

Accordingly, the well-known cry of ''Prentices —'prentices—Clubs—clubs!' now rang along Fleet Street; and Jenkin, snatching up his weapon, which lay beneath the counter ready at the slightest notice, and calling to Tunstall to take his bat and follow, leaped over the hatch-door which protected the outer shop, and ran as fast as he could towards the affray, echoing the cry as he ran, and elbowing, or shoving aside, whoever stood in his way. His comrade, first calling to his master to give an eye to the shop, followed Jenkin's example, and ran after him as fast as he could, but with more attention to the safety and convenience of others; while old David Ramsay,* with hands and eyes uplifted, a green apron before him, and a glass which he had been polishing thrust into his bosom, came forth to look after the safety of his goods and chattels, knowing by old experience, that, when the cry of 'Clubs' once arose, he would have little aid on the part of his apprentices.

CHAPTER II.

> This, sir, is one among the Seignory,
> Has wealth at will, and will to use his wealth,
> And wit to increase it. Marry, his worst folly
> Lies in a thriftless sort of charity,
> That goes a-gadding sometimes after objects
> Which wise men will not see when thrust upon them.
>
> THE OLD COUPLE.

THE ancient gentleman bustled about his shop, in pettish displeasure at being summoned hither so hastily, to the interruption of his more abstract studies; and, unwilling to renounce the train of calculation which he had put in progress, he mingled whimsically with the fragments of the arithmetical operation, his oratory to the passengers, and angry reflections on his idle apprentices. 'What d'ye lack, sir?—Madam, what d'ye lack?—clocks for hall or table—night watches—day watches?—*Locking wheel being 48*

* Note E. David Ramsay.

—*the power of retort 8—the striking pins are 48* —What d'ye lack, honoured sir?—*The quotient —the multiplicand* — That the knaves should have gone out at this blessed minute! —*the acceleration being at the rate of 5 minutes, 55 seconds, 53 thirds, 59 fourths*—I will switch them both when they come back—I will, by the bones of the immortal Napier!'

Here the vexed philosopher was interrupted by the entrance of a grave citizen of a most respectable appearance, who, saluting him familiarly by the name 'Davie, my old acquaintance,' demanded what had put him so much out of sorts, and gave him at the same time a cordial grasp of his hand.

The stranger's dress was, though grave, rather richer than usual. His paned hose were of black velvet, lined with purple silk, which garniture appeared at the slashes. His doublet was of purple cloth, and his short cloak of black velvet to correspond with his hose; and both were adorned with a great number of small silver buttons richly wrought in filigree. A triple chain of gold hung round his neck; and, in place of a sword or dagger, he wore at his belt an ordinary knife for the purpose of the table, with a small silver case, which appeared to contain writing materials. He might have seemed some secretary or clerk engaged in the service of the public, only that his low, flat, and unadorned cap, and his well blacked, shining shoes, indicated that he belonged to the city. He was a well-made man, about the middle size, and seemed firm in health, though advanced in years. His looks expressed sagacity and good-humour; and the air of respectability which his dress announced was well supported by his clear eye, ruddy cheek, and grey hair. He used the Scottish idiom in his first address, but in such a manner that it could hardly be distinguished whether he was passing upon his friend a sort of jocose mockery, or whether it was his own native dialect, for his ordinary discourse had little provincialism.

In answer to the queries of his respectable friend, Ramsay groaned heavily, answering by echoing back the question, 'What ails me, Master George? Why, everything ails me! I profess to you that a man may as well live in Fairyland as in the Ward of Farringdon Without. My apprentices are turned into mere goblins—they appear and disappear like spunkies, and have no more regularity in them than a watch without a scapement. If there is a ball to be tossed up, or a bullock to be driven mad, or a quean to be ducked for scolding, or a head to be broken, Jenkin is sure to be at the one end or the other of it, and then away skips Francis Tunstall for company. I think the prize-fighters, bear-leaders, and mountebanks are in a league against me, my dear friend, and that they pass my house ten times for any other in the city. Here's an Italian fellow come over, too, that they call Punchinello; and, altogether' —

'Well,' interrupted Master George, 'but what is all this to the present case?'

'Why,' replied Ramsay, 'here has been a cry of thieves or murder (I hope that will prove the least of it amongst these English pock-pudding swine!), and I have been interrupted in the deepest calculation ever mortal man plunged into, Master George.'

'What, man!' replied Master George, 'you must take patience—You are a man that deals in time, and can make it go fast and slow at pleasure; you, of all the world, have least reason to complain if a little of it be lost now and then. But here come your boys, and bringing in a slain man betwixt them, I think—here has been serious mischief, I am afraid.'

'The more mischief, the better sport,' said the crabbed old watchmaker. 'I am blithe, though, that it's neither of the twa loons themselves.—What are ye bringing a corpse here for, ye fause villains?' he added, addressing the two apprentices, who, at the head of a considerable mob of their own class, some of whom bore evident marks of a recent fray, were carrying the body betwixt them.

'He is not dead yet, sir,' answered Tunstall.

'Carry him into the apothecary's, then,' replied his master. 'D'ye think I can set a man's life in motion again, as if he were a clock or a timepiece?'

'For God's sake, old friend,' said his acquaintance, 'let us have him here at the nearest—he seems only in a swoon.'

'A swoon?' said Ramsay; 'and what business had he to swoon in the streets? Only, if it will oblige my friend Master George, I would take in all the dead men of Saint Dunstan's parish. Call Sam Porter to look after the shop.'

So saying, the stunned man, being the identical Scotsman who had passed a short time before amidst the jeers of the apprentices, was carried into the back shop of the artist, and there placed in an armed chair till the apothecary from over the way came to his assistance. This gentleman, as sometimes happens to those of the learned professions, had rather more lore than knowledge, and began to talk of the sinciput and occiput, and cerebrum and cerebellum, until he exhausted David Ramsay's brief stock of patience.

'Bell-um! bell-um!' he repeated, with great indignation. 'What signify all the bells in London, if you do not put a plaster on the chield's crown?'

Master George, with better directed zeal, asked the apothecary whether bleeding might not be useful; when, after humming and hawing for a moment, and being unable, upon the spur of the occasion, to suggest anything else, the man of pharmacy observed, that it would, at all events, relieve the brain or cerebrum, in case there was a tendency to the deposition of any extravasated blood, to operate as a pressure upon that delicate organ. Fortunately he was adequate to performing this operation; and, being powerfully aided by Jenkin Vincent (who was learned in all cases of broken heads) with plenty of cold water, and a little vinegar, applied according to the scientific method practised by the bottle-holders in a modern ring, the man began to raise himself on his chair, draw his cloak tightly around him, and looked about like one who struggles to recover sense and recollection.

'He had better lie down on the bed in the little back closet,' said Master Ramsay's visitor, who seemed perfectly familiar with the accommodations which the house afforded.

'He is welcome to my share of the truckle,' said Jenkin,—for in the said back closet were the two apprentices accommodated in one truckle-bed,—'I can sleep under the counter.'

'So can I,' said Tunstall, 'and the poor fellow can have the bed all night.'

'Sleep,' said the apothecary, 'is, in the opinion of Galen, a restorative and febrifuge, and is most naturally taken in a truckle-bed.'

'Where a better cannot be come by,' said Master George; 'but these are two honest lads, to give up their beds so willingly. Come, off with his cloak, and let us bear him to his couch —I will send for Doctor Irving, the king's chirurgeon—he does not live far off, and that shall be my share of the Samaritan's duty, neighbour Ramsay.'

'Well, sir,' said the apothecary, 'it is at your pleasure to send for other advice, and I shall not object to consult with Doctor Irving, or any other medical person of skill, neither to continue to furnish such drugs as may be needful from my pharmacopeia. However, whatever Doctor Irving, who, I think, hath had his degrees in Edinburgh, or Doctor Any-one-beside, be he Scottish or English, may say to the contrary, sleep, taken timeously, is a febrifuge, or sedative, and also a restorative.'

He muttered a few more learned words, and concluded by informing Ramsay's friend, in English far more intelligible than his Latin, that he would look to him as his paymaster, for medicines, care, and attendance, furnished, or to be furnished, to this party unknown.

Master George only replied by desiring him to send his bill for what he had already to charge, and to give himself no further trouble unless he heard from him. The pharmacopolist, who, from discoveries made by the cloak falling a little aside, had no great opinion of the faculty of this chance patient to make reimbursement, had no sooner seen his case espoused by a substantial citizen, than he showed some reluctance to quit possession of it, and it needed a short and stern hint from Master George, which, with all his good-humour, he was capable of expressing when occasion required, to send to his own dwelling this Esculapius of Temple Bar.

When they were rid of Master Raredrench, the charitable efforts of Jenkin and Francis to divest the patient of his long grey cloak were firmly resisted on his own part. -'My life suner—my life suner,' he muttered in indistinct murmurs. In these efforts to retain his upper garment, which was too tender to resist much handling, it gave way at length with a loud rent, which almost threw the patient into a second syncope, and he sat before them in his under garments, the looped and repaired wretchedness of which moved at once pity and laughter, and had certainly been the cause of his unwillingness to resign the mantle, which, like the virtue of charity, served to cover so many imperfections.

The man himself cast his eyes on his poverty-struck garb, and seemed so much ashamed of the disclosure, that, muttering between his teeth, that he would be too late for an appointment, he made an effort to rise and leave the shop, which was easily prevented by Jenkin Vincent and his comrade, who, at the nod of Master George, laid hold of and detained him in his chair. The patient next looked round him for a moment, and then said faintly, in his broad northern language—'What sort of usage ca' ye this, gentlemen, to a stranger, a sojourner in your town? Ye hae broken my head—ye hae riven my cloak, and now ye are for restraining my personal liberty! They were wiser than me,' he said, after a moment's pause, 'that counselled me to wear my warst claithing in the streets of London; and if I could have got ony thing warse than these mean garments'- ('which would have been very difficult,' said Jin Vin, in a whisper, to his companion),—'they would have been e'en ower gude for the grips o men sae little acquented with the laws of honest civility.'

'To say the truth,' said Jenkin, unable to forbear any longer, although the discipline of the times prescribed to those in his situation a degree of respectful distance and humility in the presence of parents, masters, or seniors, of which the present age has no idea—'to say the truth, the good gentleman's clothes look as if they would not brook much handling.'

'Hold your peace, young man,' said Master George, with a tone of authority; 'never mock the stranger or the poor the black ox has not trod on your foot yet--you know not what lands you may travel in, or what clothes you may wear, before you die.'

Vincent held down his head and stood rebuked, but the stranger did not accept the apology which was made for him.

'I *am* a stranger, sir,' said he, 'that is certain; though methinks, that, being such, I have been somewhat familiarly treated in this town of yours; -- but as for my being poor, I think I need not be charged with poverty, till I seek siller of somebody.'

'The dear country all over,' said Master George, in a whisper to David Ramsay, 'pride and poverty.'

But David had taken out his tablets and silver pen, and, deeply immersed in calculations, in which he rambled over all the terms of arithmetic, from the simple unit to millions, billions, and trillions, neither heard nor answered the observation of his friend, who, seeing his abstraction, turned again to the Scot.

'I fancy now, Jockey, if a stranger were to offer you a noble, you would chuck it back at his head?'

'Not if I could do him honest service for it, sir,' said the Scot; 'I am willing to do what I may to be useful, though I come of an honourable house, and may be said to be in a sort indifferently weel provided for.'

'Ay!' said the interrogator, 'and what house may claim the honour of your descent?'

'An ancient coat belongs to it, as the play says,' whispered Vincent to his companion.

'Come, Jockey, out with it,' continued Master George, observing that the Scot, as usual with his countrymen, when asked a blunt, straightforward question, took a little time before answering it.

'I am no more Jockey, sir, than you are John,' said the stranger, as if offended at being addressed by a name, which at that time was used, as Sawney now is, for a general appellative of

the Scottish nation. 'My name, if you must know it, is Richie Moniplies;* and I come of the old and honourable house of Castle Collop, weel ken'd at the West Port of Edinburgh.'

'What is that you call the West Port?' proceeded the interrogator.

'Why, an it like your honour' said Richie, who now, having recovered his senses sufficiently to observe the respectable exterior of Master George, threw more civility into his manner than at first, 'the West Port is a gate of our city, as yonder brick arches at Whitehall form the entrance of the King's palace here, only that the West Port is of stonern work, and mair decorated with architecture and the policy of bigging.'

'Nouns, man, the Whitehall gateways were planned by the great Holbein,' answered Master George; 'I suspect your accident has jumbled your brains, my good friend. I suppose you will tell me next, you have at Edinburgh as fine a navigable river as the Thames, with all its shipping?'

'The Thames!' exclaimed Richie, in a tone of ineffable contempt—'God bless your honour's judgment, we have at Edinburgh the Water of Leith and the Nor-Loch!'

'And the Pow Burn, and the Quarry Holes, and the Gusedub, fause loon!' answered Master George, speaking Scotch with a strong and natural emphasis; 'it is such landloupers as you, that, with your falset and fair fashions, bring reproach on our whole country.'

'God forgie me, sir!' said Richie, much surprised at finding the supposed Southron converted into a native Scot; 'I took your honour for an Englisher! But I hope there was naething wrang in standing up for ane's ain country's credit in a strange land, where all men cry her down.'

'Do you call it for your country's credit, to show that she has a lying, pulling rascal for one of her children?' said Master George. 'But come, man, never look grave on it,—as you have found a countryman, so you have found a friend, if you deserve one—and specially if you answer me truly.'

'I see nae gude it would do me to speak ought else but truth,' said the worthy North Briton.

'Well, then—to begin,' said Master George, 'I suspect you are a son of old Mungo Moniplies, the flesher, at the West Port?'

'Your honour is a witch, I think,' said Richie, grinning.

'And how dared you, sir, to uphold him for a noble?'

'I dinna ken, sir,' said Richie, scratching his head; 'I hear muckle of an Earl of Warwick in these southern parts,—Guy, I think his name was,—and he has great reputation here for slaying dun cows, and boars, and such like; and I am sure my father has killed more cows and boars, not to mention bulls, calves, sheep, ewes, lambs, and pigs, than the hale baronage of England.'

'Go to! you are a shrewd knave,' said Master George; 'charm your tongue, and take care of saucy answers. Your father was an honest burgher, and the deacon of his craft: I am sorry to see his son in so poor a coat.'

'Indifferent, sir,' said Richie Moniplies, looking down on his garments—'very indifferent; but it is the wonted livery of poor burghers' sons in our country—one of Luckie Want's bestowing upon us -rest us patient! The king's leaving Scotland has taken all custom frae Edinburgh; and there is hay made at the Cross, and a dainty crop of fouats in the Grassmarket. There is as much grass grows where my father's stall stood, as might have been a good bite for the beasts he was used to kill.'

'It is even too true,' said Master George; 'and while we make fortunes here, our old neighbours and their families are starving at home. This should be thought upon oftener.—And how came you by that broken head, Richie?—tell me honestly.'

'Troth, sir, I'se no lee about the matter,' answered Moniplies. 'I was coming along the street here, and ilk ane was at me with their jests and roguery. So I thought to mysel', ye are ower mony for me to mell with; but let me catch ye in Barford's Park, or at the fit of the Vennel, I could gar some of ye sing another sang. Sae ae auld hirpling deevil of a potter behoved just to step in my way and offer me a pig, as he said, just to put my Scotch ointment in, and I gave him a push, as but natural, and the tottering deevil couped ower amang his ain pigs, and damaged a score of them. And then the reird raise, and hadna these twa gentlemen helped me out of it, murdered I suld hae been, without remeid. And as it was, just when they got haud of my arm to have me out of the fray, I got the lick that dounerit me from a left-handed lighterman.'

Master George looked to the apprentices as if to demand the truth of this story.

'It is just as he says, sir,' replied Jenkin; 'only I heard nothing about pigs. The people said he had broke some crockery, and that—I beg pardon, sir—nobody could thrive within the kenning of a Scot.'

'Well, no matter what they said, you were an honest fellow to help the weaker side. And you, sirrah,' continued Master George, addressing his countryman, 'will call at my house to-morrow morning, agreeable to this direction.'

'I will wait upon your honour,' said the Scot, bowing very low; 'that is, if my honourable master will permit me.'

'Thy master!' said George,—'Hast thou a other master save Want, whose livery you you wear?'

'Troth, in one sense, if it please your ho I serve twa masters,' said Richie; 'for bo master and me are slaves to that same b a whom we thought to show our heels to by on off from Scotland. So that you see, s im, in a sort of black ward tenure, as we to re- our country, being the servant of a s

'And what is your master's na e little George; and observing that Richie h r, who added, 'Nay, do not tell me, if it is a moda-

'A secret that there is little use i said Richie; 'only ye ken that c stomachs are ower proud to call i our distress. No that my mast

d is t h he h- as t's id nd ile le, to

* Moniplies. See Glossary.

than present pinch, sir,' he added, looking towards the two English apprentices, 'having a large sum in the royal treasury—that is,' he continued, in a whisper to Master George, 'the King is owing him a lot of siller; but it's ill getting at it, it's like.—My master is the young Lord Glenvarloch.'

Master George testified surprise at the name. —'*You* one of the young Lord Glenvarloch's followers, and in such a condition?'

'Troth and I am all the followers he has, for the present, that is; and blithe and I be if he were mickle better aff than I am, though I were to bide as I am.'

'I have seen his father with four gentlemen and ten lackeys at his heels,' said Master George, rustling in their laces and velvets. Well, this is a changeful world, but there is a better beyond it.—The good old house of Glenvarloch, that stood by king and country five hundred years!'

'Your honour may say a thousand,' said the follower.

'I will say what I know to be true, friend,' said the citizen, 'and not a word more.—You seem well recovered now—can you walk?'

'Bravely, sir,' said Richie; 'it was but a bit dover. I was bred at the West Port, and my cantle will stand a clour wad bring a stot down.'

'Where does your master lodge?'

'We pit up, an it like your honour,' replied the Scot, 'in a sma' house at the fit of ane of the wynds that gang down to the water side, with a decent man, John Christie, a ship-chandler, as they ca't. His father came from Dundee. I wotna the name of the wynd, but it's right anent the mickle kirk yonder; and your honour will mind that we pass only by our family name of simple Master Nigel Olifaunt, as keeping ourselves retired for the present, though in Scotland we be called the Lord Nigel.'

'It is wisely done of your master,' said the citizen. 'I will find out your lodgings, though your direction be none of the clearest.' So saying, and slipping a piece of money at the same time into Richie Moniplies's hand, he bade him hasten home, and get into no more affrays.

'I will take care of that now, sir,' said Richie, with a look of importance, 'having a charge about me. And so, wussing ye a' weel; with special thanks to these twa young gentlemen'—

'I am no gentleman,' said Jenkin, flinging his cap on his head; 'I am a tight London 'prentice, and hope to be a freeman one day. Frank may write himself gentleman if he will.'

'I *was* a gentleman once,' said Tunstall, 'and I hope I have done nothing to lose the name of it.'

'Weel, weel, as ye list,' said Richie Moniplies; 'but I am mickle beholden to ye baith—and I am not a hair the less like to bear it in mind that I say but little about it just now.—[illegible] to you, my kind countryman.' So [illegible] thrust out of the sleeve of his ragged [illegible] long bony hand and arm, on which the [illegible] like whip-cord. Master George [illegible] heartily, while Jenkin and Frank ex[illegible] looks with each other.

[illegible] Moniplies would next have addressed [illegible] to the master of the shop, but seeing [illegible] who afterwards said, 'scribbling on his bit bookie, as if he were demented,' he contented his politeness with 'giving him a hat,' touching, that is, his bonnet, in token of salutation, and so left the shop.

'Now, there goes Scotch Jockey, with all his bad and good about him,' said Master George to Master David, who suspended, though unwillingly, the calculations with which he was engaged, and, keeping his pen within an inch of the tablets, gazed on his friend with great lack-lustre eyes, which expressed anything rather than intelligence or interest in the discourse addressed to him.—'That fellow,' proceeded Master George, without heeding his friend's state of abstraction, 'shows, with great liveliness of colouring, how our Scotch pride and poverty make liars and braggarts of us; and yet the knave, whose every third word to an Englishman is a boastful lie, will, I warrant you, be a true and tender friend and follower to his master, and has perhaps parted with his mantle to him in the cold blast, although he himself walked *in cuerpo*, as the Don says.—Strange! that courage and fidelity—for I will warrant that the knave is stout—should have no better companion than this swaggering braggadocio humour.—But you mark me not, friend Davie?'

'I do—I do, most heedfully,' said Davie.—'For as the sun goeth round the dial plate in twenty-four hours, add, for the moon, fifty minutes and a half'—

'You are in the seventh heavens, man,' said his companion.

'I crave your pardon,' replied Davie.—'Let the wheel A go round in twenty-four hours—I have it—and the wheel B in twenty-four hours fifty minutes and a half, fifty-seven being to twenty-four as fifty-nine to twenty-four hours fifty minutes and a half, or very nearly.—I crave your forgiveness, Master George, and heartily wish you good-even.'

'Good-even!' said Master George; 'why, you have not wished me good-day yet. Come, old friend, lay by these tablets, or you will crack the inner machinery of *your* skull, as our friend yonder has got the outer case of his damaged.—Good-night, quotha! I mean not to part with you so easily. I came to get my four-hours' nunchion from you, man, besides a tune on the lute from my god-daughter, Mistress Marget.'

'Good faith! I was abstracted, Master George—but you know me. Whenever I get amongst the wheels,' said Master Ramsay, 'why, 'tis'——

'Lucky that you deal in small ones,' said his friend; as, awakened from his reveries and calculations, Ramsay led the way up a little back stair to the first storey, occupied by his daughter and his little household.

The apprentices resumed their places in the front shop, and relieved Sam Porter; when Jenkin said to Tunstall—'Didst see, Frank, how the old goldsmith cottoned in with his beggarly countryman? When would one of his wealth have shaken hands so courteously with a poor Englishman?—Well, I'll say that for the best of the Scots, that they will go over head and ears to serve a countryman, when they will not wet a nail of their finger to save a Southron, as they call us, from drowning. And yet Master George is but half-bred Scot neither in that

respect; for I have known him do many a kind thing to the English too.'

'But hark ye, Jenkin,' said Tunstall, 'I think you are but half-bred English yourself. How came you to strike on the Scotsman's side after all?'

'Why, you did so too,' answered Vincent.

'Ay, because I saw you begin; and, besides, it is no Cumberland fashion to fall fifty upon one,' replied Tunstall.

'And no Christ Church fashion neither,' said Jenkin. 'Fair play and Old England for ever!—Besides, to tell you a secret, his voice had a twang in it—in the dialect, I mean—reminded me of a little tongue, which I think sweeter—sweeter than the last toll of Saint Dunstan's will sound, on the day that I am shot of my indentures.—Ha! you guess who I mean, Frank?'

'Not I, indeed,' answered Tunstall.—'Scotch Janet, I suppose, the laundress.'

'Off with Janet in her own bucking-basket!—no, no, no!—You blind buzzard,—do you not know I mean pretty Mistress Marget?'

'Umph!' answered Tunstall dryly.

A flash of anger, not unmingled with suspicion, shot from Jenkin's keen black eyes.

'Umph!—and what signifies umph? I am not the first 'prentice has married his master's daughter, I think?'

'They kept their own secret, I fancy,' said Tunstall, 'at least till they were out of their time.'

'I tell you what it is, Frank,' answered Jenkin sharply, 'that may be the fashion of you gentlefolks, that are taught from your biggin to carry two faces under the same hood, but it shall never be mine.'

'There are the stairs, then,' said Tunstall coolly; 'go up and ask Mistress Marget of our master just now, and see what sort of a face he will wear under *his* hood.' [illegible]d Jen[illegible]

'No, I wonnot,' answere[illegible] But I w[illegible] I am not such a fool as that neither. [illegible]ounts in Cumb[illegible]e my own two eyes [illegible] all the, 'and this is that which you may depend upon.'

Francis made no reply; and they resumed their usual attention to the business of the shop, and their usual solicitations to the passengers.*

CHAPTER III.

Bobadil. I pray you, possess no gallant of your acquaintance with a knowledge of my lodging

Master Matthew. Who, I, sir?—Lord, sir!

BEN JONSON.

THE next morning found Nigel Olifaunt, the young Lord of Glenvarloch, seated, sad and solitary, in his little apartment, in the mansion of John Christie, the ship-chandler; which that honest tradesman, in gratitude perhaps to the profession from which he derived his chief support, appeared to have constructed as nearly as possible upon the plan of a ship's cabin.

It was situated near to Paul's Wharf, at the end of one of those intricate and narrow lanes, which, until that part of the city was swept away by the great fire in 1666, constituted an extraordinary labyrinth of small, dark, damp, and unwholesome streets and alleys, in one corner or other of which the plague was then as surely found lurking, as in the obscure corners of Constantinople in our own time. But John Christie's house looked out upon the river, and had the advantage, therefore, of free air, impregnated, however, with the odoriferous fumes of the articles in which the ship-chandler dealt, with the odour of pitch, and the natural scent of the ooze and sludge left by the reflux of the tide.

Upon the whole, except that his dwelling did not float with the flood-tide, and become stranded with the ebb, the young lord was nearly as comfortably accommodated as he was while on board the little trading brig from the long town of Kirkcaldy, in Fife, by which he had come a passenger to London. He received, however, every attention which could be paid him by his honest landlord, John Christie; for Richie Moniplies had not thought it necessary to preserve his master's *incognito* so completely, but that the honest ship-chandler could form a guess that his guest's quality was superior to his appearance. As for Dame Nelly, his wife, a round, buxom, laughter-loving dame, with black eyes, a tight, well-laced bodice, a green apron, and a red petticoat edged with a slight silver lace, and judiciously shortened so as to show that a short heel, and a tight, clean ankle, rested upon a well-burnished shoe,—she, of course, felt interest in a young man, who, besides being very handsome, good-humoured, and easily satisfied with the accommodations her house afforded, was evidently of a rank, as well as manners, highly superior to the skippers (or captains, as they called themselves) of merchant vessels, who were the usual tenants of the apartments which she let to hire; and at whose departure she was sure to find her well scrubbed floor soiled with the [illegible] of tobacco (which, spite of King James's Counterblast,* was then forcing itself into use), and her best curtains impregnated with the odour of Geneva and strong waters, to Dame Nelly's great indignation; for, as she truly said, the smell of the shop and warehouse was bad enough without these additions.

But all Master Olifaunt's habits were regular and cleanly, and his address, though frank and simple, showed so much of the courtier and gentleman, as formed a strong contrast with the loud halloo, coarse jests, and boisterous impatience of her maritime inmates. Dame Nelly saw that her guest was melancholy also, notwithstanding his efforts to seem contented and cheerful; and, in short, she took that sort of interest in him, without being herself aware of its extent, which an unscrupulous gallant might have been tempted to improve to the prejudice of honest John, who was at least a score of years

* Note F. George Heriot.

[* *A Counterblast to Tobacco* is included in the works of King James, Lond. 1616, published by James (Montague), Bishop of Winchester. In the bishop's Latin translation of the king's works, Lond. 1619, the tract has this pedantic title, *Misocapnus, sive de Abusu Tobacci, Lusus Regius.*]

older than his helpmate. Olifaunt, however, had not only other matters to think of, but would have regarded such an intrigue, had the idea ever occurred to him, as an abominable and ungrateful encroachment upon the laws of hospitality, his religion having been by his late father formed upon the strict principles of the national faith, and his morality upon those of the nicest honour. He had not escaped the predominant weakness of his country, an overweening sense of the pride of birth, and a disposition to value the worth and consequence of others according to the number and the fame of their deceased ancestors; but this pride of family was well subdued, and in general almost entirely concealed, by his good sense and general courtesy.

Such as we have described him, Nigel Olifaunt, or rather the young Lord of Glenvarloch, was, when our narrative takes him up under great perplexity respecting the fate of his trusty and only follower, Richard Moniplies, who had been despatched by his young master, early the preceding morning, as far as the court at Westminster, but had not yet returned. His evening adventures the reader is already acquainted with, and so far knows more of Richie than did his master, who had not heard of him for twenty-four hours. Dame Nelly Christie, in the mean time, regarded her guest with some anxiety, and a great desire to comfort him if possible. She placed on the breakfast table a noble piece of cold powdered beef, with its usual guards of turnip and carrot, recommended her mustard as coming direct from her cousin at Tewksbury, and spiced the toast with her own hands, and with her own hands also drew a jug of stout and nappy ale, all of which were elements of the substantial breakfast of the period.

When she saw that her guest's anxiety prevented him from doing justice to the good cheer which she set before him, she commenced her career of verbal consolation with the usual volubility of those women in her station, who, conscious of good looks, good intentions, and good lungs, entertain no fear either of wearying themselves or of fatiguing their auditors.

'Now, what the good year! are we to send you down to Scotland as thin as you came up? I am sure it would be contrary to the course of nature. There was my goodman's father, old Sandy Christie, I have heard he was an atomy when he came up from the North, and I am sure he died, Saint Barnaby was ten years, at twenty stone weight. I was a buxom-headed girl at the time, and lived in the neighbourhood, though I had little thought of marrying John then, who had a score of years the better of me—but he is a thriving man and a kind husband—and his father, as I was saying, died as fat as a churchwarden. Well, sir, but I hope I have not offended you for my little joke; and I hope the ale is to your honour's liking—and the beef—and the mustard?'

'All excellent—all too good,' answered Olifaunt; 'you have everything so clean and tidy, dame, that I shall not know how to live when I go back to my own country—if ever I go back there.'

This was added as it seemed involuntarily, and with a deep sigh.

'I warrant your honour go back again, if you like it,' said the dame; 'unless you think rather of taking a pretty, well-dowered English lady, as some of your countryfolk have done. I assure you some of the best of the city have married Scotsmen. There was Lady Trebleplumb, Sir Thomas Trebleplumb the great Turkey merchant's widow, married Sir Awley Macauley, whom your honour knows, doubtless; and pretty Mistress Doublefee, old Sergeant Doublefee's daughter, jumped out of window, and was married at May fair to a Scotsman with a hard name; and old Pitchpost the timber merchant's daughters did little better, for they married two Irishmen; and when folks jeer me about having a Scotsman for lodger, meaning your honour, I tell them they are afraid of their daughters and their mistresses; and sure I have a right to stand up for the Scot, since John Christie is half a Scotsman, and a thriving man, and a good husband, though there is a score of years between us; and so I would have your honour cast care away, and mend your breakfast with a morsel and a draught.'

'At a word, my kind hostess, I cannot,' said Olifaunt; 'I am anxious about this knave of mine, who has been so long absent in this dangerous town of yours.'

It may be noticed in passing, that Dame Nelly's ordinary mode of consolation was to disprove the existence of any cause for distress; and she is said to have carried this so far as to comfort a neighbour who had lost her husband, with the assurance that the dear defunct would be better to-morrow, which perhaps might not have proved an appropriate, even if it had been a possible, mode of relief. On this occasion she denied stoutly that Richie had been absent altogether twenty hours; and as for people being killed in the streets of London, to be sure two men had been found in Tower ditch last week, but that was far to the east; and the other poor man that had his throat cut in the fields, had met his mishap near by Islington; and he that was stabbed by the young Templar in a drunken frolic, by Saint Clement's in the Strand, was an Irishman. All which evidence she produced to show that none of these casualties had occurred in a case exactly parallel with that of Richie, a Scotsman, and on his return from Westminster.

'My better comfort is, my good dame,' answered Olifaunt, 'that the lad is no brawler or quarreller, unless strongly urged, and that he has nothing valuable about him to any one but me.'

'Your honour speaks very well,' retorted the inexhaustible hostess, who protracted her task of taking away, and putting to rights, in order that she might prolong her gossip. 'I'll uphold Master Moniplies to be neither reveller nor brawler, for if he liked such things he might be visiting and junketing with the young folks about here in the neighbourhood, and he never dreams of it; and when I asked the young man to go as far as my gossip's, Dame Drinkwater, to taste a glass of aniseed, and a bit of the groaning cheese,—for Dame Drinkwater has had twins, as I told your honour, sir,—and I meant it quite civilly to the young man, but he chose to sit and

keep house with John Christie; and I daresay there is a score of years between them, for your honour's servant looks scarce much older than I am. I wonder what they could say to each other. I asked John Christie, but he bid me go to sleep.'

'If he comes not soon,' said his master, 'I will thank you to tell me what magistrate I can address myself to; for besides my anxiety for the poor fellow's safety, he has papers of importance about him.'

'O, your honour may be assured he will be back in a quarter of an hour,' said Dame Nelly; 'he is not the lad to stay out twenty-four hours at a stretch. And for the papers, I am sure your honour will pardon him for just giving me a peep at the corner, as I was giving him a small cup, not so large as my thimble, of distilled waters, to fortify his stomach against the damps, and it was directed to the King's Most Excellent Majesty; and so doubtless his Majesty has kept Richie out of civility to consider of your honour's letter, and send back a fitting reply.'

Dame Nelly here hit by chance on a more available topic of consolation than those she had hitherto touched upon; for the youthful lord had himself some vague hopes that his messenger might have been delayed at court until a fitting and favourable answer should be despatched back to him. Inexperienced, however, in public affairs, as he certainly was, it required only a moment's consideration to convince him of the improbability of an expectation so contrary to all he had heard of etiquette, as well as the dilatory proceeding in a court suit, and he answered the good-natured hostess, with a sigh, that he doubted whether the king would even look on the paper addressed to him, far less take it into his immediate consideration.

'Now, out upon you for a faint-hearted gentleman!' said the good dame; 'and why should he not do as much for us as our gracious Queen Elizabeth? Many people say this and that about a queen and a king, but I think a king comes more natural to us English folks; and this good gentleman goes as often down by water to Greenwich, and employs as many of the bargemen and watermen of all kinds; and maintains, in his royal grace, John Taylor the water-poet, who keeps both a sculler and a pair of oars. And he has made a comely court at Whitehall, just by the river; and since the king is so good a friend to the Thames, I cannot see, if it please your honour, why all his subjects, and your honour in specialty, should not have satisfaction by his hands.'

'True, dame—true,—let us hope for the best; but I must take my cloak and rapier, and pray your husband in courtesy to teach me the way to a magistrate.'

'Sure, sir,' said the prompt dame, 'I can do that as well as he, who has been a slow man of his tongue all his life, though I will give him his due for being a loving husband, and a man as well to pass in the world as any betwixt us and the top of the lane. And so there is the sitting alderman, that is always at the Guildhall, which is close by Paul's, and so I warrant you he puts all to rights in the city that wisdom can mend; and for the rest there is no help but patience. But I wish I were as sure of forty pounds, as I am that the young man will come back safe and sound.'

Olifaunt, in great and anxious doubt of what the good dame so strongly averred, flung his cloak on one shoulder, and was about to belt on his rapier, when first the voice of Richie Moniplies on the stair, and then that faithful emissary's appearance in the chamber, put the matter beyond question. Dame Nelly, after congratulating Moniplies on his return, and paying several compliments to her own sagacity for having foretold it, was at length pleased to leave the apartment. The truth was, that, besides some instinctive feelings of good-breeding which combated her curiosity, she saw there was no chance of Richie's proceeding in his narrative while she was in the room, and she therefore retreated, trusting that her own address would get the secret out of one or other of the young men, when she should have either by himself.

'How, in Heaven's name, what is the matter?' said Nigel Olifaunt.—'Where have you been, or what have you been about? You look as pale as death. There is blood on your hand, and your clothes are torn. What barns-breaking have you been at? You have been drunk, Richard, and fighting.'

'Fighting I have been,' said Richard, 'in a small way; but for being drunk, that's a job ill to manage in this town, without money to come by liquor; and as for barns-breaking, the deil a thing's broken but my head. It's not made of iron, I wot, nor my claithes of chenzie-mail; so a club smashed the tane, and a claught damaged the tither. Some misleard rascals abused my country, but I think I cleared the causey of them. However, the hale hive was ower mony for me at last, and I got this eclipse on the crown, and then I was carried beyond my kenning, to a sma' booth at the Temple Port, where they sell the whirlygigs and mony-go-rounds that measure out time as a man wad measure a tartan web; and then they bled me, wold I nold I, and were reasonably civil, especially an auld countryman of ours, of whom more hereafter.'

'And at what o'clock might this be?' said Nigel.

'The twa iron carles yonder, at the kirk beside the port, were just banging out sax o' the clock.'*

'And why came you not home as soon as you recovered?' said Nigel.

'In truth, my lord, every *why* has its *wherefore*, and this has a gude ane,' answered his follower. 'To come hame, I behoved to ken whaur hame was; now, I had clean tint the name of the wynd, and the mair I asked, the mair the folk leugh, and the farther they sent me wrang; sae I gave it up till God should send daylight to help me; and as I saw mysel' near a kirk at the lang run, I e'en crap in to take up my night's quarters in the kirkyard.'

'In the churchyard!' said Nigel—'But I need not ask what drove you to such a pinch.'

'It wasna sae much the want o' siller, my Lord Nigel,' said Richie, with an air of mysterious importance, 'for I was no sae absolute without means, of whilk mair anon; but I

* [The old church of Saint Dunstan's in Fleet Street had an overhanging clock with two bells, which were struck at the quarters by wooden figures armed with clubs.]

thought I wad never ware a saxpence sterling on ane of their saucy chamberlains at a hostelry, sae lang as I could sleep fresh and fine in a fair, dry spring night. Mony a time when I hae come hame ower late, and faund the West Port steekit, and the waiter ill-willy, I have garr'd the sexton of Saint Cuthbert's calf-ward serve me for my quarters. But then there are dainty green graffs in Saint Cuthbert's kirkyard, where ane may sleep as if they were in a down-bed, till they hear the laverock singing up in the air, as high as the Castle; whereas, and behold, these London kirkyards are causeyed with through-stanes, panged hard and fast thegither; and my cloak, being something threadbare, made but a thin mattress, so I was fain to give up my bed before every limb about me was crippled. Dead folks may sleep yonder sound enow, but deil haet else.'

'And what became of you next?' said his master.

'I just took to a canny bulk-head, as they ca' them here; that is, the boards on the tap of their bits of outshots of stalls and booths, and there I sleepit as sound as if I was in a castle. Not but I was disturbed with some of the night-walking queans and swaggering billies, but when they found there was nothing to be got by me but a slash of my Andrew Ferrara, they bid me good-night for a beggarly Scot; and I was e'en weel pleased to be sae cheap rid of them. And in the morning, I cam daikering here, but sad wark I had to find the way, for I had been east as far as the place they ca' Mile-End, though it is mair like sax-mile-end.'

'Well, Richie,' answered Nigel, 'I am glad all this has ended so well—go get something to eat. I am sure you need it.'

'In troth do I, sir,' replied Moniplies; 'but, with your lordship's leave'——

'Forget the lordship for the present, Richie, as I have often told you before.'

'Faith,' replied Richie, 'I could weel forget that your honour was a lord, but then I behoved to forget that I am a lord's man, and that's not so easy. But however,' he added, assisting his description with the thumb and the two fore-fingers of his right hand, thrust out after the fashion of a bird's claw, while the little finger and the ring-finger were closed upon the palm, 'to the court I went, and my friend that promised me a sight of his Majesty's most gracious presence, was as gude as his word, and carried me into the back offices, where I got the best breakfast I have had since we came here, and it did me gude for the rest of the day; for as to what I have eaten in this accursed town, it is aye sauced with the disquieting thought that it maun be paid for. After a' there was but beef-banes and fat brose; but king's cauff, your honour kens, is better than ither folk's corn; at ony rate, it was a' in free awmous.—But I see,' he added, stopping short, 'that your honour waxes impatient.'

'By no means, Richie,' said the young nobleman, with an air of resignation, for he well knew his domestic would not mend his pace for goading; 'you have suffered enough in the embassy to have a right to tell the story in your own way. Only let me pray for the name of the friend who was to introduce you into the King's presence. You were very mysterious on the subject, when you undertook, through his means, to have the supplication put into his Majesty's own hands, since those sent heretofore, I have reason to think, went no farther than his secretary's.'

'Weel, my lord,' said Richie, 'I did not tell you his name and quality at first, because I thought you would be affronted at the like of him having to do in your lordship's affairs. But mony a man climbs up in court by waur help. It was just Laurie Linklater, one of the yeomen of the kitchen, that was my father's apprentice lang syne.'

'A yeoman of the kitchen—a scullion!' exclaimed Lord Nigel, pacing the room in displeasure.

'But consider, sir,' said Richie composedly, 'that a' your great friends hung back, and shunned to own you, or to advocate your petition; and then, though I am sure I wish Laurie a higher office, for your lordship's sake and for mine, and especially for his ain sake, being a friendly lad, yet your lordship must consider, that a scullion—if a yeoman of the King's most royal kitchen may be called a scullion—may weel rank with a master-cook elsewhere; being that king's cauff, as I said before, is better than'——

'You are right and I was wrong,' said the young nobleman. 'I have no choice of means of making my case known, so that they be honest.'

'Laurie is as honest a lad as ever lifted a ladle,' said Richie; 'not but what I dare to say he can lick his fingers like other folk, and reason good. But, in fine, for I see your honour is waxing impatient, he brought me to the palace, where a' was astir for the King going out to hunt or hawk on Blackheath, I think they ca'd it. And there was a horse stood with all the quarries about it, a bonnie grey as ever was foaled; and the saddle and the stirrups, and the curb and bit, o' burning gowd, or silver gilded at least; and down, sir, came the King, with all his nobles, dressed out in his hunting-suit of green, doubly laced, and laid down with gowd. I minded the very face o' him, though it was lang since I saw him. But my certie, lad, thought I, times are changed since ye came fleeing down the back-stairs of auld Holyrood House, in grit fear, having your breeks in your hand without time to put them on, and Frank Stewart, the wild Earl of Bothwell, hard at your haunches; and if auld Lord Glenvarloch hadna cast his mantle about his arm, and taken bluidy wounds mair than ane in your behalf, you wald not have craw'd sae crouse this day; and so saying, I could not but think your lordship's sifflication could not be less than most acceptable; and so I banged in among the crowd of lords. Laurie thought me mad, and held me by the cloak lap till the cloth rave in his hand; and so I banged in right before the King just as he mounted, and crammed the sifflication into his hand, and he opened it like in amaze; and just as he saw the first line, I was minded to make a reverence, and I had the ill luck to hit his jaud o' a beast on the nose with my hat, and scaur the creature, and she swarved aside, and the King, that sits na mickle better than a draff-pock on the saddle, was like to have gotten a clean coup, and that might have cost my craig a

raxing—and he flung down the paper amang the beast's feet, and cried, "Away with the fause loon that brought it!" And they grippit me, and cried treason; and I thought of the Ruthvens that were dirked in their ain house, for, it may be, as small a forfeit. However, they spak only of scourging me, and had me away to the porter's lodge to try the tawse on my back, and I was crying mercy as loud as I could; and the King, when he had righted himsel' on the saddle, gathered his breath, cried to do me nae harm; for, said he, he is ane of our ain Norland stots, I ken by the rowt of him,—and they a' laughed and rowted loud eneuch. And then he said, 'Gie him a copy of the proclamation, and let him go down to the north by the next light collier, before waur come o't.' So they let me go, and rode a' sniggering, laughing, and rounding in ilk ither's lugs. A sair life I had wi' Laurie Linklater; for he said it would be the ruin of him. And then, when I told him it was in your matter, he said if he had known before he would have risked a scauding for you, because he minded the brave old lord, your father. And then he showed how I suld have done,—and that I suld have held up my hand to my brow, as if the grandeur of the King and his horse-graith thegither had casten the glaiks in my een, and mair jackanape tricks I suld hae played, instead of offering the sifflication, he said, as if I had been bringing guts to a bear.* "For," said he, "Richie, the King is a weel-natured and just man of his ain kindly nature, but he has a wheen maggots that maun be cannily guided; and then, Richie," says he, in a very laigh tone, "I would tell it to nane but a wise man like yoursel', but the King has them about him wad corrupt an angel from heaven; but I could have gien you avisement how to have guided him, but now it's like after meat mustard."—"Aweel, aweel, Laurie," said I, "it may be as you say; but since I am clear of the tawse and the porter's lodge, sifflicate wha like, deil hae Richie Moniplies if he come sifflicating here again."—And so away I came, and I wasna far by the ...mple Port, or Bar, or ... gentle ... whatev... adventu...

'Well, my honest Richie, ... 'your attempt was well meant, and not so ill-conducted, I think, as to have deserved so bad an issue; but go to your beef and mustard, and we'll talk of the rest afterwards.'

'There is nae mair to be spoken, sir,' said his follower, 'except that I met ane very honest, fair-spoken, weel-put-on gentleman, or rather burgher, as I think, that was in the whigmaleery man's back shop; and when he learned wha I was, behold he was a kindly Scot himsel', and, what is more, a town's-bairn o' the gude town, and he behoved to compel me to take this Portugal piece, to drink, forsooth—My certie, thought I, we ken better, for we will eat it—and he spoke of paying your lordship a visit.'

'You did not tell him where I lived, you knave!' said the Lord Nigel angrily. ''Sdeath! I shall have every clownish burgher from Edinburgh come to gaze on my distress, and pay a shilling for having seen the Motion † of the Poor Noble.'

'Tell him where you lived?' said Richie, evading the question; 'how could I tell him what I ken'dna mysel'? If I had minded the name of the Wynd, I need not have slept in the kirkyard yestreen.'

'See, then, that you give no one notice of our lodging,' said the young nobleman; 'those with whom I have business I can meet at Paul's or in the Court of Requests.'

'This is steeking the stable-door when the steed is stolen,' thought Richie to himself; 'but I must put him on another pin.'

So thinking, he asked the young lord what was in the proclamation which he still held folded in his hand; 'for, having little time to spell at it,' said he, 'your lordship well knows I ken nought about it but the grand blazon at the tap—the lion has gotten a claught of our auld Scottish shield now, but it was as weel upheld when it had a unicorn on ilk side of it.'

Lord Nigel read the proclamation, and coloured deep with shame and indignation as [he] read; for the purport was, to his injured feelings, like the pouring of ardent spirits upon a recent wound.

'What deil's in the paper, my lord?' said Richie, unable to suppress his curiosity as he observed his master change colour; 'I wadna ask such a thing, only the proclamation is not a private thing, but is meant for a' men's hearing.'

'It is indeed meant for all men's hearing,' replied Lord Nigel, 'and it proclaims the shame of our country, and the ingratitude of our prince.'

'Now the Lord preserve us! and to publish it in London too!' ejaculated Moniplies.

'Hark ye, Richard,' said Nigel Olifaunt, 'in this paper the Lords of the Council set forth, that "in consideration of the resort of idle persons of low condition forth from his Majesty's kingdom of Scotland to his English court, filling the same with their suits and supplications, and dishonouring the royal presence with their base, poor, and beggarly persons, to the disgrace of their country in the estimation of the English; these are to prohibit the skippers, masters of vessels, and others, in every part of Scotland, from bringing such miserable creatures up to court, under pain of fine and imprisonment."'

'I marle the skipper took us on board,' said Richie.

'Then you need not marvel how you are to get back again,' said Lord Nigel, 'for here is a clause which says, that such idle suitors are to be transported back to Scotland at his Majesty's expense, and punished for their audacity with stripes, stocking, or incarceration, according to their demerits—that is to say, I suppose, according to the degree of their poverty, for I see no other demerit specified.'

* I am certain this prudential advice is not original on Mr. Linklater's part, but I am not at present able to produce my authority. I think it amounted to this, that Sir John Harington who recommends, as a sure mode to the king's favour, to praise the paces of the royal palfrey.

† *Motion*—Puppet-show.

'This will scarcely,' said Richie, 'square with our old proverb—

> A king's face
> Should give grace.

But what says the paper further, my lord?'

'O, only a small clause which especially concerns us, making some still heavier denunciations against those suitors who shall be so bold as to approach the court, under pretext of seeking payment of old debts due to them by the King, which, the paper states, is, of all species of importunity, that which is most odious to his Majesty.'*

'The King has neighbours in that matter,' said Richie; 'but it is not every one that can shift off that sort of cattle so easily as he does.'

Their conversation was here interrupted by a knocking at the door. Olifaunt looked out at the window, and saw an elderly, respectable person whom he knew not. Richie also peeped, and recognised, but, recognising, chose not to acknowledge, his friend of the preceding evening. Afraid that his share in the visit might be detected, he made his escape out of the apartment under pretext of going to his breakfast, and left their landlady the task of ushering Master George into Lord Nigel's apartment, which she performed with much courtesy.

CHAPTER IV.

> Ay, sir, the clouted shoe hath ofttimes craft in't,
> As says the rustic proverb; and your citizen,
> In's grogram suit, gold chain, and well-black'd shoes,
> Bears under his flat cap ofttimes a brain
> Wiser than burns beneath the cap and feather,
> Or seethes within the statesman's velvet nightcap.
>
> READ ME MY RIDDLE.

THE young Scottish nobleman received the citizen with distant politeness, expressing that sort of reserve by which those of the higher ranks are sometimes willing to make a plebeian sensible that he is an intruder. But Master George seemed neither displeased nor disconcerted. He assumed the chair, which, in deference to his respectable appearance, Lord Nigel offered to him, and said, after a moment's pause, during which he had looked attentively at the young man with respect not unmingled with emotion—'You will forgive me for this rudeness, my lord; but I was endeavouring to trace in your youthful countenance the features of my good old lord, your excellent father.'

There was a moment's pause ere young Glenvarloch replied, still with a reserved manner,—'I have been reckoned like my father, sir,—and am happy to see any one that respects his memory. But the business which calls me to this city is of a hasty as well as a private nature, and'——

'I understand the hint, my lord,' said Master George, 'and would not be guilty of long detaining you from business, or more agreeable conversation. My errand is almost done when I have said that my name is George Heriot, warmly befriended, and introduced into the employment of the royal family of Scotland, more than twenty years since, by your excellent father; and that, learning from a follower of yours that your lordship was in this city in prosecution of some business of importance, it is my duty—it is my pleasure—to wait on the son of my respected patron; and, as I am somewhat known both at the court and in the city, to offer him such aid in the furthering of his affairs as my credit and experience may be able to afford.'

'I have no doubt of either, Master Heriot,' said Lord Nigel, 'and I thank you heartily for the goodwill with which you have placed them at a stranger's disposal; but my business at court is done and ended, and I intend to leave London, and, indeed, the island, for foreign travel and military service. I may add, that the suddenness of my departure occasions my having little time at my disposal.'

Master Heriot did not take the hint, but sat fast, with an embarrassed countenance, however, like one who had something to say that he knew not exactly how to make effectual. At length he said, with a dubious smile, 'You are fortunate, my lord, in having so soon despatched your business at court. Your talking landlady informs me that you have been but a fortnight in this city. It is usually months and years ere the court and a suitor shake hands and part.'

'My business,' said Lord Nigel, with a brevity which was intended to stop further discussion, 'was summarily despatched.'

Still Master Heriot remained seated, and there was a cordial good humour added to the reverence of his appearance, which rendered it impossible for Lord Nigel to be more explicit in requesting his absence.

'Your lordship has not yet had time,' said the citizen, still attempting to sustain the conversation, 'to visit the places of amusement,—the playhouses, and other places to which youth resort. But I see in your lordship's hand one of the new-invented plots of the piece,† which they hand about of late.—May I ask what play?'

'O, a well-known piece,' said Lord Nigel, impatiently throwing down the proclamation, which he had hitherto been twisting to and fro in his hand,—'an excellent and well-approved piece—*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*.'

Master Heriot stooped down, saying, 'Ah, my old acquaintance, Philip Massinger,' but, having opened the paper and seen the purport, he looked at Lord Nigel Olifaunt with surprise, saying, 'I trust your lordship does not think this prohibition can extend either to *your* person or your claims?'

'I should scarce have thought so myself,' said the young nobleman; 'but so it proves. His Majesty, to close this discourse at once, has been pleased to send me this proclamation in answer to a respectful supplication for the repayment of large loans advanced by my father for the service of the state, in the King's utmost emergencies.'

'It is impossible,' said the citizen—'it is absolutely impossible! If the King could forget

* Note G. Proclamation against the Scots coming to England.

† Meaning probably, playbills.

what was due to your father's memory, still he would not have wished—would not, I may say, have dared—to be so flagrantly unjust to the memory of such a man as your father, who, dead in the body, will long live in the memory of the Scottish people.'

'I should have been of your opinion,' answered Lord Nigel, in the same tone as before; 'but there is no fighting with facts.'

'What was the tenor of this supplication?' said Heriot; 'or by whom was it presented? Something strange there must have been in the contents, or'——

'You may see my original draft,' said the young lord, taking it out of a small travelling strong-box; 'the technical part is by my lawyer in Scotland, a skilful and sensible man; the rest is my own, drawn, I hope, with due deference and modesty.'

Master Heriot hastily cast his eye over the draft. 'Nothing,' he said, 'can be more well tempered and respectful. Is it possible the King can have treated this petition with contempt?'

'He threw it down on the pavement,' said the Lord of Glenvarloch, 'and sent me for answer that proclamation, in which he classes me with the paupers and mendicants from Scotland who disgrace his court in the eyes of the proud English,—that is all. Had not my father stood by him with heart, sword, and fortune, he might never have seen the court of England himself.'

'But by whom was this supplication presented, my lord?' said Heriot; 'for the distaste taken at the messenger will sometimes extend itself to the message.'

'By my servant,' said the Lord Nigel; 'by the man you saw, and, I think, were kind to.'

'By your servant, my lord?' said the citizen; 'he seems a shrewd fellow, and doubtless a faithful; but surely'——

'You would say,' said Lord Nigel, 'he is no fit messenger to a king's presence?—Surely he is not; but what could I do? Every attempt I had made to lay my case before the King had miscarried, and my petitions got no farther than the budgets of clerks and secretaries; this fellow pretended he had a friend in the household that would bring him to the King's presence,—and so'——

'I understand,' said Heriot; 'but, my lord, why should you not, in right of your rank and birth, have appeared at court, and required an audience, which could not have been denied to you?'

The young lord blushed a little, and looked at his dress, which was very plain; and, though in perfect good order, had the appearance of having seen service.

'I know not why I should be ashamed of speaking the truth,' he said, after a momentary hesitation,—'I had no dress suitable for appearing at court. I am determined to incur no expenses which I cannot discharge; and I think you, sir, would not advise me to stand at the palace-door in person, and deliver my petition, along with those who are in very deed pleading their necessity, and begging an alms.'

'That had been, indeed, unseemly,' said the citizen; 'but yet, my lord, my mind runs strangely that there must be some mistake.—Can I speak with your domestic?'

'I see little good it can do,' answered the young lord; 'but the interest you take in my misfortunes seems sincere, and therefore'——He stamped on the floor, and in a few seconds afterwards Moniplies appeared, wiping from his beard and moustaches the crumbs of bread and the froth of the ale-pot, which plainly showed how he had been employed. 'Will your lordship grant permission,' said Heriot, 'that I ask your groom a few questions?'

'His lordship's page, Master George,' answered Moniplies, with a nod of acknowledgment, 'if you are minded to speak according to the letter.'

'Hold your saucy tongue,' said his master, 'and reply distinctly to the questions you are to be asked.'

'And *truly*, if it like your pageship,' said the citizen, 'for you may remember I have a gift to discover falset.'

'Weel, weel, weel,' replied the domestic, somewhat embarrassed, in spite of his effrontery—'though I think that the sort of truth that serves my master may weel serve ony ane else.'

'Pages lie to their masters by right of custom,' said the citizen; 'and you write yourself in that band, though I think you be among the oldest of such springalds; but to me you must speak truth, if you would not have it end in the whipping-post.'

'And that's e'en a bad resting-place,' said the well-grown page: 'so come away with your questions, Master George.'

'Well, then,' demanded the citizen, 'I am given to understand that you yesterday presented to his Majesty's hand a supplication, or petition, from this honourable lord your master?'

'Troth, there's nae gainsaying that, sir,' replied Moniplies; 'there was enow to see it besides me.'

'And you pretend that his Majesty flung it from him with contempt?' said the citizen. 'Take heed, for I have means of knowing the truth; and you were better up to the neck in the Nor-Loch, which you like so well, than tell a leasing where his Majesty's name is concerned.'

'There is nae occasion for leasing-making about the matter,' answered Moniplies firmly; 'his Majesty e'en flung it frae him as if it had dirtied his fingers.'

'You hear, sir?' said Olifaunt, addressing Heriot.

'Hush!' said the sagacious citizen; 'this fellow is not ill-named—he has more plies than one in his cloak.—Stay, fellow,' for Moniplies, muttering somewhat about finishing his breakfast, was beginning to shamble towards the door, 'answer me this further question—When you gave your master's petition to his Majesty, gave you nothing with it?'

'Ou, what should I give wi' it, ye ken, Master George?'

'That is what I desire and insist to know,' replied his interrogator.

'Weel, then, I am not free to say, that maybe I might not just slip into the King's hand a wee bit sifflication of mine ain, along with my

lord's, just to save his Majesty trouble—and that he might consider them baith at ance.'

'A supplication of your own, you varlet!' said his master.

'Ou dear, ay, my lord,' said Richie—'puir bodies hae their bits of sifflications as weel as their betters.'

'And pray, what might your worshipful petition import?' said Master Heriot.—'Nay, for Heaven's sake, my lord, keep your patience, or we shall never learn the truth of this strange matter. Speak out, sirrah, and I will stand your friend with my lord.'

'It's a lang story to tell—but the upshot is, that it's a scrape of an auld accompt due to my father's yestate by her Majesty, the King's maist gracious mother, when she lived in the Castle, and had sundry providings and furnishings forth of our booth, whilk nae doubt was an honour to my father to supply, and whilk, doubtless, it will be a credit to his Majesty to satisfy, as it will be grit convenience to me to receive the saam.'

'What string of impertinence is this?' said his master.

'Every word as true as e'er John Knox spoke,' said Richie; 'here's the bit double of the siffication.'

Master George took a crumpled paper from the fellow's hand, and said, muttering betwixt his teeth—'"Humbly showeth—um—um—his Majesty's maist gracious mother—um—um—justly addebted and owing the sum of fifteen merks—the compt whereof followeth——Twelve nowtes' feet for jillies—ane lamb, being Christmas—ane roasted capin in grease for the privy chalmer, when my Lord of Bothwell suppit with her Grace."—I think, my lord, you can hardly be surprised that the King gave this petition a brisk reception; and I conclude, Master Page, that you took care to present your own supplication before your master's?'

'Troth did I not,' answered Moniplies, 'I thought to have given my lord's first, as was reason gude; and besides that, it wad have redd the gate for my ain little bill. But what wi' the dirdum an' confusion, an' the loupin' here and there of the skeigh brute of a horse, I believe I crammed them baith into his hand cheek by jowl, and maybe my ain was bunemost; and say there was aught wrang, I am sure I had a' the fright and a' the risk'——

'And shall have all the beating, you rascal knave,' said Nigel; 'am I to be insulted and dishonoured by your pragmatical insolence, in blending your base concerns with mine?'

'Nay, nay, nay, my lord,' said the good-humoured citizen, interposing, 'I have been the means of bringing the fellow's blunder to light—allow me interest enough with your lordship to be bail for his bones. You have cause to be angry, but still I think the knave mistook more out of conceit than of purpose; and I judge you will have the better service of him another time, if you overlook this fault.—Get you gone, sirrah—I'll make your peace.'

'Na, na,' said Moniplies, keeping his ground firmly, 'if he likes to strike a lad that has followed him for pure love, for I think there has been little servant's fee between us, a' the way frae Scotland, just let my lord be doing, and see the credit he will get by it—and I would rather (mony thanks to you, though, Master George) stand by a lick of his baton, than it suld e'er be said a stranger came between us.'

'Go, then,' said his master, 'and get out of my sight.'

'Aweel I wot that is sune done,' said Moniplies, retiring slowly; 'I did not come without I had been ca'd for—and I wad have been away half-an-hour since with my gude will, only Maister George keepit me to answer his interrogation, forsooth, and that has made a' this stir.'

And so he made his grumbling exit, with the tone much rather of one who has sustained an injury, than who has done wrong.

'There never was a man so plagued as I am with a malapert knave!—The fellow is shrewd, and I have found him faithful—I believe he loves me too, and he has given proofs of it—but then he is so uplifted in his own conceit, so self-willed, and so self-opinioned, that he seems to become the master, and I the man; and whatever blunder he commits, he is sure to make as loud complaints, as if the whole error lay with me, and in no degree with himself.'

'Cherish him, and maintain him, nevertheless,' said the citizen; 'for, believe my grey hairs, that affection and fidelity are now rarer qualities in a servitor, than when the world was younger. Yet trust him, my good lord, with no commission above his birth or breeding, for you see yourself how it may chance to fall.'

'It is but too evident, Master Heriot,' said the young nobleman; 'and I am sorry I have done injustice to my sovereign, and your master. But I am, like a true Scotsman, wise behind-hand—the mistake has happened—my supplication has been refused, and my only resource is to employ the rest of my means to carry Moniplies and myself to some counterscarp, and die in the battle-front like my ancestors.'

'It were better to live and serve your country like your noble father, my lord,' replied Master George. 'Nay, nay, never look down or shake your head—the King has not refused your supplication, for he has not seen it—you ask but justice, and that his place obliges him to give to his subjects—ay, my lord, and I will say that his natural temper doth in this hold bias with his duty.'

'I were well pleased to think so, and yet'——said Nigel Olifaunt,—'I speak not of my own wrongs, but my country hath many that are unredressed.'

'My lord,' said Master Heriot, 'I speak of my royal master, not only with the respect due from a subject—the gratitude to be paid by a favoured servant, but also with the frankness of a free and loyal Scotsman. The King is himself well disposed to hold the scales of justice even; but there are those around him who can throw without detection their own selfish wishes and base interests into the scale. You are already a sufferer by this, and without your knowing it.'

'I am surprised, Master Heriot,' said the young lord, 'to hear you, upon so short an acquaintance, talk as if you were familiarly acquainted with my affairs.'

'My lord,' replied the goldsmith, 'the nature

of my employment affords me direct access to the interior of the palace; I am well known to be no meddler in intrigues or party affairs, so that no favourite has as yet endeavoured to shut against me the door of the royal closet; on the contrary, I have stood well with each while he was in power, and I have not shared the fall of any. But I cannot be thus connected with the court, without hearing, even against my will, what wheels are in motion, and how they are checked or forwarded. Of course, when I choose to seek such intelligence, I know the sources in which it is to be traced. I have told you why I was interested in your lordship's fortunes. It was last night only that I knew you were in this city, yet I have been able, in coming hither this morning, to gain for you some information respecting the impediments to your suit.'

'Sir, I am obliged by your zeal, however little it may be merited,' answered Nigel, still with some reserve; 'yet I hardly know how I have deserved this interest.'

'First let me satisfy you that it is real,' said the citizen; 'I blame you not for being unwilling to credit the fair professions of a stranger in my inferior class of society, when you have met so little friendship from relations, and those of your own rank, bound to have assisted you by so many ties. But mark the cause. There is a mortgage over your father's extensive estate, to the amount of 40,000 merks, due ostensibly to Peregrine Peterson, the Conservator of Scottish Privileges at Campvere.'

'I know nothing of a mortgage,' said the young lord; 'but there is a wadset for such a sum, which, if unredeemed, will occasion the forfeiture of my whole paternal estate, for a sum not above a fourth of its value- and it is for that very reason that I press the King's government for a settlement of the debts due to my father, that I may be able to redeem my land from this rapacious creditor.'

'A wadset in Scotland,' said Heriot, 'is the same with a mortgage on this side of the Tweed; but you are not acquainted with your real creditor. The Conservator Peterson only lends his name to shroud no less a man than the Lord Chancellor of Scotland, who hopes, under cover of this debt, to gain possession of the estate himself, or perhaps to gratify a yet more powerful third party. He will probably suffer his creature Peterson to take possession, and when the odium of the transaction shall be forgotten, the property and lordship of Glenvarloch will be conveyed to the great man by his obsequious instrument, under cover of a sale, or some similar device.'

'Can this be possible?' said Lord Nigel; 'the Chancellor wept when I took leave of him—called me his cousin—even his son—furnished me with letters, and, though I asked him for no pecuniary assistance, excused himself unnecessarily for not pressing it on me, alleging the expenses of his rank and his large family. No, I cannot believe a nobleman would carry deceit so far.'

'I am not, it is true, of noble blood,' said the citizen; 'but once more I bid you look on my grey hairs, and think what can be my interest in dishonouring them with falsehood in affairs in which I have no interest, save as they regard the son of my benefactor. Reflect also, have you had any advantage from the Lord Chancellor's letters?'

'None,' said Nigel Olifaunt, 'except cold deeds and fair words. I have thought for some time, their only object was to get rid of me—one yesterday pressed money on me when I talked of going abroad, in order that I might not want the means of exiling myself.'

'Right,' said Heriot; 'rather than you fled not, they would themselves furnish wings for you to fly withal.'

'I will to him this instant,' said the incensed youth, 'and tell him my mind of his baseness.'

'Under your favour,' said Heriot, detaining him, 'you shall not do so. By a quarrel you would become the ruin of me your informer; and though I would venture half my shop to do your lordship a service, I think you would hardly wish me to come by damage, when it can be of no service to you.'

The word *shop* sounded harshly in the ears of the young nobleman, who replied hastily—'Damage, sir?—so far am I from wishing you to incur damage, that I would to Heaven you would cease your fruitless offers of serving one whom there is no chance of ultimately assisting!'

'Leave me alone for that,' said the citizen; 'you have now erred as far on the bow-hand. Permit me to take this supplication—I will have it suitably engrossed, and take my own time (and it shall be an early one) for placing it, with more prudence, I trust, than that used by your follower, in the King's hand—I will almost answer for his taking up the matter as you would have him—but should he fail to do so, even then I will not give up the good cause.'

'Sir,' said the young nobleman, 'your speech is so friendly, and my own state so helpless, that I know not how to refuse your kind proffer, even while I blush to accept it at the hands of a stranger.'

'We are, I trust, no longer such,' said the goldsmith; 'and, for my guerdon, when my mediation proves successful, and your fortunes are re-established, you shall order your first cupboard of plate from George Heriot.'

'You would have a bad pay-master, Master Heriot,' said Lord Nigel.

'I do not fear that,' replied the goldsmith; 'and I am glad to see you smile, my lord—methinks it makes you look still more like the good old lord your father; and it emboldens me, besides, to bring out a small request—that you would take a homely dinner with me to-morrow. I lodge hard by, in Lombard Street. For the cheer, my lord, a mess of white broth, a fat capon well larded, a dish of beef collops for auld Scotland's sake, and it may be a cup of right old wine, that was barrelled before Scotland and England were one nation.—Then, for company, one or two of our own loving countrymen—and maybe my housewife may find out a bonnie Scots lass or so.'

'I would accept your courtesy, Master Heriot,' said Nigel, 'but I hear the city ladies of London like to see a man gallant—I would not like to let down a Scottish nobleman in their ideas, as doubtless you have said the best of our poor

country, and I rather lack the means of bravery for the present.'

'My lord, your frankness leads me a step farther,' said Master George. 'I—I owed your father some moneys; and—nay, if your lordship looks at me so fixedly, I shall never tell my story—and, to speak plainly, for I never could carry a lie well through in my life—it is most fitting that, to solicit this matter properly, your lordship should go to court in a manner beseeming your quality. I am a goldsmith, and live by lending money as well as by selling plate. I am ambitious to put an hundred pounds to be at interest in your hands till your affairs are settled.'

'And if they are never favourably settled?' said Nigel.

'Then, my lord,' returned the citizen, 'the miscarriage of such a sum will be of little consequence to me compared with other subjects of regret.'

'Master Heriot,' said the Lord Nigel, 'your favour is generously offered, and shall be frankly accepted. I must presume that you see your way through this business, though I hardly do; for I think you would be grieved to add any fresh burden to me, by persuading me to incur debts which I am not likely to discharge. I will therefore take your money under the hope and trust that you will enable me to repay you punctually.'

'I will convince you, my lord,' said the goldsmith, 'that I mean to deal with you as a debtor from whom I expect payment; and therefore you shall, with your own good pleasure, sign an acknowledgment for these moneys, and an obligation to content and repay me.'

He then took from his girdle his writing materials, and, writing a few lines to the purport he expressed, pulled out a small bag of gold from a side pouch under his cloak, and, observing that it should contain an hundred pounds, proceeded to tell out the contents very methodically upon the table. Nigel Olifaunt could not help intimating that this was an unnecessary ceremonial, and that he would take the bag of gold on the word of his obliging creditor; but this was repugnant to the old man's forms of transacting business.

'Bear with me,' he said, 'my good lord—we citizens are a wary and thrifty generation; and I should lose my good name for ever within the toll of Paul's, were I to grant quittance, or take acknowledgment, without bringing the money to actual tale. I think it be right now and, body of me,' he said, looking out at the window, 'yonder come my boys with my mule; for I must westward ho. Put your moneys aside, my lord; it is not well to be seen with such goldfinches chirping about one in the lodgings of London. I think the lock of your casket be indifferent good; if not, I can serve you at an easy rate with one that has held thousands;—it was the good old Sir Faithful Frugal's;—his spendthrift son sold the shell when he had eaten the kernel—and there is the end of a city fortune.'

'I hope yours will make a better termination, Master Heriot,' said the Lord Nigel.

'I hope it will, my lord,' said the old man, with a smile; 'but'—to use honest John Bunyan's phrase, 'therewithal the water stood in his eyes'—'it has pleased God to try me with the loss of two children; and for one adopted child who lives—ah! woe is me! and well-a-day!—But I am patient and thankful; and for the wealth God has sent me, it shall not want inheritors while there are orphan lads in Auld Reekie.—I wish you good-morrow, my lord.'

'One orphan has cause to thank you already,' said Nigel, as he attended him to the door of his chamber, where, resisting further escort, the old citizen made his escape.

As in going down-stairs he passed the shop where Dame Christie stood becking,* he made civil inquiries after her husband. The dame, of course, regretted his absence; but he was down, she said, at Deptford, to settle with a Dutch shipmaster.

'Our way of business, sir,' she said, 'takes him much from home, and my husband must be the slave of every tarry jacket that wants but a pound of oakum.'

'All business must be minded, dame,' said the goldsmith. 'Make my remembrances—George Heriot of Lombard Street's remembrances—to your goodman. I have dealt with him—he is just and punctual—true to time and engagements. Be kind to your noble guest, and see he wants nothing. Though it be his pleasure at present to lie private and retired, there be those that care for him, and I have a charge to see him supplied; so that you may let me know by your husband, my good dame, how my lord is, and whether he wants aught.'

'And so he is a real lord after all?' said the good dame. 'I am sure I always thought he looked like one. But why does he not go to Parliament, then?'

'He will, dame,' answered Heriot, 'to the Parliament of Scotland, which is his own country.'

'O, he is but a Scots lord, then,' said the good dame; 'and that's the thing makes him ashamed to take the title, as they say.'

'Let him not hear *you* say so, dame,' replied the citizen.

'Who, I, sir?' answered she; 'no such matter in my thought, sir. Scot or English, he is at any rate a likely man, and a civil man; and rather than he should want anything, I would wait upon him myself, and come as far as Lombard Street to wait upon your worship too.'

'Let your husband come to me, good dame,' said the goldsmith, who, with all his experience and worth, was somewhat of a formalist and disciplinarian. 'The proverb says, "House goes mad when women gad;" and let his lordship's own man wait upon his master in his chamber—it is more seemly. God give ye good-morrow.'

'Good-morrow to your worship,' said the dame somewhat coldly; and so soon as the adviser was out of hearing, was ungracious enough to mutter, in contempt of his counsel, 'Marry, quep of your advice for an old Scotch tinsmith as you are! My husband is as wise, and very near as old as yourself; if I please him, it is well enough; and though he is not just so rich just now as some folks, yet I hope to see him ride upon his moyle, with a foot-cloth, and have his two blue-coats after him, as well as they do.'

* Curtseying.

CHAPTER V.

> Wherefore come ye not to court?
> Certain 'tis the rarest sport;
> There are silks and jewels glistening,
> Prattling fools, and wise men listening,
> Bullies among brave men justling,
> Beggars amongst nobles bustling;
> Low breath'd talkers, minion lispers,
> Cutting honest throats by whispers;
> Wherefore come ye not to court?
> Skelton swears 'tis glorious sport.
>
> SKELTON SKELTONIZETH.

IT was not entirely out of parade that the benevolent citizen was mounted and attended in that manner, which, as the reader has been informed, excited a gentle degree of spleen on the part of Dame Christie, which, to do her justice, vanished in the little soliloquy which we have recorded. The good man, besides the natural desire to maintain the exterior of a man of worship, was at present bound to Whitehall, in order to exhibit a piece of valuable workmanship to King James, which he deemed his Majesty might be pleased to view, or even to purchase. He himself was therefore mounted upon his caparisoned mule, that he might the better make his way through the narrow, dirty, and crowded streets; and while one of his attendants carried under his arm the piece of plate, wrapped up in red baize, the other two gave an eye to its safety; for such was the state of the police of the metropolis, that men were often assaulted in the public street for the sake of revenge or of plunder; and those who apprehended being beset usually endeavoured, if their estate admitted such expense, to secure themselves by the attendance of armed followers. And this custom, which was at first limited to the nobility and gentry, extended by degrees to those citizens of consideration, who, being understood to travel with a charge, as it was called, might otherwise have been selected as safe subjects of plunder by the street robber.

As Master George Heriot paced forth westward with this gallant attendance, he paused at the shop-door of his countryman and friend, the ancient horologer, and, having caused Tunstall, who was in attendance, to adjust his watch by the real time, he desired to speak with his master; in consequence of which summons, the old time-meter came forth from his den, his face like a bronze bust, darkened with dust, and glistening here and there with copper filings, and his senses so bemused in the intensity of calculation, that he gazed on his friend the goldsmith for a minute before he seemed perfectly to comprehend who he was, and heard him express his invitation to David Ramsay, and pretty Mistress Margaret, his daughter, to dine with him next day at noon, to meet with a noble young countryman, without returning any answer.

'I'll make thee speak, with a murrain to thee,' muttered Heriot to himself; and, suddenly changing his tone, he said aloud,—'I pray you, neighbour David, when are you and I to have a settlement for the bullion wherewith I supplied you to mount yonder hall-clock at Theobald's, and that other whirligig that you made for the Duke of Buckingham? I have had the Spanish house to satisfy for the ingots, and I must needs put you in mind that you have been eight months behind-hand.'

There is something so sharp and *aigre* in the demand of a peremptory dun, that no human tympanum, however inaccessible to other tones, can resist the application. David Ramsay started at once from his reverie, and answered in a pettish tone, 'Wow, George, man, what needs a' this din about sax score o' pounds? A' the world kens I can answer a' claims on me, and you proffered yoursell fair time, till his maist gracious Majesty and the noble Duke suld make settled accompts wi' me; and ye may ken, by your ain experience, that I canna gang rowting like an unmannered Highland stot to their doors as ye come to mine.'

Heriot laughed, and replied, 'Well, David, I see a demand of money is like a bucket of water about your ears, and makes you a man of the world at once. And now, friend, will you tell me, like a Christian man, if you will dine with me to-morrow at noon, and bring pretty Mistress Margaret, my god-daughter, with you, to meet with our noble young countryman, the Lord of Glenvarloch?'

'The young Lord of Glenvarloch!' said the old mechanist; 'wi' a' my heart, and blithe I will be to see him again. We have not met these forty years—he was twa years before me at the humanity classes—he is a sweet youth.'

'That was his father—his father—his father!—you old dotard—Dot-and-carry-one that you are,' answered the goldsmith. 'A sweet youth he would have been by this time, had he lived, worthy nobleman! This is his son, the Lord Nigel.'

'His son!' said Ramsay. 'Maybe he will want something of a chronometer, or watch—few gallants care to be without them now-a-days.'

'He may buy half your stock-in-trade, if ever he comes to his own, for what I know,' said his friend; 'but, Davie, remember your bond, and use me not as you did when my housewife had the sheep's head and the cock-a-leeky boiling for you as late as two of the clock afternoon.'

'She had the more credit by her cookery,' answered David, now fully awake; 'a sheep's-head, over-boiled, were poison, according to our saying.'

'Well,' answered Master George, 'but as there will be no sheep's-head to-morrow, it may chance you to spoil a dinner which a proverb cannot mend. It may be you may foregather with your friend, Sir Mungo Malagrowther, for I purpose to ask his worship; so, be sure and bide tryst, Davie.'

'That will I—I will be true as a chronometer,' said Ramsay.

'I will not trust you, though,' replied Heriot. 'Hear you, Jenkin boy, tell Scots Janet to tell pretty Mistress Margaret, my god-child, she must put her father in remembrance to put on his best doublet to-morrow, and to bring him to Lombard Street at noon. Tell her they are to meet a brave young Scots lord.'

Jenkin coughed that sort of dry, short cough uttered by those who are either charged with errands which they do not like, or hear opinions to which they must not enter a dissent.

'Umph!' repeated Master George—who, as we have already noticed, was something of a

martinet in domestic discipline—'what does *umph* mean? Will you do mine errand, or not, sirrah?'

'Sure, Master George Heriot,' said the apprentice, touching his cap, 'I only meant that Mistress Margaret was not likely to forget such an invitation.'

'Why, no,' said Master George; 'she is a dutiful girl to her godfather, though I sometimes call her a pill flirt. And hark ye, Jenkin, you and your comrade had best come with your clubs, to see your master and her safely home; but first shut shop, and loose the bull-dog, and let the porter stay in the foreshop till your return. I will send two of my knaves with you; for I hear these wild young bloods of the Temple are broken out worse and lighter than ever.'

'We can keep their steel in order with good handbats,' said Jenkin, 'and never trouble your servants for the matter.'

'Or, if need be,' said Tunstall, 'we have swords as well as the Templars.'

'Fie upon it—fie upon it, young man!' said the citizen. 'An apprentice with a sword! Marry, Heaven forfend! I would as soon see him in a hat and feather.'

'Well, sir,' said Jenkin, 'we will find arms fitting to our station, and to defend our master and his daughter, if we should tear up the very stones of the pavement.'

'There spoke a London 'prentice bold,' said the citizen; 'and, for your comfort, my lads, you shall crush a cup of wine to the health of the fathers of the city. I have my eye on both of you—you are thriving lads, each in his own way. God be wi' you, Dunie. Do not forget to-morrow at noon.'

And so saying, he again turned his mule's head westward, and crossed Temple Bar at that slow and decent amble which at once became his rank and civic importance, and put his pedestrian followers to no inconvenience to keep up with him.

At the Temple gate he again paused, dismounted, and sought his way into one of the small booths occupied by scriveners in the neighbourhood. A young man, with lank, smooth hair combed straight to his ears, and then cropped short round with a certain reverence, pulled off a slouched hat, which he would upon no signal replace on his head, and answered with much demonstration of reverence to the goldsmith's question of 'How goes business, Andrew?'—'All the better for your worship's kind countenance and maintenance.'

'Get a large sheet of paper, man, and make a new pen, with a sharp neb and fine hair-stroke. Do not slit the quill up too high—it's a wasteful course in your trade, Andrew. They that do not mind corn-pickles, never come to forpits. I have known a learned man write a thousand pages with one quill.*'

'Ah, sir,' said the lad, who listened to the goldsmith, though instructing him in his own trade, with an air of veneration and acquiescence, 'how sune ony puir creature like mysel' may rise in the world, wi' the instruction of such a man as your worship!'

'My instructions are few, Andrew, soon told, and not hard to practise. Be honest—be industrious—be frugal—and you will soon win wealth and worship.—Here, copy me this supplication in your best and most formal hand. I will wait by you till it is done.'

The youth lifted not his eye from the paper, and laid not the pen from his hand, until the task was finished to his employer's satisfaction. The citizen then gave the young scrivener an angel; and bidding him, on his life, be secret in all business entrusted to him, again mounted his mule, and rode on westward along the Strand.

It may be worth while to remind our readers that the Temple Bar which Heriot passed was not the arched screen, or gateway, of the present day;† but an open railing, or palisade, which, at night, and in times of alarm, was closed with a barricade of posts and chains. The Strand also, along which he rode, was not, as now, a continued street, although it was beginning already to assume that character. It still might be considered as an open road, along the south side of which stood various houses and hotels belonging to the nobility, having gardens behind them down to the water side, with stairs to the river, for the convenience of taking boat; which mansions have bequeathed the names of their lordly owners to many of the streets leading from the Strand to the Thames. The north side of the Strand was also a long line of houses, behind which, as in Saint Martin's Lane, and other points, buildings were rapidly arising; but Covent Garden was still a garden, in the literal sense of the word, or at least but beginning to be studded with irregular buildings. All that was passing around, however, marked the rapid increase of a capital which had long enjoyed peace, wealth, and a regular government. Houses were rising in every direction; and the shrewd eye of our citizen already saw the period not distant, which should convert the nearly open highway on which he travelled into a connected and regular street, uniting the court and the town with the city of London.

He next passed Charing Cross, which was no longer the pleasant solitary village at which the judges were wont to breakfast on their way to Westminster Hall, but began to resemble the artery through which, to use Johnson's expression, 'pours the full tide of London population.' The buildings were rapidly increasing, yet scarcely gave even a faint idea of its present appearance.

At last Whitehall received our traveller, who passed under one of the beautiful gates designed by Holbein, and composed of tessellated brickwork, being the same to which Moniplies had profanely likened the West Port of Edinburgh, and entered the ample precincts of the palace of Whitehall,‡ now full of all the confusion attending improvement.

* A Biblical Commentary by Caryl, which, if the writer's memory serves him, occupies between five and six hundred printed quarto pages, and must therefore have filled more pages of manuscript than the number mentioned in the text, has this quatrain at the end of the volume:—

With one good pen I wrote this book,
Made of a grey goose quill;
A pen it was when it I took,
And a pen I leave it still.

† [Temple Bar has been removed.]

‡ [Whitehall, originally the residence of the Archbishops of York, was on the fall of Wolsey appropriated by King Henry VIII., who employed Holbein to make several additions to the building. A disastrous fire, however, in 1691, and another six years later, consumed all but the Banqueting House.]

It was just at the time when James—little suspecting that he was employed in constructing a palace, from the window of which his only son was to pass in order that he might die upon a scaffold before it—was busied in removing the ancient and ruinous buildings of De Burgh, Henry VIII., and Queen Elizabeth, to make way for the superb architecture on which Inigo Jones exerted all his genius. The king, ignorant of futurity, was now engaged in pressing on his work; and, for that purpose, still maintained his royal apartments at Whitehall, amidst the rubbish of old buildings, and the various confusion attending the erection of the new pile, which formed at present a labyrinth not easily traversed.

The goldsmith to the royal household, and who, if fame spoke true, oftentimes acted as their banker—for these professions were not as yet separated from each other—was a person of too much importance to receive the slightest interruption from sentinel or porter; and leaving his mule and two of his followers in the outer court, he gently knocked at a postern-gate of the building, and was presently admitted, while the most trusty of his attendants followed him closely, with the piece of plate under his arm. This man also he left behind him in an anteroom,—where three or four pages in the royal livery, but untrussed, unbuttoned, and dressed more carelessly than the place and nearness to a king's person seemed to admit, were playing at dice and draughts, or stretched upon benches, and slumbering with half-shut eyes. A corresponding gallery, which opened from the anteroom, was occupied by two gentlemen-ushers of the chamber, who gave each a smile of recognition as the wealthy goldsmith entered.

No word was spoken on either side; but one of the ushers looked first to Heriot, and then to a little door half-covered by the tapestry, which seemed to say, as plain as a look could, "Lies your business that way?" The citizen nodded; and the court attendant, moving on tiptoe, and with as much caution as if the floor had been paved with eggs, advanced to the door, opened it gently, and spoke a few words in a low tone. The broad Scottish accent of King James was heard in reply,—"Admit him instanter, Maxwell. Have you hairboured sae lang at the court, and not learned that gold and silver are ever welcome?"

The usher signed to Heriot to advance; and the honest citizen was presently introduced into the cabinet of the sovereign.

The scene of confusion amid which he found the king seated, was no bad picture of the state and quality of James's own mind. There was much that was rich and costly in cabinet pictures and valuable ornaments, but they were arranged in a slovenly manner, covered with dust, and lost half their value, or at least their effect, from the manner in which they were presented to the eye. The table was loaded with huge folios, amongst which lay light books of jest and ribaldry; and amongst notes of unmercifully long orations, and essays on king-craft, were mixed miserable roundels and ballads by the Royal 'Prentice, as he styled himself, in the art of poetry, and schemes for the general pacification of Europe, with a list of the names of the king's hounds, and remedies against canine madness.

The king's dress was of green velvet, quilted so full as to be dagger-proof—which gave him the appearance of clumsy and ungainly protuberance; while its being buttoned awry communicated to his figure an air of distortion. Over his green doublet he wore a sad-coloured nightgown, out of the pocket of which peeped his hunting-horn. His high-crowned grey hat lay on the floor, covered with dust, but encircled by a carcanet of large balas rubies; and he wore a blue velvet nightcap, in the front of which was placed the plume of a heron, which had been struck down by a favourite hawk in some critical moment of the flight, in remembrance of which the king wore this highly honoured feather.

But such inconsistencies in dress and appointments were mere outward types of those which existed in the royal character, rendering it a subject of doubt amongst his contemporaries, and bequeathing it as a problem to future historians. He was deeply learned, without possessing useful knowledge; sagacious in many individual cases, without having real wisdom; fond of his power, and desirous to maintain and augment it, yet willing to resign the direction of that, and of himself, to the most unworthy favourites; a big and bold asserter of his rights in words, yet one who tamely saw them trampled on in deeds; a lover of negotiations, in which he was always outwitted; and one who feared war, where conquest might have been easy. He was fond of his dignity, while he was perpetually degrading it by undue familiarity; capable of much public labour, yet often neglecting it for the meanest amusement; a wit, though a pedant; and a scholar, though fond of the conversation of the ignorant and uneducated. Even his timidity of temper was not uniform; and there were moments of his life, and those critical, in which he showed the spirit of his ancestors. He was laborious in trifles, and a trifler where serious labour was required; devout in his sentiments, and yet too often profane in his language; just and beneficent by nature, he yet gave way to the iniquities and oppression of others. He was penurious respecting money which he had to give from his own hand, yet inconsiderately and unboundedly profuse of that which he did not see. In a word, those good qualities which displayed themselves in particular cases and occasions were not of a nature sufficiently firm and comprehensive to regulate his general conduct; and, showing themselves as they occasionally did, only entitled James to the character bestowed on him by Sully,—that he was the wisest fool in Christendom.

That the fortunes of this monarch might be as little of a piece as his character, he, certainly the least able of the Stuarts, succeeded peaceably to that kingdom, against the power of which his predecessors had, with so much difficulty, defended his native throne; and, lastly, although his reign appeared calculated to insure to Great Britain that lasting tranquillity and internal peace which so much suited the king's

disposition; yet during that very reign were sown those seeds of dissension, which, like the teeth of the fabulous dragon, had their harvest in a bloody and universal civil war.*

Such was the monarch, who, saluting Heriot by the name of Jingling Geordie (for it was his well-known custom to give nicknames to all those with whom he was on terms of familiarity), inquired what new clatter-traps he had brought with him to cheat his lawful and native prince out of his siller.

'God forbid, my liege,' said the citizen, 'that I should have any such disloyal purpose. I did but bring a piece of plate to show to your most gracious Majesty, which, both for the subject and for the workmanship, I were loath to put into the hands of any subject until I knew your Majesty's pleasure anent it.'

'Body o' me, man, let's see it, Heriot; though, by my saul, Steenie's service o' plate was sae dear a bargain, I had 'maist pawned my word as a royal king, to keep my ain gold and silver in future, and let you, Geordie, keep yours.'

'Respecting the Duke of Buckingham's plate,' said the goldsmith, 'your Majesty was pleased to direct that no expense should be spared, and'——

'What signifies what I desired, man? when a wise man is with fules and bairns, he maun e'en play at the chucks. But you should have had mair sense and consideration than to gie Baby Charles and Steenie their ain gate; they wad hae floored the very rooms wi' silver, and I wonder they didna.'

George Heriot bowed, and said no more. He knew his master too well to vindicate himself otherwise than by a distant allusion to his order; and James, with whom economy was only a transient and momentary twinge of conscience, became immediately afterwards desirous to see the piece of plate which the goldsmith proposed to exhibit, and despatched Maxwell to bring it to his presence. In the meantime he demanded of the citizen whence he had procured it.

'From Italy, may it please your Majesty,' replied Heriot.

'It has naething in it tending to papistrie?' said the king, looking graver than his wont.

'Surely not, please your Majesty,' said Heriot; 'I were not wise to bring anything to your presence that had the mark of the beast.'

'You would be the mair beast yourself to do so,' said the king; 'it is weel ken'd that I wrestled wi' Dagon in my youth, and smote him on the ground-sill of his own temple; a gude evidence that I should be in time called, however unworthy, the Defender of the Faith.—But here comes Maxwell, bending under his burden, like the Golden Ass of Apuleius.'

Heriot hastened to relieve the usher, and to place the embossed salver, for such it was, and of extraordinary dimensions, in a light favourable for his Majesty's viewing the sculpture.

'Saul of my body, man,' said the king, 'it is a curious piece, and, as I think, fit for a king's chalmer; and the subject, as you say, Master George, vera adequate and beseeming—being, as I see, the judgment of Solomon—a prince in whose paths it weel becomes a' leeving monarchs to walk with emulation.'

'But whose footsteps,' said Maxwell, 'only one of them—if a subject may say so much—hath ever overtaken.'

'Haud your tongue for a fause fleeching loon!' said the king, but with a smile on his face that showed the flattery had done its part. 'Look at the bonnie piece of workmanship, and haud your clavering tongue.—And whase handiwork may it be, Geordie?'

'It was wrought, sir,' replied the goldsmith, 'by the famous Florentine, Benvenuto Cellini, and designed for Francis the First of France; but I hope it will find a fitter master.'

'Francis of France!' said the king; 'send Solomon, King of the Jews, to Francis of France!—Body of me, man, it would have kythed Cellini mad, had he never done onything else out of the gate. Francis!—why, he was a fighting fule, man,—a mere fighting fule,—got himsel' ta'en at Pavia, like our ain David at Durham lang syne;—if they could hae sent him Solomon's wit, and love of peace and godliness, they wad hae dune him a better turn. But Solomon should sit in other gate company than Francis of France.'

'I trust that such will be his good fortune,' said Heriot.

'It is a curious and vera artificial sculpture,' said the king, in continuation; 'but yet, methinks, the carnifex, or executioner there, is brandishing his gully ower near the king's face, seeing he is within reach of his weapon. I think less wisdom than Solomon's wad have taught him, that there was danger in edge-tools, and that he wad have bidden the smaik either sheath his shabble, or stand farther back.'

George Heriot endeavoured to alleviate this objection, by assuring the king that the vicinity betwixt Solomon and the executioner was nearer in appearance than in reality, and that the perspective should be allowed for.

'Gang to the deil wi' your prospective, man,' said the king; 'there cannot be a waur prospective for a lawfu' king, wha wishes to reign in luve, and die in peace and honour, than to have naked swords flashing in his een. I am accounted as brave as maist folks; and yet I profess to ye I could never look on a bare blade without blinking and winking. But a'thegither it is a brave piece;—and what is the price of it, man?'

The goldsmith replied by observing, that it was not his own property, but that of a distressed countryman.

'Whilk you mean to mak your excuse for asking the double of its worth, I warrant?' answered the king. 'I ken the tricks of you burrows-town merchants, man.'

'I have no hopes of baffling your Majesty's sagacity,' said Heriot; 'the piece is really what I say, and the price a hundred and fifty pounds sterling, if it pleases your Majesty to make present payment.'

'A hundred and fifty punds, man! and as mony witches and warlocks to raise them!' said the irritated monarch. 'My saul, Jingling Geordie, ye are minded that your purse shall jingle to a bonnie tune!—How am I to tell you down a hundred and fifty punds for what will

* Note H. King James.

not weigh as many merks? and ye ken that my very household servitors, and the officers of my mouth, are sax months in arrear!'

The goldsmith stood his ground against all this objurgation, being what he was well accustomed to, and only answered that, if his Majesty liked the piece, and desired to possess it, the price could be easily settled. It was true that the party required the money, but he, George Heriot, would advance it on his Majesty's account, if such were his pleasure, and wait his royal conveniency for payment, for that and other matters; the money, meanwhile, lying at the ordinary usage.

'By my honour,' said James, 'and that is speaking like an honest and reasonable tradesman. We maun get another subsidy frae the Commons, and that will make ae compting of it. Awa wi' it, Maxwell—awa wi' it, and let it be set where Steenie and Baby Charles shall see it as they return from Richmond.—And now that we are secret, my good auld friend Geordie, I do truly opine, that, speaking of Solomon and ourselves, the hale wisdom in the country left Scotland, when we took our travels to the Southland here.'

George Heriot was courtier enough to say that 'the wise naturally follow the wisest, as stags follow their leader.'

'Troth, I think there is something in what thou sayest,' said James; 'for we ourselves, and we have left behind are all astir, and run clean hirdie-girdie, like sae mony warlocks and witches on the devil's Sabbath-e'en.'

'I am sorry to hear this, my liege,' said Heriot. 'May it please your Grace to say what our countrymen have done to deserve such a character?'

'They are become frantic, man—clean brain-crazed,' answered the king. 'I cannot keep them out of the court by all the proclamations that the heralds roar themselves hoarse with. Yesterday, nae farther gane, just as we were mounted, and about to ride forth, in rushed a thorough Edinburgh gutterblood—a ragged rascal, every dud upon whose back was bidding good-day to the other, with a coat and hat that would have served a pease bogle, and without havings or reverence, thrust into our hands, like a sturdy beggar, some supplication about debts owing by our gracious mother, and sichlike trash; whereat the horse spangs on end, and, but for our admirable sitting, wherein we have been thought to excel maist sovereign princes, as well as subjects in Europe, I promise you we would have been laid endlang on the causeway.'

'Your Majesty,' said Heriot, 'is their common father, and therefore they are the bolder to press into your gracious presence.'

'I ken I am *pater patriæ* well enough,' said James; 'but one would think they had a mind to squeeze my puddings out, that they may divide the inheritance. Ud's death, Geordie, there is not a loon among them can deliver a supplication as it suld be done in the face of Majesty.'

'I would I knew the most fitting and beseeming mode to do so,' said Heriot, 'were it but to instruct our poor countrymen in better fashions.'

'By my halidome,' said the king, 'ye are a ceevileesed fellow, Geordie, and I carena if I fling awa as much time as may teach ye. And, first, see you, sir—ye shall approach the presence of Majesty thus—shadowing your eyes with your hand, to testify that you are in the presence of the Vicegerent of Heaven.—Vera weel, George, that is done in a comely manner.—Then, sir, ye sall kneel, and make as if you would kiss the hem of our garment, the latch of our shoe, or such like. Vera weel enacted—whilk we, as being willing to be debonair and pleasing towards our lieges, prevent thus—and motion to you to rise;—whilk, having a boon to ask, as yet you obey not, but, gliding your hand into your pouch, bring forth your supplication, and place it reverentially in our open palm.' The goldsmith, who had complied with great accuracy with all the prescribed points of the ceremonial, here completed it, to James's no small astonishment, by placing in his hand the petition of the Lord of Glenvarloch. 'What means this, ye fause loon?' said he, reddening and sputtering; 'hae I been teaching you the manual exercise, that ye suld present your piece at our ain royal body? —Now, by this light, I had as lief that ye had bended a real pistolet against me, and yet this hae ye done in my very cabinet, where nought suld enter but at my ain pleasure.'

'I trust your Majesty,' said Heriot, as he continued to kneel, 'will forgive my exercising the lesson you condescended to give me in the behalf of a friend?'

'Of a friend!' said the king; 'so much the waur, so much the waur, I tell you. If it had been something to do yoursel' good, there would have been some sense in it, and some chance that you wad not have come back on me in a hurry; but a man may have a hundred friends, and petitions for every ane of them, ilk ane after other.'

'Your Majesty, I trust,' said Heriot, 'will judge me by former experience, and will not suspect me of such presumption.'

'I kenna,' said the placable monarch; 'the world goes daft, I think—*sed semel insanivimus omnes*—thou art my old and faithful servant, that is the truth; and were't anything for thy own behoof, man, thou shouldst not ask twice. But, troth, Steenie loves me so dearly, that he cares not that any one should ask favours of me but himself.—Maxwell' (for the usher had re-entered after having carried off the plate), 'get into the ante-chamber wi' your lang lugs.—In conscience, Geordie, I think that, as thou hast been mine ain auld fiduciary, and wert my goldsmith when I might say with the Ethnic poet—*Non meâ renidet in domo lacunar*—for, faith, they had pillaged my mither's auld house sae, that beechen bickers, and treen trenchers, and latten plattens were whiles the best at our board, and glad we were of something to put on them, without quarrelling with the metal of the dishes. D'ye mind, for thou wert in maist of our complots, how we were fain to send sax of the Blue-banders to harry the Lady of Loganhouse's dowcot and poultry-yard, and what an awfu' plaint the poor dame made against Jock of

Milch, and the thieves of Annandale, wha were as sackless of the deed as I am of the sin of murder?'

'It was the better for Jock,' said Heriot; 'for, if I remember weel, it saved him from a strapping up at Dumfries, which he had weel deserved for other misdeeds.'

'Ay, man, mind ye that?' said the king; 'but he had other virtues, for he was a tight huntsman, moreover, that Jock of Milch, and could halloo to a hound till all the woods rang again. But he came to an Annandale end at the last, for Lord Torthorwald run his lance out through him.—Cocksnails, man, when I think of these wild passages, in my conscience, I am not sure but we lived merrier in auld Holyrood in these shifting days, than now when we are dwelling at heck and manger. *Cantabit vacuus*—we had but little to care for.'

'And if your Majesty please to remember,' said the goldsmith, 'the awful task we had to gather silver-vessail and gold-work enough to make some show before the Spanish ambassador.'

'Vera true,' said the king, now in a full tide of gossip, 'and I mind not the name of the right leal lord that helped us with every unce he had in his house, that his native prince might have some credit in the eyes of them that had the Indies at their beck.'

'I think, if your Majesty,' said the citizen, 'will cast your eye on the paper in your hand, you will recollect his name.'

'Ay!' said the king, 'say ye sae, man?—Lord Glenvarloch, that was his name indeed—*Justus et tenax propositi*—A just man, but as obstinate as a baited bull. He stood whiles against us, that Lord Randal Olifaunt of Glenvarloch, but he was a loving and a leal subject in the main. But this supplicator maun be his son—Randal has been long gone where king and lord must go, Geordie, as weel as the like of you—and what does his son want with us?'

'The settlement,' answered the citizen, 'of a large debt due by your Majesty's treasury, for money advanced to your Majesty in great state emergency, about the time of the Raid of Ruthven.'

'I mind the thing weel,' said King James—'Od's death, man, I was just out of the clutches of the Master of Glamis and his complices, and there was never siller mair welcome to a born prince—the mair the shame and pity that crowned king should need sic a petty sum. But what need he dun us for it, man, like a baxter at the breaking? We aught him the siller, and will pay him wi' our convenience, or make it otherwise up to him, whilk is enow between prince and subject—We are not *in meditatione fugæ*, man, to be arrested thus peremptorily.'

'Alas! an it please your Majesty,' said the goldsmith, shaking his head, 'it is the poor young nobleman's extreme necessity, and not his will, that makes him importunate; for he must have money, and that briefly, to discharge a debt due to Peregrine Peterson, Conservator of the Privileges at Campvere, or his hale hereditary barony and estate of Glenvarloch will be evicted in virtue of an unredeemed wadset.'

'How say ye, man—how say ye!' exclaimed the king impatiently; 'the carle of a Conservator, the son of a Low Dutch skipper, evict the auld estate and lordship of the house of Olifaunt?—God's bread, man, that maun not be!—we maun suspend the diligence by writ of favour, or otherwise.'

'I doubt that may hardly be,' answered the citizen, 'if it please your Majesty; your learned counsel in the law of Scotland advise, that there is no remeid but in paying money.'

'Ud's fish!' said the king, 'let him keep haud by the strong hand against the carle, until we can take some order about his affairs.'

'Alas!' insisted the goldsmith, 'if it like your Majesty, your own pacific government, and your doing of equal justice to all men, has made main force a kittle line to walk by, unless just within the bounds of the Highlands.'

'Weel—weel—weel, man,' said the perplexed monarch, whose ideas of justice, expedience, and convenience became on such occasions strangely embroiled; 'just it is we should pay our debts, that the young man may pay his; and he must be paid, and *in verbo regis* he shall be paid—but how to come by the siller, man, is a difficult chapter—ye maun try the city, Geordie.'

'To say the truth,' answered Heriot, 'please your gracious Majesty, what betwixt loans, and benevolences, and subsidies, the city is at this present'——

'Donna tell me of what the city is,' said King James; 'our exchequer is as dry as Dean Giles's discourses on the penitentiary psalms—*Ex nihilo nihil fit*—It's ill taking the breeks aff a wild Highlandman—they that come to me for siller, should tell me how to come by it—the city ye maun try, Heriot; and donna think to be called Jingling Geordie for nothing—and *in verbo regis* I will pay the lad if you get me the loan—I wonnot haggle on the terms; and, between you and me, Geordie, we will redeem the brave auld estate of Glenvarloch.—But wherefore comes not the young lord to court, Heriot—is he comely—is he presentable in the presence?'

'No one can be more so,' said George Heriot; 'but'——

'Ay, I understand ye,' said his Majesty—'I understand ye—*Res angusta domi*—puir lad—puir lad!—and his father a right true leal Scots heart, though stiff in some opinions. Hark ye, Heriot, let the lad have twa hundred pounds to fit him out. And, here—here'—(taking the carcanet of rubies from his old hat)—'ye have had these in pledge before for a larger sum, ye auld Levite that ye are. Keep them in gage, till I gie ye back the siller out of the next subsidy.'

'If it please your Majesty to give me such directions in writing,' said the cautious citizen.

'The deil is in your nicety, George,' said the king; 'ye are as precese as a Puritan in form, and a mere Nullifidian in the marrow of the matter. May not a king's word serve you for advancing your pitiful twa hundred pounds?'

'But not for detaining the crown jewels,' said George Heriot.

And the king, who from long experience was inured to dealing with suspicious creditors, wrote an order upon George Heriot, his well-beloved goldsmith and jeweller, for the sum of two hundred pounds, to be paid presently to Nigel Olifaunt, Lord of Glenvarloch, to be imputed as

so much debts due to him by the crown; and authorising the retention of a carcanet of balas rubies, with a great diamond, as described in a catalogue of his Majesty's jewels, to remain in possession of the said George Heriot, advancer of the said sum, and so forth, until he was lawfully contented and paid thereof. By another rescript, his Majesty gave the same George Heriot directions to deal with some of the moneyed men, upon equitable terms, for a sum of money for his Majesty's present use, not to be under 50,000 merks, but as much more as could conveniently be procured.

'And has he ony lair, this Lord Nigel of ours?' said the king.

George Heriot could not exactly answer this question; but believed 'the young lord had studied abroad.'

'He shall have our own advice,' said the king, 'how to carry on his studies to maist advantage; and it may be we will have him come to court, and study with Steenie and Baby Charles. And, now we think on't, away—away, George—for the bairns will be coming hame presently, and we would not as yet they ken'd of this matter we have been treating anent. *Propera pedem*, O Geordie. Clap your mule between your hough, and god-den with you.'

Thus ended the conference betwixt the gentle King Jamie and his benevolent jeweller and goldsmith.

CHAPTER VI.

O, I do know him 'tis the mouldy lemon
Which our court wits will wet their lips withal,
When they would sauce their honeyed conversation
With somewhat sharper flavour.—Marry, sir,
That virtue's well nigh left him all the juice
That was so sharp and poignant, is squeezed out;
While the poor rind, although as sour as ever,
Must season soon the draff we give our grunters,
For two legged things are weary on't.

THE CHAMBERLAIN A COMEDY.

THE good company invited by the hospitable citizen assembled at his house in Lombard Street at the 'hollow and hungry hour' of noon, to partake of that meal which divides the day; being about the time when modern persons of fashion, turning themselves upon their pillow, begin to think, not without a great many doubts and much hesitation, that they will by and by commence it. Thither came the young Nigel, arrayed plainly, but in a dress, nevertheless, more suitable to his age and quality than he had formerly worn, accompanied by his servant Moniplies, whose outside also was considerably improved. His solemn and stern features glared forth from under a blue velvet bonnet, fantastically placed sideways on his head—he had a sound and tough coat of English blue broadcloth, which, unlike his former vestment, would have stood the tug of all the apprentices in Fleet Street. The buckler and broadsword he wore as the arms of his condition, and a neat silver badge, bearing his lord's arms, announced that he was an appendage of aristocracy. He sat down in the good citizen's buttery, not a little pleased to find his attendance upon the table in the hall was likely to be rewarded with his share of a meal such as he had seldom partaken of.

Master David Ramsay, that profound and ingenious mechanic, was safely conducted to Lombard Street, according to promise, well washed, brushed, and cleaned from the soot of the furnace and the forge. His daughter, who came with him, was about twenty years old, very pretty, very demure, yet with lively black eyes, that ever and anon contradicted the expression of sobriety, to which silence, reserve, a plain velvet hood, and a cambric ruff, had condemned Mistress Marget, as the daughter of a quiet citizen.

There were also two citizens and merchants of London, men ample in cloak and many-linked golden chain, well to pass in the world, and experienced in their craft of merchandise, but who require no particular description. There was an elderly clergyman also, in his gown and cassock, a decent, venerable man, partaking in his manners of the plainness of the citizens amongst whom he had his cure.

These may be dismissed with brief notice; but not so Sir Mungo Malagrowther, of Girnigo Castle, who claims a little more attention, as an original character of the time in which he flourished.

That good knight knocked at Master Heriot's door just as the clock began to strike twelve, and was seated in his chair ere the last stroke had chimed. This gave the knight an excellent opportunity of making sarcastic observations on all who came later than himself, not to mention a few rubs at the expense of those who had been so superfluous as to appear earlier.

Having little or no property save his bare designation, Sir Mungo had been early attached to court in the capacity of whipping-boy, as the office was then called, to King James the Sixth, and, with his Majesty, trained to all polite learning by his celebrated preceptor, George Buchanan. The office of whipping-boy doomed its unfortunate occupant to undergo all the corporeal punishment which the Lord's Anointed, whose proper person was of course sacred, might chance to incur, in the course of travelling through his grammar and prosody. Under the stern rule, indeed, of George Buchanan, who did not approve of the vicarious mode of punishment, James bore the penance of his own faults, and Mungo Malagrowther enjoyed a sinecure; but James's other pedagogue, Master Patrick Young, went more ceremoniously to work, and appalled the very soul of the youthful king by the floggings which he bestowed on the whipping-boy when the royal task was not suitably performed. And be it told to Sir Mungo's praise, that there were points about him in the highest respect suited to his official situation. He had even in youth a naturally irregular and grotesque set of features, which, when distorted by fear, pain, and anger, looked like one of the whimsical faces which present themselves in a Gothic cornice. His voice also was high-pitched and querulous, so that, when smarting under Master Peter Young's unsparing inflictions, the expression of his grotesque physiognomy, and the superhuman yells which he uttered, were well suited to produce all the effects on the monarch who deserved

the lash, that could possibly be produced by seeing another and an innocent individual suffering for his delict.

Sir Mungo Malagrowther, for such he became, thus got an early footing at court, which another would have improved and maintained. But, when he grew too big to be whipped, he had no other means of rendering himself acceptable. A bitter, caustic, and backbiting humour, a malicious wit, and an envy of others more prosperous than the possessor of such amiable qualities, have not, indeed, always been found obstacles to a courtier's rise; but then they must be amalgamated with a degree of selfish cunning and prudence, of which Sir Mungo had no share. His satire ran riot, his envy could not conceal itself, and it was not long after his majority till he had as many quarrels upon his hands as would have required a cat's nine lives to answer. In one of these rencounters he received, perhaps we should say fortunately, a wound, which served him as an excuse for answering no invitations of the kind in future. Sir Rullion Rattray, of Ranagullion, cut off, in mortal combat, three of the fingers of his right hand, so that Sir Mungo never could hold sword again. At a later period, having written some satirical verses upon the Lady Cockpen, he received so severe a chastisement from some persons employed for the purpose, that he was found half dead on the spot where they had thus dealt with him, and one of his thighs having been broken, and ill set, gave him a hitch in his gait, with which he hobbled to his grave. The lameness of his leg and hand, besides that they added considerably to the grotesque appearance of this original, procured him in future a personal immunity from the more dangerous consequences of his own humour; and he gradually grew old in the service of the court, in safety of life and limb, though without either making friends or attaining preferment. Sometimes, indeed, the king was amused with his caustic sallies, but he had never art enough to improve the favourable opportunity; and his enemies (who were for that matter the whole court) always found means to throw him out of favour again. The celebrated Archie Armstrong offered Sir Mungo, in his generosity, a skirt of his own fool's coat, proposing thereby to communicate to him the privileges and immunities of a professed jester—'For,' said the man of motley, 'Sir Mungo, as he goes on just now, gets no more for a good jest than just the king's pardon for having made it.'

Even in London, the golden shower which fell around him did not moisten the blighted fortunes of Sir Mungo Malagrowther. He grew old, deaf, and peevish—lost even the spirit which had formerly animated his strictures—and was barely endured by James, who, though himself nearly as far stricken in years, retained, to an unusual and even an absurd degree, the desire to be surrounded by young people.

Sir Mungo, thus fallen into the yellow leaf of years and fortune, showed his emaciated form and faded embroidery at court as seldom as his duty permitted; and spent his time in indulging his food for satire in the public walks, and in the aisles of Saint Paul's, which were then the general resort of newsmongers and characters of all descriptions, associating himself chiefly with such of his countrymen as he accounted of inferior birth and rank to himself. In this manner, hating and contemning commerce, and those who pursued it, he nevertheless lived a good deal among the Scottish artists and merchants who had followed the court to London. To these he could show his cynicism without much offence; for some submitted to his jeers and ill-humour in deference to his birth and knighthood, which in those days conferred high privileges- and others, of more sense, pitied and endured the old man, unhappy alike in his fortunes and his temper.

Amongst the latter was George Heriot, who, though his habits and education induced him to carry aristocratical feelings to a degree which would now be thought extravagant, had too much spirit and good sense to permit himself to be intruded upon to an unauthorised excess, or used with the slightest improper freedom, by such a person as Sir Mungo, to whom he was, nevertheless, not only respectfully civil, but essentially kind, and even generous.

Accordingly, this appeared from the manner in which Sir Mungo Malagrowther conducted himself upon entering the apartment. He paid his respects to Master Heriot, and a decent, elderly, somewhat severe-looking female, in a coif, who, by the name of Aunt Judith, did the honours of his house and table, with little or no portion of the supercilious acidity which his singular physiognomy assumed when he made his bow successively to David Ramsay and the two sober citizens. He thrust himself into the conversation of the latter, to observe he had heard in Paul's, that the bankrupt concerns of Pindivide, a great merchant, -who, as he expressed it, had given the crows a pudding, and on whom he knew, from the same authority, each of the honest citizens had some unsettled claim,- was like to prove a total loss 'stock and block, ship and cargo, keel and rigging, all lost, now and for ever.'

The two citizens grinned at each other; but, too prudent to make their private affairs the subject of public discussion, drew their heads together, and evaded further conversation by speaking in a whisper.

The old Scots knight next attacked the watchmaker with the same disrespectful familiarity.—'Davie,' he said, 'Davie, ye donnard auld idiot, have ye no gane mad yet, with applying your mathematical science, as ye call it, to the Book of Apocalypse? I expected to have heard ye make out the sign of the beast, as clear as a tout on a bawbee whistle.'

'Why, Sir Mungo,' said the mechanist, after making an effort to recall to his recollection what had been said to him, and by whom, 'it may be that ye are nearer the mark than ye are yoursel' aware of; for, taking the ten horns o' the beast, ye may easily estimate by your digitals'——

'My digits' you d—d auld, rusty, good-for-nothing timepiece!' exclaimed Sir Mungo, while, betwixt jest and earnest, he laid on his hilt his hand, or rather his claw (for Sir Rullion's broadsword had abridged it into that form),—'D'ye mean to upbraid me with my mutilation?'

Master Heriot interfered. 'I cannot persuade our friend David,' he said, 'that scriptural prophecies are intended to remain in obscurity, until their unexpected accomplishment shall make, as in former days, that fulfilled which was written. But you must not exert your knightly valour on him for all that.'

'By my saul, and it would be throwing it away,' said Sir Mungo, laughing. 'I would as soon set out, with hound and horn, to hunt a sturdied sheep; for he is in a doze again, and up to the chin in numerals, quotients, and dividends.—Mistress Margaret, my pretty honey,' for the beauty of the young citizen made even Sir Mungo Malagrowther's grim features relax themselves a little, 'is your father always as entertaining as he seems just now?'

Mistress Margaret simpered, bridled, looked to either side, then straight before her; and, having assumed all the airs of bashful embarrassment and timidity which were necessary, as she thought, to cover a certain shrewd readiness which really belonged to her character, at length replied, 'That indeed her father was very thoughtful, but she had heard that he took the habit of mind from her grandfather.'

'Your grandfather!' said Sir Mungo,—after doubting if he had heard her aright, 'Said she her grandfather! The lassie is distraught!—I ken nae wench on this side of Temple Bar that is derived from so distant a relation.'

'She has got a god-father, however, Sir Mungo,' said George Heriot, again interfering; 'and I hope you will allow him interest enough with you, to request you will not put his pretty god-child to so deep a blush.'

'The better—the better,' said Sir Mungo. 'It is a credit to her, that, bred and born within the sound of Bow-bell, she can blush for anything; and, by my saul, Master George,' he continued, chucking the irritated and reluctant damsel under the chin, 'she is bonnie enough to make amends for her lack of ancestry—at least, in such a region as Cheapside, where, d'ye mind me, the kettle cannot call the porridge-pot'——

The damsel blushed, but not so angrily as before. Master George Heriot hastened to interrupt the conclusion of Sir Mungo's homely proverb, by introducing him personally to Lord Nigel.

Sir Mungo could not at first understand what his host said.—'Bread of heaven, what say ye, man?'

Upon the name of Nigel Olifaunt, Lord Glenvarloch, being again hallooed into his ear, he drew up, and, regarding his entertainer with some austerity, rebuked him for not making persons of quality acquainted with each other, that they might exchange courtesies before they mingled with other folks. He then made as handsome and courtly a congee to his new acquaintance as a man maimed in foot and hand could do; and, observing he had known my lord his father, bade him welcome to London, and hoped he should see him at court.

Nigel in an instant comprehended, as well from Sir Mungo's manner, as from a strict compression of their entertainer's lips, which intimated the suppression of a desire to laugh, that he was dealing with an original of no ordinary description, and, accordingly, returned his courtesy with suitable punctiliousness. Sir Mungo, in the meanwhile, gazed on him with much earnestness; and, as the contemplation of natural advantages was as odious to him as that of wealth, or other adventitious benefits, he had no sooner completely perused the handsome form and good features of the young lord, than, like one of the comforters of the man of Uz, he drew close up to him, to enlarge on the former grandeur of the Lords of Glenvarloch, and the regret with which he had heard that their representative was not likely to possess the domains of his ancestry. Anon, he enlarged upon the beauties of the principal mansion of Glenvarloch—the commanding site of the old castle—the noble expanse of the lake, stocked with wild-fowl for hawking—the commanding screen of forest, terminating in a mountain-ridge abounding with deer—and all the other advantages of that fine and ancient barony, till Nigel, in spite of every effort to the contrary, was unwillingly obliged to sigh.

Sir Mungo, skilful in discerning when the withers of those he conversed with were wrung, observed that his new acquaintance winced, and would willingly have pressed the discussion; but the cook's impatient knock upon the dresser with the haft of his dudgeon knife, now gave a signal loud enough to be heard from the top of the house to the bottom, summoning, at the same time, the serving men to place the dinner upon the table, and the guests to partake of it.

Sir Mungo, who was an admirer of good cheer, —a taste which, by the way, might have some weight in reconciling his dignity to these city visits,—was tolled off by the sound, and left Nigel and the other guests in peace, until his anxiety to arrange himself in his due place of pre-eminence at the genial board was duly gratified. Here, seated on the left hand of Aunt Judith, he beheld Nigel occupy the station of yet higher honour on the right, dividing that matron from pretty Mistress Margaret; but he saw this with the more patience, that there stood betwixt him and the young lord a superb larded capon.

The dinner proceeded according to the form of the times. All was excellent of the kind; and, besides the Scottish cheer promised, the board displayed beef and pudding, the statutory dainties of old England. A small cupboard of plate, very choicely and beautifully wrought, did not escape the compliments of some of the company, and an oblique sneer from Sir Mungo, as intimating the owner's excellence in his own mechanical craft.

'I am not ashamed of the workmanship, Sir Mungo,' said the honest citizen. 'They say a good cook knows how to lick his own fingers; and methinks it were unseemly that I, who have furnished half the cupboards in broad Britain, should have my own covered with paltry pewter.'

The blessing of the clergyman now left the guests at liberty to attack what was placed before them; and the meal went forward with great decorum, until Aunt Judith, in further recommendation of the capon, assured her company that it was of a celebrated breed of poultry, which she had herself brought from Scotland.

'Then, like some of his countrymen, madam,' said the pitiless Sir Mungo, not without a glance towards his landlord, 'he has been well larded in England.'

'There are some others of his countrymen,' answered Master Heriot, 'to whom all the lard in England has not been able to render that good office.'

Sir Mungo sneered and reddened, the rest of the company laughed; and the satirist, who had his reasons for not coming to extremity with Master George, was silent for the rest of the dinner.

The dishes were exchanged for confections and wine of the highest quality and flavour; and Nigel saw the entertainments of the wealthiest burgomasters which he had witnessed abroad fairly outshone by the hospitality of a London citizen. Yet there was nothing ostentatious or which seemed inconsistent with the degree of an opulent burgher.

While the collation proceeded, Nigel, according to the good breeding of the time, addressed his discourse principally to Mistress Judith, whom he found to be a woman of a strong Scottish understanding, more inclined towards the Puritans than was her brother George (for in that relation she stood to him, though he always called her aunt), attached to him in the strongest degree, and sedulously attentive to all his comforts. As the conversation of this good dame was neither lively nor fascinating, the young lord naturally addressed himself next to the old horologer's very pretty daughter, who sat upon his right hand. From her, however, there was no extracting any reply beyond the measure of a monosyllable; and when the young gallant had said the best and most complaisant things which his courtesy supplied, the smile that mantled upon her pretty mouth was so slight and evanescent as scarce to be discernible.

Nigel was beginning to tire of his company, for the old citizens were speaking with his host of commercial matters in language to him totally unintelligible, when Sir Mungo Malagrowther suddenly summoned their attention.

That amiable personage had for some time withdrawn from the company into the recess of a projecting window, so formed and placed as to command a view of the door of the house and of the street. This situation was probably preferred by Sir Mungo on account of the number of objects which the streets of a metropolis usually offer, of a kind congenial to the thoughts of a splenetic man. What he had hitherto seen passing there was probably of little consequence; but now a trampling of horse was heard without, and the knight suddenly exclaimed—'By my faith, Master George, you had better go look to shop; for here comes Knighton, the Duke of Buckingham's groom, and two fellows after him, as if he were my lord Duke himself.'

'My cash keeper is below,' said Heriot, without disturbing himself, 'and he will let me know if his Grace's commands require my immediate attention.'

'Umph!—cash keeper?' muttered Sir Mungo to himself; 'he wad have had an easy office when I first ken'd ye.—But,' said he, speaking aloud, 'will you not come to the window at least? for Knighton has trundled a piece of silver-plate into your house—ha! ha! ha!—trundled it upon its edge, as a callant would drive a hoop. I cannot help laughing—ha! ha! ha!—at the fellow's impudence.'

'I believe you could not help laughing,' said George Heriot, rising up and leaving the room, 'if your best friend lay dying.'

'Bitter that, my lord—ha?' said Sir Mungo, addressing Nigel. 'Our friend is not a goldsmith for nothing—he hath no leaden wit. But I will go down and see what comes on't.'

Heriot, as he descended the stairs, met his cash keeper coming up with some concern on his face.—'Why, how now, Roberts,' said the goldsmith, 'what means all this, man?'

'It is Knighton, Master Heriot, from the court—Knighton, the Duke's man. He brought back the silver you carried to Whitehall, flung it into the entrance as if it had been an old pewter platter, and bade me tell you the King would have none of your trumpery.'

'Ay, indeed!' said George Heriot. 'None of my trumpery!—Come hither into the compting room, Roberts.—Sir Mungo,' he added, bowing to the knight, who had joined, and was preparing to follow them, 'I pray your forgiveness for an instant.'

In virtue of this prohibition Sir Mungo, who, as well as the rest of the company had overheard what passed betwixt George Heriot and his cash keeper, saw himself condemned to wait in the outer business room, where he would have endeavoured to slake his eager curiosity by questioning Knighton; but that emissary of greatness, after having added to the uncivil message of his master some rudeness of his own, had again scampered westward, with his satellites at his heels.

In the meanwhile, the name of the Duke of Buckingham, the omnipotent favourite both of the King and the Prince of Wales, had struck some anxiety into the party which remained in the great parlour. He was more feared than beloved, and if not absolutely of a tyrannical disposition, was accounted haughty, violent, and vindictive. It pressed on Nigel's heart, that he himself, though he could not conceive how nor why, might be the original cause of the resentment of the duke against his benefactor. The others made their comments in whispers, until the sounds reached Ramsay, who had not heard a word of what had previously passed; but, plunged in those studies with which he connected every other incident and event, took up only the catchword, and replied—'The duke—the Duke of Buckingham—George Villiers—ay—I have spoke with Lambe about him.'

'Our Lord and Our Lady! Now, how can you say so, father?' said his daughter, who had shrewdness enough to see that her father was touching on dangerous ground.

'Why, ay, child,' answered Ramsay; 'the stars do but incline, they cannot compel. But well you wot, it is commonly said of his Grace, by those who have the skill to cast nativities, that there was a notable conjunction of Mars and Saturn—the apparent or true time of which, reducing the calculations of Eichstadius, made for the latitude of Oranienburgh, to that of

London, gives seven hours, fifty-five minutes, and forty-one seconds'——

'Hold your peace, old soothsayer,' said Heriot, who at that instant entered the room with a calm and steady countenance; 'your calculations are true and undeniable when they regard brass and wire, and mechanical force; but future events are at the pleasure of Him who bears the hearts of kings in his hands.'

'Ay, but, George,' answered the watchmaker, 'there was a concurrence of signs at this gentleman's birth which showed his course would be a strange one. Long has it been said of him, he was born at the very meeting of night and day, and under crossing and contending influences that may affect both us and him.

> Full moon and high sea,
> Great man shalt thou be:
> Red dawning, stormy sky,
> Bloody death shalt thou die.'

'It is not good to speak of such things,' said Heriot, 'especially of the great; stone walls have ears, and a bird of the air shall carry the matter.'

Several of the guests seemed to be of their host's opinion. The two merchants took brief leave, as if under consciousness that something was wrong. Mistress Margaret, her body-guard of 'prentices being in readiness, plucked her father by the sleeve, and, rescuing him from a brown study (whether referring to the wheels of time, or to that of fortune, is uncertain), wished good-night to her friend Mistress Judith, and received her god-father's blessing, who, at the same time, put upon her slender finger a ring of much taste and some value; for he seldom suffered her to leave him without some token of his affection. Thus honourably dismissed, and accompanied by her escort, she set forth on her return to Fleet Street.

Sir Mungo had bid adieu to Master Heriot as he came out from the back compting-room, but such was the interest which he took in the affairs of his friend, that, when Master George went up-stairs, he could not help walking into that sanctum sanctorum, to see how Master Roberts was employed. The knight found the cash-keeper busy in making extracts from those huge, brass-clasped, leathern-bound manuscript folios, which are the pride and trust of dealers, and the dread of customers whose year of grace is out. The good knight leant his elbows on the desk, and said to the functionary, in a condoling tone of voice,—'What! you have lost a good customer, I fear, Master Roberts, and are busied in making out his bill of charges?'

Now, it chanced that Roberts, like Sir Mungo himself, was a little deaf, and, like Sir Mungo, knew also how to make the most of it; so that he answered at cross purposes,—'I humbly crave your pardon, Sir Mungo, for not having sent in your bill of charge sooner, but my master bade me not disturb you. I will bring the items together in a moment.' So saying, he began to turn over the leaves of his book of fate, murmuring, 'Repairing ane silver seal—new clasp to his chain of office—ane over-gilt brooch to his hat, being a Saint Andrew's cross, with thistles—a copper-gilt pair of spurs,—this to Daniel Driver, we not dealing in the article.'

He would have proceeded; but Sir Mungo, not prepared to endure the recital of the catalogue of his own petty debts, and still less willing to satisfy them on the spot, wished the book-keeper, cavalierly, good-night, and left the house without further ceremony. The clerk looked after him with a civil city sneer, and immediately resumed the more serious labours which Sir Mungo's intrusion had interrupted.*

CHAPTER VII.

> Things needful we have thought on; but the thing
> Of all most needful—that which Scripture terms,
> As if alone it merited regard,
> The ONE thing needful—that's yet unconsider'd.
>
> THE CHAMBERLAIN.

WHEN the rest of the company had taken their departure from Master Heriot's house, the young Lord of Glenvarloch also offered to take leave; but his host detained him for a few minutes, until all were gone excepting the clergyman.

'My lord,' then said the worthy citizen, 'we have had our permitted hour of honest and hospitable pastime, and now I would fain delay you for another and graver purpose, as it is our custom, when we have the benefit of good Master Windsor's company, that he reads the prayers of the Church for the evening before we separate. Your excellent father, my lord, would not have departed before family worship—I hope the same from your lordship.'

'With pleasure, sir,' answered Nigel; 'and you add in the invitation an additional obligation to those with which you have loaded me. When young men forget what is their duty, they owe deep thanks to the friend who will remind them of it.'

While they talked together in this manner, the serving-men had removed the folding tables, brought forward a portable reading-desk, and placed chairs and hassocks for their master, their mistress, and the noble stranger. Another low chair, or rather a sort of stool, was placed close beside that of Master Heriot; and, though the circumstance was trivial, Nigel was induced to notice it, because, when about to occupy that seat, he was prevented by a sign from the old gentleman, and motioned to another of somewhat more elevation. The clergyman took his station behind the reading-desk. The domestics, a numerous family both of clerks and servants, including Moniplies, attended with great gravity, and were accommodated with benches.

The household were all seated, and, externally at least, composed to devout attention, when a low knock was heard at the door of the apartment; Mistress Judith looked anxiously at her brother, as if desiring to know his pleasure. He nodded his head gravely, and looked to the door. Mistress Judith immediately crossed the chamber, opened the door, and led into the apartment a beautiful creature, whose sudden and singular appearance might have made her almost pass for an apparition. She was deadly pale—there was not the least shade of vital red

* Note I. Sir Mungo Malagrowther.

to enliven features, which were exquisitely formed, and might, but for that circumstance, have been termed transcendently beautiful. Her long black hair fell down over her shoulders and down her back, combed smoothly and regularly, but without the least appearance of decoration or ornament, which looked very singular at a period when head-gear, as it was called, of one sort or other, was generally used by all ranks. Her dress was of pure white, of the simplest fashion, and hiding all her person excepting the throat, face, and hands. Her form was rather beneath than above the middle size, but so justly proportioned and elegantly made, that the spectator's attention was entirely withdrawn from her size. In contradiction of the extreme plainness of all the rest of her attire, she wore a necklace which a duchess might have envied, so large and lustrous were the brilliants of which it was composed; and around her waist a zone of rubies of scarce inferior value.

When this singular figure entered the apartment, she cast her eyes on Nigel, and paused, as if uncertain whether to advance or retreat. The glance which she took of him seemed to be one rather of uncertainty and hesitation, than of bashfulness or timidity. Aunt Judith took her by the hand, and led her slowly forward—her dark eyes, however, continued to be fixed on Nigel, with an expression of melancholy by which he felt strangely affected. Even when she was seated on the vacant stool, which was placed there probably for her accommodation, she again looked on him more than once with the same pensive, lingering, and anxious expression, but without either shyness or embarrassment, not even so much as to call the slightest degree of complexion into her cheek.

So soon as this singular female had taken up the prayer-book which was laid upon her cushion, she seemed immersed in devotional duty; and although Nigel's attention to the service was so much disturbed by this extraordinary apparition, that he looked towards her repeatedly in the course of the service, he could never observe that her eyes or her thoughts strayed so much as a single moment from the task in which she was engaged. Nigel himself was less attentive, for the appearance of this lady seemed so extraordinary, that, strictly as he had been bred up by his father to pay the most reverential attention during performance of divine service, his thoughts, in spite of himself, were disturbed by her presence, and he earnestly wished the prayers were ended, that his curiosity might obtain some gratification. When the service was concluded, and each had remained, according to the decent and edifying practice of the Church, concentrated in mental devotion for a short space, the mysterious visitant arose ere any other person stirred; and Nigel remarked that none of the domestics left their places, or even moved, until she had first kneeled on one knee to Heriot, who seemed to bless her with his hand laid on her head, and a melancholy solemnity of look and action. She then bended her body, but without kneeling, to Mistress Judith, and having performed these two acts of reverence, she left the room; yet, just in the act of her departure, she once more turned her penetrating eyes on Nigel with a fixed look, which compelled him to turn his own aside. When he looked towards her again, he saw only the skirt of her white mantle as she left the apartment.

The domestics then rose and dispersed themselves—wine and fruit and spices were offered to Lord Nigel and to the clergyman, and the latter took his leave. The young lord would fain have accompanied him, in hope to get some explanation of the apparition which he had beheld, but he was stopped by his host, who requested to speak with him in his compting-room.

'I hope, my lord,' said the citizen, 'that your preparations for attending court are in such forwardness that you can go thither the day after to-morrow. It is, perhaps, the last day, for some time, that his Majesty will hold open court for all who have pretensions by birth, rank, or office, to attend upon him. On the subsequent day he goes to Theobald's, where he is so much occupied with hunting and other pleasures, that he cares not to be intruded on.'

'I shall be in all outward readiness to pay my duty,' said the young nobleman, 'yet I have little heart to do it. The friends from whom I ought to have found encouragement and protection have proved cold and false—I certainly will not trouble *them* for their countenance on this occasion—and yet I must confess my childish unwillingness to enter quite alone upon so new a scene.'

'It is bold of a mechanic like me to make such an offer to a nobleman,' said Heriot; 'but I must attend at court to-morrow. I can accompany you as far as the presence-chamber, from my privilege as being of the household. I can facilitate your entrance, should you find difficulty, and I can point out the proper manner and time of approaching the King. But I do not know,' he added, smiling, 'whether these little advantages will not be over-balanced by the incongruity of a nobleman receiving them from the hands of an old smith.'

'From the hands rather of the only friend I have found in London,' said Nigel, offering his hand.

'Nay, if you think of the matter in that way,' replied the honest citizen, 'there is no more to be said—I will come for you to-morrow, with a barge proper to the occasion.—But remember, my good young lord, that I do not, like some men of my degree, wish to take opportunity to step beyond it, and associate with my superiors in rank, and therefore do not fear to mortify my presumption, by suffering me to keep my distance in the presence, and where it is fitting for both of us to separate; and for what remains, most truly happy shall I be in proving of service to the son of my ancient patron.'

The style of conversation led so far from the point which had interested the young nobleman's curiosity, that there was no returning to it that night. He therefore exchanged thanks and greeting with George Heriot, and took his leave, promising to be equipped and in readiness to embark with him on the second successive morning at ten o'clock.

The generation of linkboys, celebrated by Count Anthony Hamilton, as peculiar to London,

had already, in the reign of James I., begun their functions, and the service of one of them with his smoky torch had been secured to light the young Scottish lord and his follower to their own lodgings, which, though better acquainted than formerly with the city, they might in the dark have run some danger in missing. This gave the ingenious Master Moniplies an opportunity of gathering close up to his master, after he had gone through the form of slipping his left arm into the handle of his buckler, and loosening his broadsword in the sheath, that he might be ready for whatever should befall.

'If it were not for the wine and the good cheer which we have had in yonder old man's house, my lord,' said the sapient follower, 'and that I ken him by report to be a just-living man in many respects, and a real Edinburgh gutter-blood, I should have been well pleased to have seen how his feet were shaped, and whether he had not a cloven cloot under the braw roses and Cordovan shoon of his.'

'Why, you rascal,' answered Nigel, 'you have been too kindly treated, and now that you have filled your ravenous stomach, you are railing on the good gentleman that relieved you.'

'Under favour, no, my lord,' said Moniplies,—'I would only like to see something mair about him. I have eaten his meat, it is true—more shame that the like of him should have meat to give, when your lordship and me could scarce have gotten, on our own account, brose and a bear bannock—I have drunk his wine too.'

'I see you have,' replied his master, 'a great deal more than you should have done.'

'Under your patience, my lord,' said Moniplies, 'you are pleased to say that, because I crushed a quart with that jolly boy Jenkin, as they call the 'prentice boy, and that was out of mere acknowledgment for his former kindness—I own that I, moreover, sung the good old song of Elsie Marley, so as they never heard it chanted in their lives'——

And 'withal' (as John Bunyan says) 'as they went on their way,' he sung—

'O, do ye ken Elsie Marley, honey—
The wife that sells the barley, honey?
For Elsie Marley's grown sae fine,
She winna get up to feed the swine.—
O, do ye ken'——

Here in mid career was the songster interrupted by the stern grip of his master, who threatened to baton him to death if he brought the city-watch upon them by his ill-timed melody.

'I crave pardon, my lord—I humbly crave pardon—only when I think of that Jen Win, as they call him, I can hardly help humming—"O, do ye ken"—But I crave your honour's pardon, and will be totally dumb, if you command me so.'

'No, sirrah!' said Nigel, 'talk on, for I well know you would say and suffer more under pretence of holding your peace, than when you get an unbridled licence. How is it, then? What have you to say against Master Heriot?'

It seems more than probable that, in permitting this licence, the young lord hoped his attendant would stumble upon the subject of the young lady who had appeared at prayers in a manner so mysterious. But whether this was the case, or whether he merely desired that Moniplies should utter in a subdued and undertone of voice those spirits which might otherwise have vented themselves in obstreperous song, it is certain he permitted his attendant to proceed with his story in his own way.

'And therefore,' said the orator, availing himself of his immunity, 'I would like to ken what sort of a carle this Maister Heriot is. He hath supplied your lordship with walth of gold, as I can understand; and if he has, I make it for certain he hath had his ain end in it, according to the fashion of the world. Now, had your lordship your own good lands at your guiding, doubtless this person, with most of his craft,—goldsmiths they call themselves—I say usurers,—wad be glad to exchange so many pounds of African dust, by whilk I understand gold, against so many fair acres, and hundreds of acres, of broad Scottish land.'

'But you know I have no land,' said the young lord, 'at least none that can be affected by any debt which I can at present become obliged for—I think you need not have reminded me of that.'

'True, my lord, most true; and, as your lordship says, open to the meanest capacity, without any unnecessary expositions. Now, therefore, my lord, unless Maister George Heriot has something mair to allege as a motive for his liberality, vera different from the possession of your estate—and moreover, as he could gain little by the capture of your body, wherefore should it not be your soul that he is in pursuit of?'

'My soul, you rascal!' said the young lord; 'what good should my soul do him?'

'What do I ken about that?' said Moniplies; 'they go about roaring and seeking whom they may devour—doubtless they like the food that they rage so much about—and, my lord, they say,' added Moniplies, drawing up still closer to his master's side, 'they say that Master Heriot has one spirit in his house already.'

'How or what do you mean?' said Nigel; 'I will break your head, you drunken knave, if you palter with me any longer.'

'Drunken?' answered his trusty adherent, 'and is this the story?—why, how could I but drink your lordship's health on my bare knees, when Master Jenkin began it to me?—hang them that would not!—I would have cut the impudent knave's hams with my broadsword, that should make scruple of it, and so have made him kneel when he should have found it difficult to rise again. But touching the spirit,' he proceeded, finding that his master made no answer to his valorous tirade, 'your lordship has seen her with your own eyes.'

'I saw no spirit,' said Glenvarloch, but yet breathing thick as one who expects some singular disclosure; 'what mean you by a spirit?'

'You saw a young lady come in to prayers, that spoke not a word to any one, only made becks and bows to the old gentleman and sudden of the house—ken ye wha she is?' made her

'No, indeed,' answered Nigel; he was deadly of the family, I suppose.' ade of vital red

'Deil a bit—deil a bit,' an hastily, 'not a blood-drop's k Malagrowther. had a drop of blood in her bo

what all human beings allege to be truth, that dwell within hue and cry of Lombard Street—that lady, or quean, or whatever you choose to call her, has been dead in the body these many a year, though she haunts them, as we have seen, even at their very devotions.'

'You will allow her to be a good spirit at least,' said Nigel Olifaunt, 'since she chooses such a time to visit her friends?'

'For that I kenna, my lord,' answered the superstitious follower: 'I ken no spirit that would have faced the right-down hammer-blow of Mess John Knox, whom my father stood by in his very warst days, bating a chance time when the court, which my father supplied with butcher-meat, was against him. But yon divine has another airt from powerful Master Rollock, and Mess David Black, of North Leith, and sic like.—Alack-a-day! wha can ken, if it please your lordship, whether sic prayers as the Southron read out of their auld blethering black mess-book there, may not be as powerful to invite fiends, as a right red-het prayer, warm frae the heart, may be powerful to drive them away, even as the evil spirit was driven by the smell of the fish's liver from the bridal-chamber of Sara, the daughter of Raguel? As to whilk story, nevertheless, I make scruple to say whether it be truth or not, better men than I am having doubted on that matter.'

'Well, well, well,' said his master impatiently, 'we are now near home, and I have permitted you to speak of this matter for once, that we may have an end of your prying folly, and your idiotical superstitions, for ever. For whom do you, or your absurd authors or informers, take this lady?'

'I can say naething preceesely as to that,' answered Moniplies; 'certain it is her body died and was laid in the grave many a day since, notwithstanding she still wanders on earth, and chiefly amongst Maister Heriot's family, though she hath been seen in other places by them that well knew her. But who she is, I will not warrant to say, or how she becomes attached, like a Highland Brownie, to some peculiar family. They say she has a row of apartments of her own, anteroom, parlour, and bedroom; but deil a bed she sleeps in but her own coffin, and the walls, doors, and windows are so chinked up as to prevent the least blink of daylight from entering; and then she dwells by torchlight'——

'To what purpose, if she be a spirit?' said Nigel Olifaunt.

'How can I tell your lordship?' answered his attendant. 'I thank God, I know nothing of her likings, or mislikings—only her coffin is there; and I leave your lordship to guess what a live person has to do with a coffin. As little as a ghost with a lantern, I trow.'

'What reason,' repeated Nigel, 'can a creature so young and so beautiful have, already habitually to contemplate her bed of last long rest?'

'Kin... troth, I kenna, my lord,' answered Moni-
his han... there is the coffin, as they told me
solemnity of ...en it. It is made of heben-wood,
her body, b... ...ils, and lined all through with
Judith, and hav... ...ask, might serve a princess to
reverence, she k...
act of her depart

'Singular,' said Nigel, whose brain, like that of most active young spirits, was easily caught by the singular and the romantic; 'does she not eat with the family?'

'Who!—she!' exclaimed Moniplies, as if surprised at the question; 'they would need a lang spoon would sup with her, I trow. Always there is something put for her into the Tower, as they call it, whilk is a whigmaleery of a whirling-box, that turns round half on the tae side o' the wa', half on the tother.'

'I have seen the contrivance in foreign nunneries,' said the Lord of Glenvarloch. 'And is it thus she receives her food?'

'They tell me something is put in ilka day, for fashion's sake,' replied the attendant; 'but it's no to be supposed she would consume it, ony mair than the images of Bel and the Dragon consumed the dainty vivers that were placed before them. There are stout yeomen and chamber-queans in the house enow to play the part of Lick-it-up-a', as well as the threescore and ten priests of Bel, besides their wives and children.'

'And she is never seen in the family but when the hour of prayer arrives?' said the master.

'Never that I hear of,' replied the servant.

'It is singular,' said Nigel Olifaunt, musing. 'Were it not for the ornaments which she wears, and still more for her attendance upon the service of the Protestant Church, I should know what to think, and should believe her either a Catholic votaress, who, for some cogent reason, was allowed to make her cell here in London, or some unhappy popish devotee, who was in the course of undergoing a dreadful penance. As it is, I know not what to deem of it.'

His reverie was interrupted by the linkboy knocking at the door of honest John Christie, whose wife came forth with 'quips, and becks, and wreathed smiles,' to welcome her honoured guest on his return to his apartment.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ay! mark the matron well—and laugh not, Harry,
At her old steeple-hat, and velvet guard—
I've call'd her like the ear of Dionysius;
I mean that ear-form'd vault, built o'er his dungeon,
To catch the groans and discontented murmurs
Of his poor bondsmen—Even so doth Martha
Drink up, for her own purpose, all that passes,
Or is supposed to pass, in this wide city—
She can retail it too, if that her profit
Shall call on her to do so; and retail it
For your advantage, so that you can make
Your profit jump with hers.

THE CONSPIRACY.

We must now introduce to the reader's acquaintance another character, busy and important far beyond her ostensible situation in society—in a word, Dame Ursula Suddlechop, wife of Benjamin Suddlechop, the most renowned barber in all Fleet Street. This dame had her own particular merits, the principal part of which was (if her own report could be trusted) an infinite desire to be of service to her fellow-creatures. Leaving to her thin, half-starved partner the boast of having the most dexterous snap with his fingers of any shaver in London, and the care of a shop where

starved apprentices flayed the faces of those who were boobies enough to trust them, the dame drove a separate and more lucrative trade, which yet had so many odd turns and windings, that it seemed in many respects to contradict itself.

Its highest and most important duties were of a very secret and confidential nature, and Dame Ursula Suddlechop was never known to betray any transaction entrusted to her, unless she had either been indifferently paid for her service, or that some one found it convenient to give her a double douceur to make her disgorge the secret; and these contingencies happened in so few cases, that her character for trustiness remained as unimpeached as that for honesty and benevolence.

In fact, she was a most admirable matron, and could be useful to the impassioned and the frail in the rise, progress, and consequences of their passion. She could contrive an interview for lovers who could show proper reasons for meeting privately; she could relieve the frail fair one of the burden of a guilty passion, and perhaps establish the hopeful offspring of unlicensed love as the heir of some family whose love was lawful, but where an heir had not followed the union. More than this she could do, and had been concerned in deeper and dearer secrets. She had been a pupil of Mistress Turner, and learned from her the secret of making the yellow starch, and, it may be, two or three other secrets of more consequence, though perhaps none that went to the criminal extent of those whereof her mistress was accused. But all that was deep and dark in her real character was covered by the show of outward mirth and good-humour, the hearty laugh and buxom jest with which the dame knew well how to conciliate the elder part of her neighbours, and the many petty arts by which she could recommend herself to the younger, those especially of her own sex.

Dame Ursula was, in appearance, scarce past forty, and her full, but not overgrown form, and still comely features, although her person was plumped out, and her face somewhat coloured by good cheer, had a joyous expression of gaiety and good-humour, which set off the remains of beauty in the wane. Marriages, births, and christenings were seldom thought to be performed with sufficient ceremony, for a considerable distance round her abode, unless Dame Ursley, as they called her, was present. She could contrive all sorts of pastimes, games, and jests, which might amuse the large companies which the hospitality of our ancestors assembled together on such occasions, so that her presence was literally considered as indispensable in the family of all citizens of ordinary rank, on such joyous occasions. So much also was she supposed to know of life and its labyrinths, that she was the willing confidant of half the loving couples in the vicinity, most of whom used to communicate their secrets to, and receive their counsels from, Dame Ursley. The rich rewarded her services with rings, owches, or gold pieces, which she liked still better; and she very generously gave her assistance to the poor, on the same mixed principles as young practitioners in medicine assist them, partly from compassion, and partly to keep her hand in use.

Dame Ursley's reputation in the city was the greater that her practice had extended beyond Temple Bar, and that she had acquaintances, nay, patrons and patronesses, among the quality, whose rank, as their members were much fewer, and the prospect of approaching the courtly sphere much more difficult, bore a degree of consequence unknown to the present day, when the toe of the citizen presses so close on the courtier's heel. Dame Ursley maintained her intercourse with this superior rank of customers, partly by driving a small trade in perfumes, essences, pomades, head-gears from France, dishes or ornaments from China, then already beginning to be fashionable; not to mention drugs of various descriptions, chiefly for the use of the ladies, and partly by other services, more or less connected with the esoteric branches of her profession heretofore alluded to.

Possessing such and so many various modes of thriving, Dame Ursley was nevertheless so poor, that she might probably have mended her own circumstances, as well as her husband's, if she had renounced them all, and set herself quietly down to the care of her own household, and to assist Benjamin in the concerns of his trade. But Ursula was luxurious and genial in her habits, and could no more have endured the stinted economy of Benjamin's board, than she could have reconciled herself to the bald chat of his conversation.

It was on the evening of the day on which Lord Nigel Olifaunt dined with the wealthy goldsmith, that we must introduce Ursula Suddlechop upon the stage. She had that morning made a long tour to Westminster, was fatigued, and had assumed a certain large elbow-chair, rendered smooth by frequent use, placed on one side of her chimney, in which there was lit a small but bright fire. Here she observed, betwixt sleeping and waking, the simmering of a pot of well-spiced ale, on the brown surface of which bobbed a small crab-apple, sufficiently roasted, while a little mulatto girl watched, still more attentively, the process of dressing a veal sweetbread in a silver stewpan which occupied the other side of the chimney. With these viands, doubtless, Dame Ursula proposed concluding the well-spent day, of which she reckoned the labour over, and the rest at her own command. She was deceived, however; for just as the ale, or, to speak technically, the lamb's-wool, was fitted for drinking, and the little dingy maiden intimated that the sweetbread was ready to be eaten, the thin cracked voice of Benjamin was heard from the bottom of the stairs.

'Why, Dame Ursley—why, wife, I say—why, dame—why, love, you are wanted more than a strop for a blunt razor—why, dame'——

'I would some one would draw the razor across thy windpipe, thou bawling ass!' said the dame to herself, in the first moment of irritation against her clamorous helpmate; and then called aloud, — 'Why, what is the matter, Master Suddlechop? I am just going to slip into bed; I have been daggled to and fro the whole day.'

'Nay, sweetheart, it is not me,' said the patient Benjamin, 'but the Scots laundry-maid from

neighbour Ramsay's, who must speak with you incontinent.'

At the word sweetheart, Dame Ursley cast a wistful look at the mess which was stewed to a second in the stewpan, and then replied with a sigh,—'Bid Scots Jenny come up, Master Suddlechop. I shall be very happy to hear what she has to say;' then added in a lower tone, 'and I hope she will go to the devil in the flame of a tar-barrel, like many a Scots witch before her!'

The Scots laundress entered accordingly, and, having heard nothing of the last kind wish of Dame Suddlechop, made her reverence with considerable respect, and said, her young mistress had returned home unwell, and wished to see her neighbour, Dame Ursley, directly.

'And why will it not do to-morrow, Jenny, my good woman?' said Dame Ursley; 'for I have been as far as Whitehall to-day already, and I am well-nigh worn off my feet, my good woman.'

'Aweel!' answered Jenny, with great composure, 'and if that sae be sae, I maun take the langer tramp mysel', and maun gae down the water-side for auld Mother Redcap, at the Hungerford Stairs, that deals in comforting young creatures, e'en as you do yoursel', hinny; for ane o' ye the bairn maun see before she sleeps, and that's a' that I ken on't.'

So saying, the old emissary, without further entreaty, turned on her heel, and was about to retreat, when Dame Ursley exclaimed,—'No, no—if the sweet child your mistress has any necessary occasion for good advice and kind tendance, you need not go to Mother Redcap, Janet. She may do very well for skippers' wives, chandlers' daughters, and such-like; but nobody shall wait on pretty Mistress Margaret, the daughter of his most sacred Majesty's horologer, excepting and saving myself. And so I will but take my chopins and my cloak, and put on my muffler, and cross the street to neighbour Ramsay's in an instant. But tell me yourself, good Jenny, are you not something tired of your young lady's frolics and change of mind twenty times a day?'

'In troth, not I,' said the patient drudge, 'unless it may be when she is a wee fashious about washing her laces; but I have been her keeper since she was a bairn, neighbour Suddlechop, and that makes a difference.'

'Ay,' said Dame Ursley, still busied putting on additional defences against the night air; 'and you know for certain that she has two hundred pounds a year in good land, at her own free disposal?'

'Left by her grandmother, Heaven rest her soul!' said the Scotswoman; 'and to a daintier lassie she could not have bequeathed it.'

'Very true, very true, mistress; for, with all her little whims, I have always said Mistress Margaret Ramsay was the prettiest girl in the ward; and, Jenny, I warrant the poor child has had no supper?'

Jenny could not say but it was the case, 'for, her master being out, the twa 'prentice lads had gone out after shutting shop, to fetch them home, and she and the other maid had gone out to Sandy Mac-Gavin's to see a friend frae Scotland.'

'As was very natural, Mistress Janet,' said Dame Ursley, who found her interest in assenting to all sorts of propositions from all sorts of persons.

'And so the fire went out too,' said Jenny.

'Which was the most natural of the whole,' said Dame Suddlechop; 'and so, to cut the matter short, Jenny, I'll carry over the little bit of supper that I was going to eat. For dinner I have tasted none, and it may be my young pretty Mistress Marget will eat a morsel with me; for it is mere emptiness, Mistress Jenny, that often puts these fancies of illness into young folk's heads.' So saying, she put the silver posset-cup with the ale into Jenny's hands, and, assuming her mantle with the alacrity of one determined to sacrifice inclination to duty, she hid the stewpan under its folds, and commanded Wilsa, the little mulatto girl, to light them across the street.

'Whither away so late?' said the barber, whom they passed seated with his starveling boys round a mess of stock-fish and parsnips, in the shop below.

'If I were to tell you, gaffer,' said the dame, with most contemptuous coolness, 'I do not think you could do my errand, so I will e'en keep it to myself.' Benjamin was too much accustomed to his wife's independent mode of conduct to pursue his inquiry further; nor did the dame tarry for further question, but marched out at the door, telling the eldest of the boys 'to sit up till her return, and look to the house the whilst.'

The night was dark and rainy, and although the distance betwixt the two shops was short, it allowed Dame Ursley leisure enough, while she strode along with high-tucked petticoats, to embitter it by the following grumbling reflections—'I wonder what I have done, that I must needs trudge at every old beldam's bidding, and every young minx's maggot! I have been marched from Temple Bar to Whitechapel, on the matter of a pinmaker's wife having pricked her fingers—marry, her husband that made the weapon might have salved the wound.—And here is this fantastic ape, pretty Mistress Marget, forsooth—such a beauty as I could make of a Dutch doll, and as fantastic, and humorous, and conceited, as if she were a duchess. I have seen her in the same day as changeful as a marmozet, and as stubborn as a mule. I should like to know whether her little conceited noddle, or her father's old crazy, calculating jolter-pate, breeds most whimsies. But then there's that two hundred pounds a-year in dirty land, and the father is held a close chuff, though a fanciful—he is our landlord, besides, and she has begged a late day from him for our rent; so God help me, I must be conformable—besides, the little capricious devil is my only key to get at Master George Heriot's secret, and it concerns my character to find that out; and so, *andiamos*, as the lingua franca hath it.'

Thus pondering, she moved forward with hasty strides until she arrived at the watchmaker's habitation. The attendant admitted them by means of a pass-key. Onward glided Dame Ursula, now in glimmer and now in gloom, not like the lovely Lady Christabelle, through Gothic

sculpture and ancient armour, but creeping and stumbling amongst relics of old machines, and models of new inventions in various branches of mechanics, with which wrecks of useless ingenuity, either in a broken or half-finished shape, the apartment of the fanciful though ingenious mechanist was continually lumbered.

At length they attained, by a very narrow staircase, pretty Mistress Margaret's apartment, where she, the cynosure of the eyes of every bold young bachelor in Fleet Street, sat in a posture which hovered between the discontented and the disconsolate. For her pretty back and shoulders were rounded into a curve, her round and dimpled chin reposed in the hollow of her little palm, while the fingers were folded over her mouth; her elbow rested on a table, and her eyes seemed fixed upon the dying charcoal, which was expiring in a small grate. She scarce turned her head when Dame Ursula entered, and when the presence of that estimable matron was more precisely announced in words by the old Scotswoman, Mistress Margaret, without changing her posture, muttered some sort of answer that was wholly unintelligible.

'Go your ways down to the kitchen with Wilsa, good Mistress Jenny,' said Dame Ursula, who was used to all sorts of freaks on the part of her patients or clients, whichever they might be termed; 'put the stewpan and the porringer by the fireside, and go down below—I must speak to my pretty love, Mistress Margaret, by myself—and there is not a bachelor betwixt this and Bow but will envy me the privilege.'

The attendants retired as directed, and Dame Ursula, having availed herself of the embers of charcoal to place her stewpan to the best advantage, drew herself as close as she could to her patient, and began in a low, soothing, and confidential tone of voice, to inquire what ailed her pretty flower of neighbours.

'Nothing, dame,' said Margaret, somewhat pettishly, and changing her posture so as rather to turn her back upon the kind inquirer.

'Nothing, lady-bird!' answered Dame Suddlechop; 'and do you use to send for your friends out of bed at this hour for nothing?'

'It was not I who sent for you, dame,' replied the malcontent maiden.

'And who was it, then?' said Ursula; 'for if I had not been sent for, I had not been here at this time of night, I promise you!'

'It was the old Scotch fool, Jenny, who did it out of her own head, I suppose,' said Margaret; 'for she has been stunning me these two hours about you and Mother Redcap.'

'Me and Mother Redcap!' said Dame Ursula, 'an old fool, indeed, that couples f[illegible]up so.—But come, come, my sweet little neighbour, Jenny is no such fool after all; she knows young folks want more and better advice than her own, and she knows, too, where to find it for them; so you must t[illegible] heart of grace, my pretty maiden, and tell [illegible] what you are moping about, and then let Dame Ursula alone for finding out a cure.'

'Nay, an you be so wise, Mother Ursula,' replied the girl, 'you may guess what I ail without my telling you.'

'Ay, ay, child,' answered the complaisant matron, 'no one can play better than I at the good old game of What is my thought like? Now, I'll warrant that little head of yours is running on a new head tire a foot higher than those our city dames wear—or you are all for a trip to Islington or Ware, and your father is cross and will not consent—or'——

'Or you are an old fool, Dame Suddlechop,' said Margaret peevishly, 'and must needs trouble yourself about matters you know nothing of.'

'Fool as much as you will, mistress,' said Dame Ursula, offended in her turn, 'but not so very many years older than yourself, mistress.'

'O, we are angry, are we?' said the beauty; 'and pray, Madam Ursula, how come you, that are not so many years older than me, to talk about such nonsense to me, who am so many years younger, and who yet have too much sense to care about head-gears and Islington?'

'Well, well, young mistress,' said the sage counsellor, rising, 'I perceive I can be of no use here; and methinks, since you know your own matters so much better than other people do, you might dispense with disturbing folks at midnight to ask their advice.'

'Why, now you are angry, mother,' said Margaret, detaining her; 'this comes of your coming out at even-tide without eating your supper—I never heard you utter a cross word after you had finished your little morsel.—Here, Janet, a trencher and salt for Dame Ursula;—and what have you in that porringer, dame? Filthy, clammy ale, as I would live.—Let Janet fling it out of the window, or keep it for my father's morning draught; and she shall bring you the pottle of sack that was set ready for him—good man, he will never find out the difference, for ale will wash down his dusty calculations quite as well as wine.'

'Truly, sweetheart, I am of your opinion,' said Dame Ursula, whose temporary displeasure vanished at once before these preparations for good cheer; and so settling herself on the great easy-chair, with a three-legged table before her, she began to despatch, with good appetite, the little delicate dish which she had prepared for herself. She did not, however, fail in the duties of civility, and earnestly, but in vain, pressed Mistress Margaret to partake her dai[illegible]. The damsel declined the invitation.

'At least pledge me in a glass of sack,' said Dame Ursula; 'I have heard my grandame say that, before the gospellers came in, the old Catholic father confessors and their penitents always had a cup of sack together before confession; and you are my penitent.'

'I shall drink no sack, I am sure,' said Margaret; 'and I told you before, that, if you cannot find out what ails me, I shall never have the heart to tell it.'

So saying, she turned away from Dame Ursula once more, and resumed her musing posture, with her hand on her elbow, and her back, at least one shoulder, turned towards her confidant.

'Nay, then,' said Dame Ursula, 'I must ert my skill in good earnest.—You must give me this pretty hand, and I will tell you by palmistry, as well as any gipsy of them all, what foot it is you halt upon.'

'As if I halted upon any foot at all,' said Margaret, something scornfully, but yielding her left hand to Ursula, and continuing at the same time her averted position.

'I see brave lines here,' said Ursula, 'and not ill to read neither—pleasure and wealth, and merry nights and late mornings to my Beauty, and such an equipage as shall shake Whitehall. O, have I touched you there?—and smile you now, my pretty one?—for why should not he be Lord Mayor, and go to court in his gilded caroche, as others have done before him?'

'Lord Mayor? pshaw!' replied Margaret.

'And why pshaw at my Lord Mayor, sweetheart? or perhaps you pshaw at my prophecy; but there is a cross in every one's line of life as well as in yours, darling. And what though I see a 'prentice's flat cap in this pretty palm, yet there is a sparkling black eye under it, hath not its match in the ward of Farringdon-Without.'

'Whom do you mean, dame?' said Margaret coldly.

'Whom should I mean,' said Dame Ursula, 'but the prince of 'prentices, and king of good company, Jenkin Vincent?'

'Out, woman!—Jenkin Vincent?—a clown—a Cockney!' exclaimed the indignant damsel.

'Ay, sets the wind in that quarter, Beauty?' quoth the dame; 'why, it has changed something since we spoke together last, for then I would have sworn it blew fairer for poor Jin Vin; and the poor lad dotes on you too, and would rather see your eyes than the first glimpse of the sun on the great holiday on May-day.'

'I would my eyes had the power of the sun to blind his, then,' said Margaret, 'to teach the drudge his place.'

'Nay,' said Dame Ursula, 'there be some who say that Frank Tunstall is as proper a lad as Jin Vin, and of surety he is third cousin to a knighthood, and come of a good house; and so mayhap you may be for northward ho!'

'Maybe I may,' answered Margaret—'but not with my father's 'prentice—I thank you, Dame Ursula.'

'Nay, then, the devil may guess your thoughts for me,' said Dame Ursula; 'this comes of trying to shoe a filly that is eternally wincing and shifting ground!'

'Hear me, then,' said Margaret, 'and mind what I say.—This day I dined abroad'——

'I can tell you where,' answered her counsellor, —'with your god-father the rich goldsmith—ay, you see I know something—nay, I could tell you, an I would, with whom, too.'

'Indeed?' said Margaret, turning suddenly round with an accent of strong surprise, and colouring up to the eyes.

'With old Sir Mungo Malagrowther,' said the oracular dame—'he was trimmed in my Benjamin's shop in his way to the city.'

'Pshaw! the frightful old mouldy skeleton!' said the damsel.

'Indeed you say true, my dear,' replied the confidant,—'it is a shame to him to be out of Saint Pancras's charnel-house, for I know no other place he is fit for, the foul-mouthed old railer. He said to my husband'——

'Somewhat which signifies nothing to our purpose, I daresay,' interrupted Margaret. 'I *must* speak, then.—There dined with us a nobleman'——

'A nobleman! the maiden's mad!' said Dame Ursula.

'There dined with us, I say,' continued Margaret, without regarding the interruption, 'a nobleman, a Scottish nobleman.'

'Now, Our Lady keep her!' said the confidant, 'she is quite frantic! heard ever any one of a watchmaker's daughter falling in love with a nobleman—and a Scots nobleman, to make the matter complete, who are all as proud as Lucifer, and as poor as Job?—A Scots nobleman, quotha? I had as lief you told me of a Jew pedlar. I would have you think how all this is to end, pretty one, before you jump in the dark.'

'That is nothing to you, Ursula—it is your assistance,' said Mistress Margaret, 'and not your advice, that I am desirous to have, and you know I can make it worth your while.'

'O, it is not for the sake of lucre, Mistress Margaret,' answered the obliging dame; 'but truly I would have you listen to some advice—bethink you of your own condition.'

'My father's calling is mechanical,' said Margaret, 'but our blood is not so. I have heard my father say that we are descended, at a distance indeed, from the great Earls of Dalwolsey.'*

'Ay, ay,' said Dame Ursula; 'even so—I never knew a Scot of you, but was descended, as ye call it, from some great house or other; and a piteous descent it often is—and as for the distance you speak of, it is so great as to put you out of sight of each other. Yet do not toss your pretty head so scornfully, but tell me the name of this lordly northern gallant, and we will try what can be done in the matter.'

'It is Lord Glenvarloch, whom they call Lord Nigel Olifaunt,' said Margaret, in a low voice, and turning away to hide her blushes.

'Marry, Heaven forfend!' exclaimed Dame Suddlechop; 'this is the very devil and something worse!'

'How mean you?' said the damsel, surprised at the vivacity of her exclamation.

'Why, know ye not,' said the dame, 'what powerful enemies he has at court! know ye not —But blisters on my tongue, it runs too fast for my wit—enough to say, that you had better make your bridal-bed under a falling house, than think of young Glenvarloch.'

'He *is* unfortunate, then?' said Margaret; 'I knew it—I divined it—there was sorrow in his voice when he said even what was gay—there was a touch of misfortune in his melancholy smile—he had not thus clung to my thoughts had I seen him in all the midday glare of prosperity.'

'Romances have cracked her brain!' said Dame Ursula; 'she is a castaway girl—utterly distraught—loves a Scots lord—and likes him the better for being unfortunate! Well, mistress, I am sorry this is a matter I cannot aid you in—

* The head of the ancient and distinguished house of Ramsay, and to whom, as their chief, the individuals of that name look as their origin and source of gentry. Allan Ramsay, the pastoral poet, in the same manner, makes

Dalhousie of an auld descent,
My chief, my stoup, my ornament.

it goes against my conscience, and it is an affair above my condition and beyond my management;—but I will keep your counsel.'

'You will not be so base as to desert me, after having drawn my secret from me?' said Margaret indignantly. 'If you do, I know how to have my revenge; and if you do not, I will reward you well. Remember the house your husband dwells in is my father's property.'

'I remember it but too well, Mistress Margaret,' said Ursula, after a moment's reflection, 'and I would serve you in anything in my condition; but to meddle with such high matters—I shall never forget poor Mistress Turner,* my honoured patroness, peace be with her!—she had the ill-luck to meddle in the matter of Somerset and Overbury, and so the great earl and his lady slipped their necks out of the collar, and left her and some half-dozen others to suffer in their stead. I shall never forget the sight of her standing on the scaffold with the ruff round her pretty neck, all done up with the yellow starch which I had so often helped her to make, and that was so soon to give place to a rough hempen cord. Such a sight, sweetheart, will make one loath to meddle with matters that are too hot or heavy for their handling.'

'Out, you fool!' answered Mistress Margaret; 'am I one to speak to you about such criminal practices as that wretch died for? All I desire of you is, to get me precise knowledge of what affair brings this young nobleman to court.'

'And when you have his secret,' said Ursula, 'what will it avail you, sweetheart?—and yet I would do your errand, if you could do as much for me.'

'And what is it you would have of me?' said Mistress Margaret.

'What you have been angry with me for asking before,' answered Dame Ursula. 'I want to have some light about the story of your godfather's ghost, that is only seen at prayers.'

'Not for the world,' said Mistress Margaret, 'will I be a spy on my kind god-father's secrets. —No, Ursula—that I will never pry into, which he desires to keep hidden. But thou knowest that I have a fortune of my own, which must at no distant day come under my management—think of some other recompense.'

'Ay, that I well know,' said the counsellor—'it is that two hundred per year, with your father's indulgence, that makes you so wilful, sweetheart.'

'It may be so,' said Margaret Ramsay; 'meanwhile, do you serve me truly, and here is a ring of value in pledge that, when my fortune is in my own hand, I will redeem the token with fifty broad pieces of gold.'

'Fifty broad pieces of gold!' repeated the dame; 'and this ring, which is a right fair one, in token you fail not of your word?—Well, sweetheart, if I must put my throat in peril, I am sure I cannot risk it for a friend more generous than you; and I would not think of more than the pleasure of serving you, only Benjamin gets more idle every day, and our family'——

'Say no more of it,' said Margaret; 'we understand each other. And now, tell me what you know of this young man's affairs, which made you so unwilling to meddle with them?'

'Of that I can say no great matter, as yet,' answered Dame Ursula; 'only I know the most powerful among his own countrymen are against him, and also the most powerful at the court here. But I will learn more of it; for it will be a dim print that I will not read for your sake, pretty Mistress Margaret. Know you where this gallant dwells?'

'I heard by accident,' said Margaret, as if ashamed of the minute particularity of her memory upon such an occasion,—'he lodges, I think—at one Christie's—if I mistake not—at Paul's Wharf—a ship-chandler's.'

'A proper lodging for a young baron!—Well, but cheer you up, Mistress Margaret—if he has come up a caterpillar, like some of his countrymen, he may cast his slough like them, and come out a butterfly.—So I drink good-night and sweet dreams to you, in another parting cup of sack; and you shall hear tidings of me within four-and-twenty hours. And, once more, I commend you to your pillow, my pearl of pearls and Marguerite of Marguerites.'

So saying, she kissed the reluctant cheek of her young friend, or patroness, and took her departure with the light and stealthy pace of one accustomed to accommodate her footsteps to the purposes of despatch and secrecy.

Margaret Ramsay looked after her for some time in anxious silence. 'I did ill,' she at length murmured, 'to let her wring this out of me; but she is artful, bold, and serviceable—and I think faithful—or, if not, she will be true at least to her interest, and that I can command. I would I had not spoken, however,—I have begun a hopeless work. For what has he said to me to warrant my meddling in his fortunes? —Nothing but words of the most ordinary import—mere table-talk, and terms of course. Yet who knows'—she said, and then broke off, looking at the glass the while; which, as it reflected back a face of great beauty, probably suggested to her mind a more favourable conclusion of the sentence than she cared to trust her tongue withal.

CHAPTER IX.

So pitiful a thing is suitor's state!
Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
Hath brought to court to sue, for *Had I wist*,
That few have found and many a one hath missed:
Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is, in sueing long to bide:
To lose good days, that might be better spent;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
To have thy prince's grace, yet want her peers';
To have thy asking, yet wait many years;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares—
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs.
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.
MOTHER HUBBARD'S TALE.

ON the morning of the day on which George Heriot had prepared to escort the young Lord of Glenvarloch to the court at Whitehall, it may

* Note J. Mistress Anne Turner.

be reasonably supposed that the young man, whose fortunes were likely to depend on this cast, felt himself more than usually anxious. He rose early, made his toilet with uncommon care, and, being enabled, by the generosity of his more plebeian countryman, to set out a very handsome person to the best advantage, he obtained a momentary approbation from himself as he glanced at the mirror, a loud and distinct plaudit from his landlady, who declared at once, that, in her judgment, he would take the wind out of the sail of every gallant in the presence—so much had she been able to enrich her discourse with the metaphors of those with whom her husband dealt.

At the appointed hour, the barge of Master George Heriot arrived, handsomely manned and appointed, having a tilt, with his own cipher and the arms of his company painted thereupon. The young Lord of Glenvarloch received his friend, who had evinced such disinterested attachment, with the kind courtesy which well became him.

Master Heriot then made him acquainted with the bounty of his sovereign, which he paid over to his young friend, declining what he had himself formerly advanced to him. Nigel felt all the gratitude which the citizen's disinterested friendship had deserved, and was not wanting in expressing it suitably.

Yet, as the young and high-born nobleman embarked to go to the presence of his prince, under the patronage of one whose best or most distinguished qualification, was his being an eminent member of the Goldsmiths' Incorporation, he felt a little surprised, if not abashed, at his own situation; and Richie Moniplies, as he stepped over the gangway to take his place forward in the boat, could not help muttering,—"It was a changed day betwixt Master Heriot and his honest father in the Kirkgate,—but, doubtless, there was a difference between clinking on gold and silver, and clattering upon pewter."

On they glided, by the assistance of the oars of four stout watermen, along the Thames, which then served for the principal high road betwixt London and Westminster; for few ventured on horseback through the narrow and crowded streets of the city, and coaches were then a luxury reserved only for the higher nobility, and to which no citizen, whatever was his wealth, presumed to aspire. The beauty of the banks, especially on the northern side, where the gardens of the nobility descended from their hotels, in many places, down to the water's edge, was pointed out to Nigel by his kind conductor, and was pointed out in vain. The mind of the young Lord of Glenvarloch was filled with anticipations, not the most pleasant, concerning the manner in which he was likely to be received by that monarch, in whose behalf his family had been nearly reduced to ruin; and he was, with the usual mental anxiety of those in such a situation, framing imaginary questions from the king, and over-toiling his spirit in devising answers to them.

His conductor saw the labour of Nigel's mind, and avoided increasing it by further conversation; so that, when he had explained to him briefly the ceremonies observed at court on such occasions of presentation, the rest of their voyage was performed in silence.

They landed at Whitehall Stairs, and entered the palace, after announcing their names,—the guards paying to Lord Glenvarloch the respect and honours due to his rank.

The young man's heart beat high and thick within him as he came into the royal apartments. His education abroad, conducted, as it had been, on a narrow and limited scale, had given him but imperfect ideas of the grandeur of a court; and the philosophical reflections which taught him to set ceremonial and exterior splendour at defiance, proved, like other maxims of mere philosophy, ineffectual, at the moment they were weighed against the impression naturally made on the mind of an inexperienced youth by the unusual magnificence of the scene. The splendid apartments through which they passed, the rich apparel of the grooms, guards, and domestics in waiting, and the ceremonial attending their passage through the long suite of apartments, had something in it, trifling and commonplace as it might appear to practised courtiers, embarrassing and even alarming, to one who went through these forms for the first time, and who was doubtful what sort of reception was to accompany his first appearance before his sovereign.

Heriot, in anxious attention to save his young friend from any momentary awkwardness, had taken care to give the necessary password to the warders, grooms of the chambers, ushers, or by whatever name they were designated; so they passed on without interruption.

In this manner they passed several anterooms, filled chiefly with guards, attendants of the court, and their acquaintances, male and female, who, dressed in their best apparel, and with eyes rounded by eager curiosity to make the most of their opportunity, stood, with beseeming modesty, ranked against the wall, in a manner which indicated that they were spectators, not performers, in the courtly exhibition.

Through these exterior apartments Lord Glenvarloch and his city friend advanced into a large and splendid withdrawing-room, communicating with the presence-chamber, into which anteroom were admitted those only, who, from birth, their posts in the state or household, or by the particular grant of the king, had right to attend the court, as men entitled to pay their respects to their sovereign.

Amid this favoured and selected company Nigel observed Sir Mungo Malagrowther, who, avoided and discountenanced by those who knew how low he stood in court interest and favour, was but too happy in the opportunity of hooking himself upon a person of Lord Glenvarloch's rank, who was, as yet, so inexperienced as to feel it difficult to shake off an intruder.

The knight forthwith framed his grim features to a ghastly smile, and, after a preliminary and patronising nod to George Heriot, accompanied with an aristocratic wave of the hand, which intimated at once superiority and protection, he laid aside altogether the honest citizen, to whom he owed many a dinner, to attach himself exclusively to the young lord, although he suspected

he might be occasionally in the predicament of needing one as much as himself. And even the notice of this original, singular and unamiable as he was, was not entirely indifferent to the Lord Glenvarloch, since the absolute and somewhat constrained silence of his good friend Heriot, which left him at liberty to retire painfully to his own agitating reflections, was now relieved; while, on the other hand, he could not help feeling interest in the sharp and sarcastic information poured upon him by an observant, though discontented courtier, to whom a patient auditor, and he a man of title and rank, was as much a prize, as his acute and communicative disposition rendered him an entertaining companion to Nigel Olifaunt. Heriot, in the meantime, neglected by Sir Mungo, and avoiding every attempt by which the grateful politeness of Lord Glenvarloch strove to bring him into the conversation, stood by, with a kind of half-smile on his countenance; but whether excited by Sir Mungo's wit, or arising at his expense, did not exactly appear.

In the meantime, the trio occupied a nook of the anteroom, next to the door of the presence-chamber, which was not yet thrown open, when Maxwell, with his rod of office, came bustling into the apartment, where most men, excepting those of high rank, made way for him. He stopped beside the party in which we are interested, looked for a moment at the young Scots nobleman, then made a slight obeisance to Heriot, and lastly, addressing Sir Mungo Malagrowther, began a hurried complaint to him of the misbehaviour of the Gentlemen Pensioners and warders, who suffered all sorts of citizens, suitors, and scriveners to sneak into the outer apartments, without either respect or decency.—'The English,' he said, 'were scandalized, for such a thing durst not be attempted in the Queen's days. In her time, there was then the court-yard for the mobility, and the apartments for the nobility; and it reflects on your place, Sir Mungo,' he added, 'belonging to the household as you do, that such things should not be better ordered.'

Here Sir Mungo, afflicted, as was frequently the case on such occasions, with one of his usual fits of deafness, answered, 'It was no wonder the mobility used freedoms, when those whom they saw in office were so little better in blood and havings than themselves.'

'You are right, sir—quite right,' said Maxwell, putting his hand on the tarnished embroidery on the old knight's sleeve,—'when such fellows see men in office dressed in cast-off suits, like paltry stage-players, it is no wonder the court is thronged with intruders.'

'Were you lauding the taste of my embroidery, Maister Maxwell?' answered the knight, who apparently interpreted the deputy-chamberlain's meaning rather from his action than his words; —'it is of an ancient and liberal pattern, having been made by your mother's father, auld James Stitchell, a master-fashioner of honest repute, in Merlin's Wynd, whom I made a point to employ, as I am now happy to remember, seeing your father thought fit to intermarry with sic a person's daughter.'

Maxwell looked stern; but, conscious there was nothing to be got of Sir Mungo in the way of amends, and that prosecuting the quarrel with such an adversary would only render him ridiculous, and make public a mis-alliance of which he had no reason to be proud, he covered his resentment with a sneer; and, expressing his regret that Sir Mungo was become too deaf to understand or attend to what was said to him, walked on, and planted himself beside the folding-doors of the presence-chamber, at which he was to perform the duty of deputy-chamberlain, or usher, so soon as they should be opened.

'The door of the presence is about to open,' said the goldsmith in a whisper to his young friend; 'my condition permits me to go no farther with you. Fail not to present yourself boldly, according to your birth, and offer your supplication; which the King will not refuse to accept, and, as I hope, to consider favourably.'

As he spoke, the door of the presence-chamber opened accordingly, and, as is usual on such occasions, the courtiers began to advance towards it, and to enter in a slow, but continuous and uninterrupted stream.

As Nigel presented himself in his turn at the entrance, and mentioned his name and title, Maxwell seemed to hesitate. 'You are not known to any one,' he said. 'It is my duty to suffer no one to pass to the presence, my lord, whose face is unknown to me, unless upon the word of a responsible person.'

'I came with Master George Heriot,' said Nigel, in some embarrassment at this unexpected interruption.

'Master Heriot's name will pass current for much gold and silver, my lord,' replied Maxwell, with a civil sneer, 'but not for birth and rank. I am compelled by my office to be peremptory. The entrance is impeded—I am much concerned to say it—your lordship must stand back.'

'What is the matter?' said an old Scottish nobleman, who had been speaking with George Heriot, after he had separated from Nigel, and who now came forward, observing the altercation betwixt the latter and Maxwell.

'It is only Master Deputy-Chamberlain Maxwell,' said Sir Mungo Malagrowther, 'expressing his joy to see Lord Glenvarloch at court, whose father gave him his office—at least I think he is speaking to that purport—for your lordship kens my imperfection.' A subdued laugh, such as the situation permitted, passed round amongst those who heard this specimen of Sir Mungo's sarcastic temper. But the old nobleman stepped still more forward, saying—'What!—the son of my gallant old opponent, Ochtred Olifaunt?—I will introduce him to the presence myself.'

So saying, he took Nigel by the arm, without farther ceremony, and was about to lead him forward, when Maxwell, still keeping his rod across the door, said, but with hesitation and embarrassment,—'My lord, this gentleman is not known, and I have orders to be scrupulous.'

'Tutti-taiti, man,' said the old lord, 'I will be answerable he is his father's son, from the cut of his eyebrow—and thou, Maxwell, knew'st his father well enough to have spared thy scruples. Let us pass, man.' So saying, he put aside the deputy-chamberlain's rod, and entered the pre-

sence-room, still holding the young nobleman by the arm.

'Why, I must know you, man,' he said—'I must know you. I knew your father weel, man, and I have broke a lance and crossed a blade with him; and it is to my credit that I am living to brag of it. He was King's-man, and I was Queen's-man, during the Douglas wars—young fellows both, that feared neither fire nor steel; and we had some old feudal quarrels besides, that had come down from father to son, with our seal-rings, two-handed broadswords, and plate-coats, and the crests on our burgonets.'

'Too loud, my Lord of Huntinglen,' whispered a gentleman of the chamber.—'The King! the King!'

The old earl (for such he proved) took the hint, and was silent; and James, advancing from a side-door, received in succession the compliments of strangers, while a little group of favourite courtiers, or officers of the household, stood around him, to whom he addressed himself from time to time. Some more pains had been bestowed on his toilet than upon the occasion when we first presented the monarch to our readers; but there was a natural awkwardness about his figure which prevented his clothes from sitting handsomely, and the prudence or timidity of his disposition had made him adopt the custom, already noticed, of wearing a dress so thickly quilted as might withstand the stroke of a dagger, which added an ungainly stiffness to his whole appearance, contrasting oddly with the frivolous, ungraceful, and fidgeting motions with which he accompanied his conversation. And yet, though the king's deportment was very undignified, he had a manner so kind, familiar, and good-humoured, was so little apt to veil over or conceal his own foibles, and had so much indulgence and sympathy for those of others, that his address, joined to his learning, and a certain proportion of shrewd mother-wit, failed not to make a favourable impression on those who approached his person.

When the Earl of Huntinglen had presented Nigel to his sovereign, a ceremony which the good peer took upon himself, the king received the young lord very graciously, and observed to his introducer, that he 'was fain to see them twa stand side by side; for I trow, my Lord Huntinglen,' continued he, 'your ancestors, ay, and e'en your lordship's self and this lad's father, have stood front to front at the sword's point, and that is a worse posture.'

'Until your Majesty,' said Lord Huntinglen, 'made Lord Ochtred and me cross palms, upon the memorable day when your Majesty feasted all the nobles that were at feud together, and made them join hands in your presence'——

'I mind it weel,' said the king; 'I mind it weel—it was a blessed day, being the nineteen of September, of all days in the year—and it was a blithe sport to see how some of the carles grinned as they clapped loofs together. By my saul, I thought some of them, mair special the Hieland chiels, wad have broken out in our own presence; but we caused them to march hand in hand to the Cross, ourselves leading the way, and there drink a blithe cup of kindness with ilk other, to the staunching of feud, and perpetuation of amity. Auld John Anderson was provost that year—the carle grat for joy, and the bailies and councillors danced bare-headed in our presence like five-year-auld colts, for very triumph.'

'It was indeed a happy day,' said Lord Huntinglen, 'and will not be forgotten in the history of your Majesty's reign.'

'I would not that it were, my lord,' replied the monarch—'I would not that it were pretermitted in our annals. Ay, ay—*Beati pacifici.* My English lieges here may weel make much of me, for I would have them to know, they have gotten the only peaceable man that ever came of my family. If James with the Fiery Face had come amongst you,' he said, looking round him, 'or my great-grandsire of Flodden memory!'

'We should have sent him back to the north again,' whispered one English nobleman.

'At least,' said another, in the same inaudible tone, 'we should have had a *man* to our sovereign, though he were but a Scotsman.'

'And now, my young springald,' said the king to Lord Glenvarloch, 'where have you been spending your calf-time?'

'At Leyden, of late, may it please your Majesty,' answered Lord Nigel.

'Aha! a scholar,' said the king; 'and, by my saul, a modest and ingenuous youth, that hath not forgotten how to blush, like most of our travelled Monsieurs. We will treat him conformably.'

Then, drawing himself up, coughing slightly, and looking around him with the conscious importance of superior learning, while all the courtiers who understood, or understood not, Latin, pressed eagerly forward to listen, the sapient monarch prosecuted his inquiries as follows:—

'Hem! hem! *Salve bis, quaterque salve, Glenvarlochides noster! Nuperumne ab Lugduno Batavorum Britanniam rediisti!*'

The young nobleman replied, bowing low,—

'*Imo, Rex augustissime—biennium fere apud Lugdunenses moratus sum.*'

James proceeded,—

'*Biennium dicis? bene, bene, optume factum est—Non uno die, quod dicunt,—intelligisti, Domine Glenvarlochiensis?* Aha!'

Nigel replied by a reverent bow, and the king, turning to those behind him, said,—

'*Adolescens quidem ingenui vultus ingenuique pudoris.*' Then resumed his learned queries. '*Et quid hodie Lugdunenses loquuntur—Vossius vester nihilne novi scripsit?—nihil certe, quod doleo, typis recenter edidit.*'

'*Valet quidem Vossius, Rex benevole,*' replied Nigel, '*ast senex veneratissimus annum agit, ni fallor, septuagesimum.*'

'*Virum, mehercle, vix tam grandævum crediderim,*' replied the monarch. '*Et Vorstius iste?—Arminii improbi successor aque ac sectator—Herosne adhuc, ut cum Homero loquar, Ζωὸς ἐστὶ καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ δέρκων?*'

Nigel, by good fortune, remembered that Vorstius, the divine last mentioned in his Majesty's queries about the state of Dutch literature, had been engaged in a personal con-

troversy with James, in which the king had taken so deep an interest, as at length to hint in his public correspondence with the United States, that they would do well to apply the secular arm to stop the progress of heresy by violent measures against the professor's person — a demand which their Mighty Mightinesses' principles of universal toleration induced them to elude, though with some difficulty. Knowing all this, Lord Glenvarloch, though a courtier of only five minutes' standing, had address enough to reply,

'*Vivum quidem, haud diu est, hominem videbam—vigere autem quis dicat qui sub fulminibus eloquentiæ tuæ, Rex augustissime, jamdudum pronus jacet, et prostratus est?*' *

This last tribute to his polemical powers completed James's happiness, which the triumph of exhibiting his erudition had already raised to a considerable height.

He rubbed his hands, snapped his fingers, fidgeted, chuckled, exclaimed '*Euge! belle! optime!*' and turning to the Bishops of Exeter and Oxford, who stood behind him, he said — 'Ye see, my lords, no bad specimen of our Scottish Latinity, with which language we would all our subjects of England were as well imbued as this and other youths of honourable birth, in our auld kingdom; also we keep the genuine and Roman pronunciation, like other learned nations on the Continent, sae that we hold communing with any scholar in the universe, who can but speak the Latin tongue; whereas ye, our learned subjects of England, have introduced into your universities, otherwise most learned, a fashion of pronouncing like unto the "nippit foot and clippit foot" of the bride in the fairy tale, whilk manner of speech (take it not amiss that I be round with you) can be understood by no nation on earth saving yourselves, whereby Latin, *quoad Anglos*, ceaseth to be *communis lingua*, the general dragoman or interpreter, between all the wise men of the earth.'

The Bishop of Exeter bowed, as in acquiescence to the royal censure; but he of Oxford stood upright, as mindful over what subjects his see extended, and as being equally willing to become food for faggots in defence of the Latinity of the university, as for any article of his religious creed.

The king, without awaiting an answer from either prelate, proceeded to question Lord Nigel, but in the vernacular tongue. — 'Weel, my likely Alumnus of the Muses, and what make you so far from the north?'

'To pay my homage to your Majesty,' said the young nobleman, kneeling on one knee, 'and to lay before you,' he added, 'this my humble and dutiful supplication.'

The presenting of a pistol would certainly have startled King James more, but could (setting apart the fright) hardly have been more unpleasing to his indolent disposition.

'And is it even so, man?' said he; 'and can no single man, were it but for the rarity of the case, ever come up frae Scotland, excepting *ex proposito*—on set purpose, to see what he can make out of his loving sovereign? It is but three days syne that we had weel nigh lost our life, and put three kingdoms into dule weeds, from the over haste of a clumsy handed peasant, to thrust a packet into our hand, and now we are besett by the like impediment in our very court. To our secretary with that gear, my lord—to our secretary with that gear.'

'I have already offered my humble supplication to your Majesty's Secretary of State,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'but it seems ——'

'That he would not receive it, I warrant?' said the king, interrupting him; 'by my saul, our secretary kens that point of king craft, called refusing, better than we do, and will look at nothing but what he likes himsel.—I think I wad make a better secretary to him than he to me.—Weel, my lord, you are welcome to London; and as ye seem an acute and learned youth, I advise ye to turn your neb northward as soon as ye like, and settle yoursel for a while at Saint Andrews, and we will be right glad to hear that you prosper in your studies.—*Incumbite remis fortiter.*'

While the king spoke, he held the petition of the young lord carelessly, like one who only delayed till the supplicant's back was turned, to throw it away, or at least lay it aside to be no more looked at. The petitioner, who read this in his cold and indifferent looks, and in the manner in which he twisted and crumpled together the paper, arose with a bitter sense of anger and disappointment, made a profound obeisance, and was about to retire hastily. But Lord Huntinglen, who stood by him, checked his intention by an almost imperceptible touch upon the skirt of his cloak, and Nigel, taking the hint, retreated only a few steps from the royal presence, and then made a pause. In the meantime, Lord Huntinglen kneeled before James, in his turn, and said—'May it please your Majesty to remember, that upon one certain occasion you did promise to grant me a boon every year of your sacred life?' †

'I mind it weel, man,' answered James, 'I mind it weel, and good reason why—it was when you unclasped the fause traitor Ruthven's fangs from about our royal throat, and drove your dirk into him like a true subject. We did then, as you remind us (whilk was unnecessary), being partly beside ourselves with joy at our liberation, promise we would grant you a free boon every year; whilk promise, on our coming to menseful possession of our royal faculties, we did confirm, *restrictive* always and *conditionaliter*, that your lordship's demand should be such as we, in our royal discretion, should think reasonable.'

'Even so, gracious sovereign,' said the old earl, 'and may I yet further crave to know if I have ever exceeded the bounds of your royal benevolence?'

'By my word, man, no!' said the king; 'I cannot remember you have asked much for yourself, if it be not a dog or a hawk, or a buck out of our park at Theobald's, or such like. But to what serves this preface?'

* Lest any lady or gentleman should suspect there is aught of mystery concealed under the sentences printed in italics, they will be pleased to understand that they contain only a few commonplace Latin phrases relating to the state of letters in Holland, which neither deserve nor would endure a literal translation.

† Note K. Lord Huntinglen.

'To the boon which I am now to ask of your Grace,' said Lord Huntinglen, 'which is, that your Majesty would be pleased, on the instant, to look at the placet of Lord Glenvarloch, and do upon it what your own just and royal nature shall think meet and just, without reference to your secretary or any other of your council.'

'By my saul, my lord, this is strange,' said the king; 'ye are pleading for the son of your enemy!'

'Of one who *was* my enemy till your Majesty made him my friend,' answered Lord Huntinglen.

'Weel spoken, my lord!' said the king; 'and with a true Christian spirit. And, respecting the supplication of this young man, I partly guess where the matter lies; and in plain troth I had promised to George Heriot to be good to the lad.—But then, here the shoe pinches. Steenie and Baby Charles cannot abide him—neither can your own son, my lord; and so, methinks, he had better go down to Scotland before he comes to ill luck by them.'

'My son, an it please your Majesty, so far as he is concerned, shall not direct my doings,' said the earl, 'nor any wild headed young man of them all.'

'Why, neither shall they mine,' replied the monarch; 'by my father's saul, none of them all shall play Rex with me. I will do what I will, and what I ought, like a free king.'

'Your Majesty will then grant me my boon?' said the Lord Huntinglen.

'Ay, marry will I—marry will I,' said the king; 'but follow me this way, man, where we may be more private.'

He led Lord Huntinglen with rather a hurried step through the courtiers, all of whom gazed earnestly on this unwonted scene, as is the fashion of all courts on similar occasions. The king passed into a little cabinet, and bade, in the first moment, Lord Huntinglen lock or bar the door; but countermanded his direction in the next, saying, 'No, no, no—bread o' life, man, I am a free king—will do what I will and what I should—I am *justus et tenax propositi*, man—nevertheless, keep by the door, Lord Huntinglen, in case Steenie should come in with his mad humour.'

'O, my poor master!' groaned the Earl of Huntinglen. 'When you were in your own cold country, you had warmer blood in your veins.'

The king hastily looked over the petition or memorial, every now and then glancing his eye towards the door, and then sinking it hastily on the paper, ashamed that Lord Huntinglen, whom he respected, should suspect him of timidity.

'To grant the truth,' he said, after he had finished his hasty perusal, 'this is a hard case, and harder than it was represented to me, though I had some inkling of it before. And so the lad only wants payment of the siller due from us, in order to reclaim his paternal estate? But then, Huntinglen, the lad will have other debts—and why burden himsel' with sae mony acres of barren woodland? Let the land gang, man, let the land gang; Steenie has the promise of it from our Scottish Chancellor—it is the best hunting ground in Scotland—and Baby Charles and Steenie want to kill a buck there this next year—they maun hae the land—they maun hae the land; and our debt shall be paid to the young man plack and bawbee, and he may have the spending of it at our court; or if he has such an eard hunger, wounds! man, we'll stuff his stomach with English land, which is worth twice as much, ay, ten times as much, as these accursed hills and heughs, and mosses and muirs, that he is sae keen after.'

All this while the poor king ambled up and down the apartment in a piteous state of uncertainty, which was made more ridiculous by his shambling, circular mode of managing his legs, and his ungainly fashion on such occasions of fiddling with the bunches of ribbons which fastened the lower part of his dress.

Lord Huntinglen listened with great composure, and answered, 'An it please your Majesty, there was an answer yielded by Naboth when Ahab coveted his vineyard—"The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."'

'Ey, my lord—ey, my lord!' ejaculated James, while the colour mounted both to his cheek and nose; 'I hope ye mean not to teach me divinity? Ye need not fear, my lord, that I will shun to do justice to every man; and since your lordship will give me no help to take up this man in a more peaceful manner—whilk, methinks, would be better for the young man, as I said before—why—since it maun be so—'sdeath, I am a free king man, and he shall have his money, and redeem his land, and make a kirk and a miln of it an he will.' So saying, he hastily wrote an order on the Scottish Exchequer for the sum in question, and then added, 'How they are to pay it, I see not; but I warrant he will find money on the order among the goldsmiths, who can find it for every one but me.—And now you see, my Lord of Huntinglen, that I am neither an untrue man, to deny you the boon whilk I became bound for, nor an Ahab, to covet Naboth's vineyard; nor a mere nose of wax, to be twisted this way and that, by favourites and counsellors at their pleasure. I think you will grant now that I am none of those?'

'You are my own native and noble prince,' said Huntinglen, as he knelt to kiss the royal hand—'just and generous, whenever you listen to the workings of your own heart.'

'Ay, ay,' said the king, laughing good naturedly, as he raised his faithful servant from the ground, 'that is what ye all say when I do anything to please ye. There—there, take the sign manual, and away with you and this young fellow. I wonder Steenie and Baby Charles have not broken in on us before now.'

Lord Huntinglen hastened from the cabinet, foreseeing a scene at which he was unwilling to be present, but which sometimes occurred when James roused himself so far as to exert his own free will, of which he boasted so much, in spite of that of his imperious favourite Steenie, as he called the Duke of Buckingham, from a supposed resemblance betwixt his very handsome countenance, and that with which the Italian artists represented the proto martyr Stephen. In fact,

the haughty favourite, who had the unusual good fortune to stand as high in the opinion of the heir-apparent as of the existing monarch, had considerably diminished in his respect towards the latter; and it was apparent to the more shrewd courtiers that James endured his domination rather from habit, timidity, and a dread of encountering his stormy passions, than from any heartfelt continuation of regard towards him, whose greatness had been the work of his own hands. To save himself the pain of seeing what was likely to take place on the duke's return, and to preserve the king from the additional humiliation which the presence of such a witness must have occasioned, the earl left the cabinet as speedily as possible, having first carefully pocketed the important sign-manual.

No sooner had he entered the presence-room, than he hastily sought Lord Glenvarloch, who had withdrawn into the embrasure of one of the windows, from the general gaze of men who seemed disposed only to afford him the notice which arises from surprise and curiosity, and, taking him by the arm, without speaking, led him out of the presence-chamber into the first anteroom. Here they found the worthy goldsmith, who approached them with looks of curiosity, which were checked by the old lord, who said hastily, 'All is well.—Is your barge in waiting?' Heriot answered in the affirmative. 'Then,' said Lord Huntinglen, 'you shall give me a cast in it, as the watermen say, and I, in requital, will give you both your dinner; for we must have some conversation together.'

They both followed the earl without speaking, and were in the second anteroom when the important annunciation of the ushers, and the hasty murmur with which all made ample way as the company repeated to each other,—'The Duke—the Duke!' made them aware of the approach of the omnipotent favourite.

He entered, that unhappy minion of court favour, sumptuously dressed in the picturesque attire which will live for ever on the canvas of Vandyke, and which marks so well the proud age, when aristocracy, though undermined and nodding to its fall, still, by external show and profuse expense, endeavoured to assert its paramount superiority over the inferior orders. The handsome and commanding countenance, stately form, and graceful action and manners of the Duke of Buckingham, made him become that picturesque dress beyond any man of his time. At present, however, his countenance seemed discomposed, his dress a little more disordered than became the place, his step hasty, and his voice imperative.

All marked the angry spot upon his brow, and bore back so suddenly to make way for him, that the Earl of Huntinglen, who affected no extraordinary haste on the occasion, with his companions, who could not, if they would, have decently left him, remained as it were by themselves in the middle of the room, and in the very path of the angry favourite. He touched his cap ... ly as he looked on Huntinglen, but unbonneted to Heriot, and sunk his beaver, with its shadowy plume, as low as the floor, with a profound air of mock respect. In returning his greeting, which he did simply and unaffectedly, the citizen only said,—'Too much courtesy, my lord Duke, is often the reverse of kindness.'

'I grieve you should think so, Master Heriot,' answered the duke; 'I only meant, by my homage, to claim your protection, sir, your patronage. You are become, I understand, a solicitor of suits—a promoter—an undertaker—a fautor of court suitors of merit and quality, who chance to be penniless. I trust your bags will bear you out in your new boast.'

'They will bear me the farther, my lord Duke,' answered the goldsmith, 'that my boast is but small.'

'O, you do yourself less than justice, my good Master Heriot,' continued the duke, in the same tone of irony; 'you have a marvellous court faction, to be the son of an Edinburgh tinker. Have the goodness to prefer me to the knowledge of the high-born nobleman who is honoured and advantaged by your patronage.'

'That shall be *my* task,' said Lord Huntinglen, with emphasis. 'My lord Duke, I desire you to know Nigel Olifaunt, Lord Glenvarloch, representative of one of the most ancient and powerful baronial houses in Scotland.—Lord Glenvarloch, I present you to his Grace the Duke of Buckingham, representative of Sir George Villiers, knight, of Brookesby in the county of Leicester.'

The duke coloured still more high as he bowed to Lord Glenvarloch scornfully, a courtesy which the other returned haughtily, and with restrained indignation. 'We know each other, then,' said the duke, after a moment's pause, and as if he had seen something in the young nobleman which merited more serious notice than the bitter raillery with which he commenced—'we know each other—and you know me, my lord, for your enemy.' *

'I thank you for your plainness, my lord Duke,' replied Nigel; 'an open enemy is better than a hollow friend.'

'For you, my Lord Huntinglen,' said the duke, 'methinks you have but now overstepped the limits of the indulgence permitted to you, as the father of the Prince's friend, and my own.'

'By my word, my lord Duke,' replied the earl, 'it is easy for any one to outstep boundaries of the existence of which he is not aware. It is neither to secure my protection nor approbation that my son keeps such exalted company.'

'O, my lord, we know you, and indulge you,' said the duke; 'you are one of those who presume for a life long upon the merit of one good action.'

'In faith, my lord, and if it be so,' said the old earl, 'I have at least the advantage of such as presume more than I do, without having done any action of merit whatever. But I ... as we, to quarrel with you, my lord—we ... reasonable.' friends nor enemies—you have y... said the old have mine.' ... crave to know

Buckingham only replied by ... bounds of your bonnet, and shaking its lofty plu... ess and scornful toss of the head ... the king; 'I thus; the duke walking onwar... ked much for apartments, and the others ... hawk, or a buck and repairing to Whitehall... or such-like. But embarked on board the barge ...

* Note L. Bucking... inglen.

CHAPTER X.

Bid not thy fortune troll upon the wheels
Of yonder dancing cubes of mottled bone;
And drown it not, like Egypt's royal harlot,
Dissolving her rich pearl in the brimm'd wine-cup.
These are the arts, Lothario, which shrink acres
Into brief yards—bring sterling pounds to farthings,
Credit to infamy; and the poor gull,
Who might have lived an honour'd, easy life,
To ruin, and an unregarded grave.

THE CHANGES.

WHEN they were fairly embarked on the Thames, the earl took from his pocket the supplication, and, pointing out to George Heriot the royal warrant endorsed thereon, asked him if it was in due and regular form? The worthy citizen hastily read it over, thrust forth his hand as if to congratulate the Lord Glenvarloch, then checked himself, pulled out his barnacles (a present from old David Ramsay), and again perused the warrant with the most business-like and critical attention. 'It is strictly correct and formal,' he said, looking to the Earl of Huntinglen; 'and I sincerely rejoice at it.'

'I doubt nothing of its formality,' said the earl; 'the King understands business well, and, if he does not practise it often, it is only because indolence obscures parts which are naturally well qualified for the discharge of affairs. But what is next to be done for our young friend, Master Heriot? You know how I am circumstanced. Scottish lords living at the English court have seldom command of money; yet, unless a sum can be presently raised on this warrant, matters standing as you hastily hinted to me, the mortgage, wadset, or whatever it is called, will be foreclosed.'

'It is true,' said Heriot, in some embarrassment; 'there is a large sum wanted in redemption—yet, if it is not raised, there will be an expiry of the legal, as our lawyers call it, and the estate will be evicted.'

'My noble—my worthy friends, who have taken up my cause so undeservedly, so unexpectedly,' said Nigel, 'do not let me be a burden on your kindness. You have already done too much where nothing was merited.'

'Peace, man, peace,' said Lord Huntinglen, 'and let old Heriot and me puzzle this scent out. He is about to open—hark to him!'

'My lord,' said the citizen, 'the Duke of Buckingham sneers at our city money-bags; yet they can sometimes open, to prop a falling and a noble house.'

'We know they can,' said Lord Huntinglen—'mind not Buckingham, he is a Peg-a-Ramsey. And now for the remedy.'

'I partly hinted to Lord Glenvarloch already,' said Heriot, 'that the redemption money might be advanced upon such a warrant as the present, and I will engage my honour that it can. But then, in order to secure the lender, he must come in the shoes of the creditor to whom he advances payment.'

'Come in his shoes,' replied the earl, 'why, what have boots or shoes to do with this matter, my good friend?'

'It is a law phrase, my lord. My experience has made me pick up a few of them,' said Heriot.

'Ay, and of better things along with them, Master George,' replied Lord Huntinglen; 'but what means it?'

'Simply this,' resumed the citizen; 'that the lender of this money will transact with the holder of the mortgage, or wadset, over the estate of Glenvarloch, and obtain from him such a conveyance to his right as shall leave the lands pledged for the debt, in case the warrant upon the Scottish Exchequer should prove unproductive. I fear, in this uncertainty of public credit, that, without some such counter security, it will be very difficult to find so large a sum.'

'Ho la!' said the Earl of Huntinglen, 'halt there! a thought strikes me.—What if the new creditor should admire the estate as a hunting-field, as much as my Lord Grace of Buckingham seems to do, and should wish to kill a buck there in the summer season? It seems to me, that, on your plan, Master George, our new friend will be as well entitled to block Lord Glenvarloch out of his inheritance as the present holder of the mortgage.'

The citizen laughed. 'I will engage,' he said, 'that the keenest sportsman to whom I may apply on this occasion shall not have a thought beyond the Lord Mayor's Easter-hunt in Epping Forest. But your lordship's caution is reasonable. The creditor must be bound to allow Lord Glenvarloch sufficient time to redeem his estate by means of the royal warrant, and must waive in his favour the right of instant foreclosure, which may be, I should think, the more easily managed, as the right of redemption must be exercised in his own name.'

'But where shall we find a person in London fit to draw the necessary writings?' said the earl. 'If my old friend Sir John Skene of Halyards had lived, we should have had advice; but time presses, and'——

'I know,' said Heriot, 'an orphan lad, a scrivener, that dwells by Temple Bar; he can draw deeds both after the English and Scottish fashion, and I have trusted him often in matters of weight and of importance. I will send one of my serving-men for him, and the mutual deeds may be executed in your lordship's presence; for, as things stand, there should be no delay.' His lordship readily assented; and as they now landed upon the private stairs leading down to the river from the gardens of the handsome hotel which he inhabited, the messenger was despatched without loss of time.

Nigel, who had sat almost stupefied while these zealous friends volunteered for him in arranging the measures by which his fortune was to be disembarrassed, now made another eager attempt to force upon them his broken expressions of thanks and gratitude. But he was again silenced by Lord Huntinglen, who declared he would not hear a word on that topic, and proposed, instead, that they should take a turn in the pleached alley, or sit upon the stone bench which overlooked the Thames, until his son's arrival should give the signal for dinner.

'I desire to introduce Dalgarno and Lord Glenvarloch to each other,' he said, 'as two who will be near neighbours, and I trust will be more kind ones than their fathers were formerly. There is but three Scots miles be-

twixt the castles, and the turrets of the one are visible from the battlements of the other.'

The old earl was silent for a moment, and appeared to muse upon the recollections which the vicinity of the castles had summoned up.

'Does Lord Dalgarno follow the court to Newmarket next week?' said Heriot, by way of removing the conversation.

'He proposes so, I think,' answered Lord Huntinglen, relapsed into his reverie for a minute or two, and then addressed Nigel somewhat abruptly—

'My young friend, when you attain possession of your inheritance, as I hope you soon will, I trust you will not add one to the idle followers of the court, but reside on your patrimonial estate, cherish your ancient tenants, relieve and assist your poor kinsmen, protect the poor against subaltern oppression, and do what our fathers used to do with fewer lights and with less means than we have.'

'And yet the advice to keep the country,' said Heriot, 'comes from an ancient and constant ornament of the court.'

'From an old courtier, indeed,' said the earl, 'and the first of my family that could so write himself—my grey beard falls on a cambric ruff and a silken doublet—my father's descended upon a buff coat and a breastplate. I would not that these days of battle returned; but I should love well to make the oaks of my old forest of Dalgarno ring once more with halloo and horn and hound, and to have the old stone-arched hall return the hearty shout of my vassals and tenants, as the bicker and the quaigh walked their rounds amongst them. I should like to see the broad Tay once more before I die—not even the Thames can match it, in my mind.'

'Surely, my lord,' said the citizen, 'all this might be easily done—it costs but a moment's resolution and the journey of some brief days, and you will be where you desire to be—what is there to prevent you?'

'Habits, Master George, habits,' replied the earl, 'which to young men are like threads of silk, so lightly are they worn, so soon broken; but which hang on our old limbs as if time had stiffened them into gyves of iron. To go to Scotland for a brief space were but labour in vain; and when I think of abiding there, I cannot bring myself to leave my old master, to whom I fancy myself sometimes useful, and whose weal and woe I have shared for so many years. But Dalgarno shall be a Scottish noble.'

'Has he visited the north?' said Heriot.

'He was there last year, and made such a report of the country, that the Prince has expressed a longing to see it.'

'Lord Dalgarno is in high grace with his Highness and the Duke of Buckingham?' observed the goldsmith.

'He is so,' answered the earl,—'I pray it may be for the advantage of them all. The Prince is just and equitable in his sentiments, though cold and stately in his manners, and very obstinate in his most trifling purposes; and the Duke, noble and gallant, and generous and open, is fiery, ambitious, and impetuous. Dalgarno has none of these faults, and such as he may have of his own may perchance be corrected by the society in which he moves—See, here he comes.'

Lord Dalgarno accordingly advanced from the farther end of the alley to the bench on which his father and his guests were seated, so that Nigel had full leisure to peruse his countenance and figure. He was dressed point-device, and almost to extremity, in the splendid fashion of the time, which suited well with his age, probably about five-and-twenty, with a noble form and fine countenance, in which last could easily be traced the manly features of his father, but softened by a more habitual air of assiduous courtesy than the stubborn old earl had ever condescended to assume towards the world in general. In other respects his address was gallant, free, and unencumbered either by pride or ceremony—far remote certainly from the charge either of haughty coldness or forward impetuosity; and so far his father had justly freed him from the marked faults which he ascribed to the manners of the prince and his favourite Buckingham.

While the old earl presented his young acquaintance Lord Glenvarloch to his son, as one whom he would have him love and honour, Nigel marked the countenance of Lord Dalgarno closely, to see if he could detect aught of that secret dislike which the king had, in one of his broken expostulations, seemed to intimate, as arising from a clashing of interests betwixt his new friend and the great Buckingham. But nothing of this was visible; on the contrary, Lord Dalgarno received his new acquaintance with the open frankness and courtesy which makes conquest at once, when addressed to the feelings of an ingenuous young man.

It need hardly be told that his open and friendly address met equally ready and cheerful acceptation from Nigel Olifaunt. For many months, and while a youth not much above two-and-twenty, he had been restrained by circumstances from the conversation of his equals. When, on his father's sudden death, he left the Low Countries for Scotland, he had found himself involved, to all appearance inextricably, with the details of the law, all of which threatened to end in the alienation of the patrimony which should support his hereditary rank. His term of sincere mourning, joined to injured pride, and the swelling of the heart under unexpected and undeserved misfortune, together with the uncertainty attending the issue of his affairs, had induced the young Lord of Glenvarloch to live, while in Scotland, in a very private and reserved manner. How he had passed his time in London, the reader is acquainted with. But this melancholy and secluded course of life was neither agreeable to his age nor to his temper, which was genial and sociable. He hailed, therefore, with sincere pleasure, the approaches which a young man of his own age and rank made towards him; and, when he had exchanged with Lord Dalgarno some of those words and signals by which, as surely as by those of freemasonry, young people recognise a mutual wish to be agreeable to each other, it seemed as if the two noblemen had been acquainted for some time.

Just as this tacit intercourse had been established, one of Lord Huntinglen's attendants

came down the alley, marshalling onwards a man dressed in black buckram, who followed him with tolerable speed, considering that, according to his sense of reverence and propriety, he kept his body bent and parallel to the horizon from the moment that he came in sight of the company to which he was about to be presented.

'Who is this, you cuckoldy knave?' said the old lord, who had retained the keen appetite and impatience of a Scottish baron even during a long alienation from his native country; 'and why does John Cook, with a murrain to him, keep back dinner?'

'I believe we are ourselves responsible for this person's intrusion,' said George Heriot; 'this is the scrivener whom we desire to see.—Look up, man, and see us in the face, as an honest man should, instead of bearing thy noddle charged against us thus like a battering-ram.'

The scrivener did look up accordingly, with the action of an automaton, which suddenly obeys the impulse of a pressed spring. But, strange to tell, not even the haste he had made to attend his patron's mandate, a business, as Master Heriot's message expressed, of weight and importance—nay, not even the state of depression in which, out of sheer humility, doubtless, he had his head stooped to the earth, from the moment he had trod the demesnes of the Earl of Huntinglen, had called any colour into his countenance. The drops stood on his brow from haste and toil, but his cheek was still pale and tallow-coloured as before; nay, what seemed stranger, his very hair, when he raised his head, hung down on either cheek as straight and sleek and undisturbed as it was when we first introduced him to our readers, seated at his quiet and humble desk.

Lord Dalgarno could not forbear a stifled laugh at the ridiculous and puritanical figure which presented itself like a starved anatomy to the company, and whispered at the same time into Lord Glenvarloch's ear—

'The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon,
Where got'st thou that goose-look?'

Nigel was too little acquainted with the English stage, to understand a quotation which had already grown matter of common allusion in London. Lord Dalgarno saw that he was not understood, and continued, 'That fellow, by his visage, should either be a saint or a most hypocritical rogue—and such is my excellent opinion of human nature, that I always suspect the worst. But they seem deep in business. Will you take a turn with me in the garden, my lord, or will you remain a member of this serious conclave?'

'With you, my lord, most willingly,' said Nigel; and they were turning away accordingly, when George Heriot, with the formality belonging to his station, observed that, 'as their business concerned Lord Glenvarloch, he had better remain, to make himself master of it, and witness to it.'

'My presence is utterly needless, my good lord;—and, my best friend, Master Heriot,' said the young nobleman, 'I shall understand nothing the better for cumbering you with my ignorance in these matters; and can only say at the end, as I now say at the beginning, that I dare not take the helm out of the hand of the kind pilots who have already guided my course within sight of a fair and unhoped-for haven. Whatever you recommend to me as fitting, I shall sign and seal; and the import of the deeds I shall better learn by a brief explanation from Master Heriot, if he will bestow so much trouble in my behalf, than by a thousand learned words and law terms from this person of skill.'

'He is right,' said Lord Huntinglen; 'our young friend is right, in confiding these matters to you and me, Master George Heriot—he has not misplaced his confidence.'

Master George Heriot cast a long look after the two young noblemen, who had now walked down the alley arm-in-arm, and at length said, 'He hath not, indeed, misplaced his confidence, as your lordship well and truly says—but, nevertheless, he is not in the right path; for it behoves every man to become acquainted with his own affairs, so soon as he hath any that are worth attending to.'

When he had made this observation, they applied themselves, with the scrivener, to look into various papers, and to direct in what manner writings should be drawn, which might at once afford sufficient security to those who were to advance the money, and at the same time preserve the right of the young nobleman to redeem the family estate, provided he should obtain the means of doing so, by the expected reimbursement from the Scottish Exchequer, or otherwise. It is needless to enter into those details. But it is not unimportant to mention, as an illustration of character, that Heriot went into the most minute legal details with a precision which showed that experience had made him master even of the intricacies of Scottish conveyancing; and that the Earl of Huntinglen, though far less acquainted with technical detail, suffered no step of the business to pass over, until he had attained a general but distinct idea of its import and its propriety.

They seemed to be admirably seconded in their benevolent intentions towards the young Lord Glenvarloch, by the skill and eager zeal of the scrivener, whom Heriot had introduced to this piece of business, the most important which Andrew had ever transacted in his life, and the particulars of which were moreover agitated in his presence between an actual earl, and one whose wealth and character might entitle him to be alderman of his ward, if not to be lord mayor, in his turn.

While they were thus in eager conversation on business, the good earl even forgetting the calls of his appetite, and the delay of dinner, in his anxiety to see that the scrivener received proper instructions, and that all was rightly weighed and considered, before dismissing him to engross the necessary deeds, the two young men walked together on the terrace which overhung the river, and talked on the topics which Lord Dalgarno, the eldest, and the most experienced, thought most likely to interest his new friend.

These naturally regarded the pleasures attending a court life; and Lord Dalgarno expressed much surprise at understanding that Nigel proposed an instant return to Scotland.

'You are jesting with me,' he said. 'All the

court rings—it is needless to mince it—with the extraordinary success of your suit—against the highest interest, it is said, now influencing the horizon at Whitehall. Men think of you—talk of you—fix their eyes on you—ask each other who is this young Scottish lord, who has stepped so far in a single day? They augur, in whispers to each other, how high and how far you may push your fortune—and all that you design to make of it is, to return to Scotland, eat raw oatmeal cakes baked upon a peat-fire, have your hand shaken by every loon of a blue-bonnet who chooses to dub you cousin, though your relationship comes by Noah; drink Scots twopenny ale, eat half-starved red-deer venison, when you can kill it, ride upon a Galloway, and be called my right honourable and maist worthy lord.'

'There is no great gaiety in the prospect before me, I confess,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'even if your father and good Master Heriot should succeed in putting my affairs on some footing of plausible hope. And yet I trust to do something for my vassals, as my ancestors before me, and to teach my children, as I have myself been taught, to make some personal sacrifices, if they be necessary, in order to maintain with dignity the situation in which they are placed by Providence.'

Lord Dalgarno, after having once or twice stifled his laughter during this speech, at length broke out into a fit of mirth, so hearty and so resistless, that, angry as he was, the call of sympathy swept Nigel along with him, and, despite of himself, he could not forbear to join in a burst of laughter, which he thought not only causeless, but almost impertinent.

He soon recollected himself, however, and said, in a tone qualified to allay Lord Dalgarno's extreme mirth, 'This is all well, my lord; but how am I to understand your merriment?' Lord Dalgarno only answered him with redoubled peals of laughter, and at length held by Lord Glenvarloch's cloak, as if to prevent his falling down on the ground, in the extremity of his convulsion.

At length, while Nigel stood half abashed, half angry, at becoming thus the subject of his new acquaintance's ridicule, and was only restrained from expressing his resentment against the son, by a sense of the obligations he owed the father, Lord Dalgarno recovered himself, and spoke in a half-broken voice, his eyes still running with tears. 'I crave your pardon, my dear Lord Glenvarloch—ten thousand times do I crave your pardon. But that last picture of rural dignity, accompanied by your grave and angry surprise at my laughing at what would have made any court-bred hound laugh, that had but so much as bayed the moon once from the court-yard at Whitehall, totally overcame me. Why, my liefest and dearest lord, you, a young and handsome fellow, with high birth, a title, and the name of an estate, so well received by the King at your first starting, as makes your further progress scarce matter of doubt, if you know how to improve it—for the King has already said you are a "braw lad, and well studied in the more humane letters"—you, too, whom all the women, and the very marked beauties of the court, desire to see, because you came from Leyden, were born in Scotland, and have gained a hard-contested suit in England—you, I say, with a person like a prince, an eye of fire, and a wit as quick, to think of throwing your cards on the table when the game is in your very hand, running back to the frozen north, and marrying—let me see—a tall, stalking, blue-eyed, fair-skinned, bony wench, with eighteen quarters in her scutcheon, a sort of Lot's wife, newly descended from her pedestal, and with her to shut yourself up in your tapestried chamber! Uh, gad! —Swouns, I shall never surf"'e the idea!'

It is seldom that youth, however high-minded, is able, from mere strength of character and principle, to support itself against the force of ridicule. Half angry, half mortified, and, to say truth, half ashamed of his more manly and better purpose, Nigel was unable, and flattered himself it was unnecessary, to play the part of a rigid moral patriot, in presence of a young man whose current fluency of language, as well as his experience in the highest circles of society, gave him, in spite of Nigel's better and firmer thoughts, a temporary ascendency over him. He sought, therefore, to compromise the matter, and avoid further debate, by frankly owning that, if to return to his own country were not his choice, it was at least a matter of necessity. 'His affairs,' he said, 'were unsettled, his income precarious.'

'And where is he whose affairs are settled, or whose income is less than precarious, that is to be found in attendance on the court?' said Lord Dalgarno; 'all are either losing or winning. Those who have wealth come hither to get rid of it, while the happy gallants who, like you and I, dear Glenvarloch, have little or none, have every chance to be sharers in their spoils.'

'I have no ambition of that sort,' said Nigel, 'and if I had, I must tell you plainly, Lord Dalgarno, I have not the means to do so. I can scarce as yet call the suit I wear my own; I owe it, and I do not blush to say so, to the friendship of yonder good man.'

'I will not laugh again, if I can help it,' said Lord Dalgarno. 'But, Lord! that you should have gone to a wealthy goldsmith for your habit—why, I could have brought you to an honest, confiding tailor, who should have furnished you with half-a-dozen, merely for love of the little word "lordship" which you place before your name;—and then your goldsmith, if he be really a friendly goldsmith, should have equipped you with such a purse of fair rose-nobles as would have bought you thrice as many suits, or done better things for you.'

'I do not understand these fashions, my lord,' said Nigel, his displeasure mastering his shame. 'Were I to attend the court of my sovereign, it should be when I could maintain, without shifting or borrowing, the dress and retinue which my rank requires.'

'Which my rank requires!' said Lord Dalgarno, repeating his last words; 'that, now, is as good as if my father had spoke it. I fancy you would love to move to court like him, followed by a round score of old blue-bottles, with white heads and red noses, with bucklers and broadswords, which their hands, trembling betwixt age and strong waters, can make no use

of—as many huge silver badges on their arms, to show whose fools they are, as would furnish forth a court cupboard of plate—rogues fit for nothing but to fill our antechambers with the flavours of onions and genievre—pah!'

'The poor knaves!' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'they have served your father, it may be, in the wars. What would become of them were he to turn them off?'

'Why, let them go to the hospital,' said Dalgarno, 'or to the bridge-end, to sell switches. The King is a better man than my father, and you see those who have served in his wars do so every day; or, when their blue coats were well worn out, they would make rare scarecrows. Here is a fellow, now, comes down the walk; the stoutest raven dare not come within a yard of that copper nose. I tell you, there is more service, as you will soon see, in my valet of the chamber, and such a lither lad as my page Lutin, than there is in a score of these old memorials of the Douglas wars,* where they cut each other's throats for the chance of finding twelve pennies Scots on the person of the slain. Marry, my lord, to make amends, they will eat mouldy victuals, and drink stale ale, as if their bellies were puncheons.—But the dinner-bell is going to sound—hark, it is clearing its rusty throat with a preliminary jowl. That is another clamorous relic of antiquity, that, were I master, should soon be at the bottom of the Thames. How the foul fiend can it interest the peasants and mechanics in the Strand to know that the Earl of Huntinglen is sitting down to dinner? But my father looks our way—we must not be late for the grace, or we shall be in *dis*-grace, if you will forgive a quibble which would have made his Majesty laugh. You will find us all of a piece, and, having been accustomed to eat in saucers abroad, I am ashamed you should witness our larded capons, our mountains of beef, and oceans of brewis, as large as Highland hills and lochs; but you shall see better cheer to-morrow. Where lodge you? I will call for you. I must be your guide through the peopled desert, to certain enchanted lands, which you will scarce discover without chart and pilot. Where lodge you?'

'I will meet you in Paul's,' said Nigel, a good deal embarrassed, 'at any hour you please to name.'

'O, you would be private?' said the young lord;—'Nay, fear not me—I will be no intruder. But we have attained this huge larder of flesh, fowl, and fish. I marvel the oaken boards groan not under it.'

They had indeed arrived in the dining-parlour of the mansion, where the table was superabundantly loaded, and where the number of attendants, to a certain extent, vindicated the sarcasms of the young nobleman. The chaplain and Sir Mungo Malagrowther were of the party. The latter complimented Lord Glenvarloch upon the impression he had made at court. 'One would have thought ye had brought the apple of discord in your pouch, my lord, or that you were the very firebrand of whilk Althea was delivered, and that she had lain-in in a barrel of gun-powder; for the King, and the Prince, and the Duke have been by the lugs about ye, and so have many more, that ken'dna before this blessed day that there was such a man living on the face of the earth.'

'Mind your victuals, Sir Mungo,' said the earl; 'they get cold while you talk.'

'Troth, and that needsna, my lord,' said the knight; 'your lordship's dinners seldom scald one's mouth—the serving-men are turning auld, like oursel's, my lord, and it is far between the kitchen and the ha'.'

With this little explosion of his spleen, Sir Mungo remained satisfied, until the dishes were removed, when, fixing his eyes on the brave new doublet of Lord Dalgarno, he complimented him on his economy, pretending to recognise it as the same which his father had worn in Edinburgh in the Spanish ambassador's time. Lord Dalgarno, too much a man of the world to be moved by anything from such a quarter, proceeded to crack some nuts with great deliberation, as he replied, that the doublet was in some sort his father's, as it was likely to cost him fifty pounds some day soon. Sir Mungo forthwith proceeded in his own way to convey this agreeable intelligence to the earl, observing, that his son was a better maker of bargains than his lordship, for he had bought a doublet as rich as that his lordship wore when the Spanish ambassador was at Holyrood, and it had cost him but fifty pounds Scots;—'That was no fool's bargain, my lord.'

'Pounds sterling, if you please, Sir Mungo,' answered the earl calmly; 'and a fool's bargain it is, in all the tenses. Dalgarno *was* a fool when he bought—I *will* be a fool when I pay—and you, Sir Mungo, craving your pardon, *are* a fool *in præsenti*, for speaking of what concerns you not.'

So saying, the earl addressed himself to the serious business of the table, and sent the wine around with a profusion which increased the hilarity, but rather threatened the temperance, of the company, until their joviality was interrupted by the annunciation that the scrivener had engrossed such deeds as required to be presently executed.

George Heriot rose from the table, observing that wine-cups and legal documents were unseemly neighbours. The earl asked the scrivener if they had laid a trencher and set a cup for him in the buttery? and received the respectful answer, that Heaven forbid he should be such an ungracious beast as to eat or drink until his lordship's pleasure was performed.

'Thou shalt eat before thou goest,' said Lord Huntinglen; 'and I will have thee try, moreover, whether a cup of sack cannot bring some colour into these cheeks of thine. It were a shame to my household, thou shouldst glide out into the Strand after such a spectre-fashion as thou now wearest.—Look to it, Dalgarno, for the honour of our roof is concerned.'

Lord Dalgarno gave directions that the man should be attended to. Lord Glenvarloch and he citizen, in the meanwhile, signed and inter-

* The cruel civil wars waged by the Scottish barons during the minority of James VI. had this name, from the figure made in them by the celebrated James Douglas, Earl of Morton. Both sides executed their prisoners without mercy or favour.

changed, and thus closed a transaction, of which the principal party concerned understood little, save that it was under the management of a zealous and faithful friend, who undertook that the money should be forthcoming, and the estate released from forfeiture, by payment of the stipulated sum for which it stood pledged, and that at the term of Lambmas, and at the hour of noon, and beside the tomb of the Regent Earl of Murray, in the High Kirk of Saint Giles, at Edinburgh, being the day and place assigned for such redemption.*

When this business was transacted, the old earl would fain have renewed his carouse; but the citizen, alleging the importance of the deeds he had about him, and the business he had to transact betimes the next morning, not only refused to return to table, but carried with him to his barge Lord Glenvarloch, who might, perhaps, have been otherwise found more tractable.

When they were seated in the boat, and fairly once more afloat in the river, George Heriot looked back seriously on the mansion they had left—'There live,' he said, 'the old fashion and the new. The father is like a noble old broadsword, but harmed with rust, from neglect and inactivity; the son is your modern rapier, well-mounted, fairly gilt, and fashioned to the taste of the time—and it is time must evince if the metal be as good as the show. God grant it prove so, says an old friend to the family.'

Nothing of consequence passed betwixt them, until Lord Glenvarloch, landing at Paul's Wharf, took leave of his friend the citizen, and retired to his own apartment; where his attendant, Richie, not a little elevated with the events of the day, and with the hospitality of Lord Huntinglen's housekeeping, gave a most splendid account of them to the buxom Dame Nelly, who rejoiced to hear that the sun at length was shining upon what Richie called the right side of the hedge.

CHAPTER XI.

You are not for the manner nor the times.
They have their vices now most like to virtues;
You cannot know them apart by any difference,
They wear the same clothes, eat the same meat—
Sleep i' the self-same beds, ride in those coaches,
Or very like four horses in a coach,
As the best men and women.

BEN JONSON.

On the following morning, while Nigel, his breakfast finished, was thinking how he should employ the day, there was a little bustle upon the stairs which attracted his attention, and presently entered Dame Nelly, blushing like scarlet, and scarce able to bring out—'A young nobleman, sir—no one less,' she added, drawing her hand slightly over her lips, 'would be saucy—a young nobleman, sir, to await on you!'

And she was followed into the little cabin by Lord Dalgarno, gay, easy, disembarrassed, and apparently as much pleased to rejoin his new acquaintance as if he had found him in the apartments of a palace. Nigel, on the contrary (for youth is slave to such circumstances), was discountenanced and mortified at being surprised by so splendid a gallant in a chamber, which, at the moment the elegant and high-dressed cavalier appeared in it, seemed to its inhabitant yet lower, narrower, darker, and meaner than it had ever shown before. He would have made some apology for the situation, but Lord Dalgarno cut him short.

'Not a word of it,' he said, 'not a single word—I know why you ride at anchor here, but I can keep counsel—so pretty a hostess would recommend worse quarters.'

'On my word—on my honour,' said Lord Glenvarloch——

'Nay, nay, make no words of the matter,' said Lord Dalgarno. 'I am no tell-tale, nor shall I cross your walk; there is game enough in the forest, thank Heaven, and I can strike a doe for myself.'

All this he said in so significant a manner, and the explanation which he had adopted seemed to put Lord Glenvarloch's gallantry on so respectable a footing, that Nigel ceased to try to undeceive him; and less ashamed, perhaps (for such is human weakness), of supposed vice than of real poverty, changed the discourse to something else, and left poor Dame Nelly's reputation and his own at the mercy of the young courtier's misconstruction.

He offered refreshments with some hesitation. Lord Dalgarno had long since breakfasted, but had just come from playing a set of tennis, he said, and would willingly taste a cup of the pretty hostess's single beer. This was easily procured, was drunk, was commended, and, as the hostess failed not to bring the cup herself, Lord Dalgarno profited by the opportunity to take a second and more attentive view of her, and then gravely drank to her husband's health, with an almost imperceptible nod to Lord Glenvarloch. Dame Nelly was much honoured, smoothed her apron down with her hands, and said,—'Her John was greatly and truly honoured by their lordships—he was a kind, painstaking man for his family, as was in the alley, or, indeed, as far north as Paul's Chain.'

She would have proceeded probably to state the difference betwixt their ages, as the only alloy to their nuptial happiness; but her lodger, who had no mind to be further exposed to his gay friend's raillery, gave her, contrary to his wont, a signal to leave the room.

Lord Dalgarno looked after her, then looked at Glenvarloch, shook his head, and repeated the well-known lines—

'My lord, beware of jealousy—
It is the green-eyed monster which doth make
The meat it feeds on.

But come,' he said, changing his tone, 'I know not why I should worry you thus—I who have so many follies of my own, when I should rather make excuse for being here at all, and tell you wherefore I came.'

So saying, he reached a seat, and, placing another for Lord Glenvarloch, in spite of his anxious haste to anticipate this act of courtesy,

* As each covenant in those days of accuracy had a special place nominated for execution, the tomb of the Regent Earl of Murray in Saint Giles's Church was frequently assigned for the purpose.

he proceeded in the same tone of easy familiarity:—

'We are neighbours, my lord, and are just made known to each other. Now, I know enough of the dear North, to be well aware that Scottish neighbours must be either dear friends or deadly enemies—must either walk hand-in-hand, or stand sword-point to sword-point; so I choose the hand-in-hand, unless you should reject my proffer.'

'How were it possible, my lord,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'to refuse what is offered so frankly, even if your father had not been a second father to me?' And, as he took Lord Dalgarno's hand, he added—'I have, I think, lost no time, since, during one day's attendance at court, I have made a kind friend and a powerful enemy.'

'The friend thanks you,' replied Lord Dalgarno, 'for your just opinion; but, my dear Glenvarloch—or rather, for titles are too formal between us of the better file—what is your Christian name?'

'Nigel,' replied Lord Glenvarloch.

'Then we will be Nigel and Malcolm to each other,' said his visitor; 'and my lord to the plebeian world around us. But I was about to ask you whom you supposed your enemy?'

'No less than the all-powerful favourite, the great Duke of Buckingham.'

'You dream! What could possess you with such an opinion?' said Dalgarno.

'He told me so himself,' replied Glenvarloch; 'and, in so doing, dealt frankly and honourably with me.'

'O, you know him not yet,' said his companion; 'the Duke is moulded of an hundred noble and fiery qualities, that prompt him, like a generous horse, to spring aside in impatience at the least obstacle to his forward course. But he means not what he says in such passing heats—I can do more with him, I thank Heaven, than most who are around him; you shall go visit him with me, and you will see how you shall be received.'

'I told you, my lord,' said Glenvarloch firmly, and with some haughtiness, 'the Duke of Buckingham, without the least offence, declared himself my enemy in the face of the court; and he shall retract that aggression as publicly as it was given, ere I will make the slightest advance towards him.'

'You would act becomingly in every other case,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'but here you are wrong. In the court horizon, Buckingham is lord of the ascendant, and as he is adverse or favouring, so sinks or rises the fortune of a suitor. The King would bid you remember your Phædrus:

Arripiens geminas, ripis cedentibus, ollas—

and so forth. You are the vase of earth; beware of knocking yourself against the vase of iron.'

'The vase of earth,' said Glenvarloch, 'will avoid the encounter, by getting ashore out of the current—I mean to go no more to court.'

'O, to court you necessarily must go; you will find your Scottish suit move ill without it, for there is both patronage and favour necessary to enforce the sign-manual you have obtained. Of that we will speak more hereafter; but tell me in the meanwhile, my dear Nigel, whether you did not wonder to see me here so early?'

'I am surprised that you could find me out in this obscure corner,' said Lord Glenvarloch.

'My page Lutin is a very devil for that sort of discovery,' replied Lord Dalgarno; 'I have but to say, "Goblin, I would know where he or she dwells," and he guides me thither as if by art-magic.'

'I hope he waits not now in the street, my lord,' said Nigel; 'I will send my servant to seek him.'

'Do not concern yourself—he is by this time,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'playing at hustle-cap and chuck-farthing with the most blackguard imps upon the wharf, unless he hath foregone his old customs.'

'Are you not afraid,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'that in such company his morals may become depraved?'

'Let his company look to their own,' answered Lord Dalgarno coolly; 'for it will be a company of real fiends in which Lutin cannot teach more mischief than he can learn: he is, I thank the gods, most thoroughly versed in evil for his years. I am spared the trouble of looking after his moralities, for nothing can make them either better or worse.'

'I wonder you can answer this to his parents, my lord,' said Nigel.

'I wonder where I should find his parents,' replied his companion, 'to render an account to them.'

'He may be an orphan,' said Lord Nigel; 'but surely, being a page in your lordship's family, his parents must be of rank.'

'Of as high rank as the gallows could exalt them to,' replied Lord Dalgarno, with the same indifference; 'they were both hanged, I believe—at least the gipsies, from whom I bought him five years ago, intimated as much to me.—You are surprised at this, now. But is it not better that, instead of a lazy, conceited, whey-faced slip of gentility, to whom, in your old-world idea of the matter, I was bound to stand Sir Pedagogue, and see that he washed his hands and face, said his prayers, learned his *accidens*, spoke no naughty words, brushed his hat, and wore his best doublet only of Sunday—that, instead of such a Jacky Goodchild, I should have something like this?'

He whistled shrill and clear, and the page he spoke of darted into the room, almost with the effect of an actual apparition. From his height he seemed but fifteen, but, from his face, might be two or even three years older, very neatly made, and richly dressed; with a thin bronzed visage, which marked his gipsy descent, and a pair of sparkling black eyes, which seemed almost to pierce through those whom he looked at.

'There he is,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'fit for every element—prompt to execute every command, good, bad, or indifferent—unmatched in his tribe, as rogue, thief, and liar.'

'All which qualities,' said the undaunted page, 'have each in turn stood your lordship in stead.'

'Out, ye imp of Satan!' said his master; 'vanish—begone—or my conjuring rod goes about your ears.' The boy turned, and disappeared as suddenly as he had entered. 'You see,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'that, in choosing my household, the best regard I can pay to gentle blood is to

exclude it from my service—that very gallows-bird were enough to corrupt a whole antechamber of pages, though they were descended from kings and kaisers.' *

'I can scarce think that a nobleman should need the offices of such an attendant as your Goblin,' said Nigel; 'you are but jesting with my inexperience.'

'Time will show whether I jest or not, my dear Nigel,' replied Dalgarno. 'In the meantime, I have to propose to you to take the advantage of the flood-tide, to run up the river for pastime; and at noon I trust you will dine with me.'

Nigel acquiesced in a plan which promised so much amusement; and his new friend and he, attended by Lutin and Moniplies, who greatly resembled, when thus associated, the conjunction of a bear and a monkey, took possession of Lord Dalgarno's wherry, which, with its badged watermen, bearing his lordship's crest on their arms, lay in readiness to receive them. The air was delightful upon the river; and the lively conversation of Lord Dalgarno added zest to the pleasures of the little voyage. He could not only give an account of the various public buildings and noblemen's houses which they passed in ascending the Thames, but knew how to season his information with abundance of anecdote, political innuendo, and personal scandal; if he had not very much wit, he was at least completely master of the fashionable tone, which in that time, as in ours, more than amply supplies any deficiency of the kind.

It was a style of conversation entirely new to his companion, as was the world which Lord Dalgarno opened to his observation; and it is no wonder that Nigel, notwithstanding his natural good sense and high spirit, admitted, more readily than seemed consistent with either, the tone of authoritative instruction which his new friend assumed towards him. There would, indeed, have been some difficulty in making a stand. To attempt a high and stubborn tone of morality, in answer to the light strain of Lord Dalgarno's conversation, which kept on the frontiers between jest and earnest, would have seemed pedantic and ridiculous; and every attempt which Nigel made to combat his companion's propositions, by reasoning as jocose as his own, only showed his inferiority in that gay species of controversy. And it must be owned, besides, though internally disapproving much of what he heard, Lord Glenvarloch, young as he was in society, became less alarmed by the language and manners of his new associate than in prudence he ought to have been.

Lord Dalgarno was unwilling to startle his proselyte by insisting upon any topic which appeared particularly to jar with his habits or principles, and he blended his mirth and his earnest so dexterously, that it was impossible for Nigel to discover how far he was serious in his propositions, or how far they flowed from a wild and extravagant spirit of raillery. And, ever and anon, those flashes of spirit and honour crossed his conversation, which seemed to intimate that, when stirred to action by some adequate motive, Lord Dalgarno would prove something very different from the court-haunting and ease-loving voluptuary which he was pleased to represent as his chosen character.

As they returned down the river, Lord Glenvarloch remarked that the boat passed the mansion of Lord Huntinglen, and noticed the circumstance to Lord Dalgarno, observing, that he thought they were to have dined there. 'Surely no,' said the young nobleman, 'I have more mercy on you than to gorge you a second time with my beef and canary wine. I propose something better for you, I promise you, than such a second Scythian festivity. And as for my father, he proposes to dine to-day with my grave, ancient Earl of Northampton, whilome that celebrated putter-down of pretended prophecies, Lord Henry Howard.' †

'And do you not go with him?' said his companion.

'To what purpose?' said Lord Dalgarno. 'To hear his wise lordship speak musty politics in false Latin, which the old fox always uses, that he may give the learned Majesty of England an opportunity of correcting his slips in grammar? That were a rare employment!'

'Nay,' said Lord Nigel, 'but out of respect, to wait on my lord your father.'

'My lord my father,' replied Lord Dalgarno, 'has blue-bottles enough to wait on him, and can well dispense with such a butterfly as myself. He can lift the cup of sack to his head without my assistance; and, should the said paternal head turn somewhat giddy, there be men enough to guide his right honourable lordship to his lordship's right honourable couch.—Now, do not stare at me, Nigel, as if my words were to sink the boat with us. I love my father—I love him dearly—and I respect him, too, though I respect not many things; a trustier old Trojan never belted a broadsword by a loop of leather. But what then? He belongs to the old world, I to the new. He has his follies, I have mine; and the less either of us sees of the other's peccadilloes, the greater will be the honour and respect—that I think, is the proper phrase—I say the *respect* in which we shall hold each other. Being apart, each of us is himself such as nature and circumstances have made him; but couple us up too closely together, you will be sure to have in your leash either an old hypocrite or a young one, or perhaps both the one and t'other.'

As he spoke thus, the boat put into the landing-place at Blackfriars. Lord Dalgarno sprung ashore, and, flinging his cloak and rapier to his page, recommended his companion to do the like. 'We are coming among a press of gallants,' he said; 'and if we walk thus muffled, we shall look like your tawny-visaged Don, who wraps him close in his cloak, to conceal the defects of his doublet.'

'I have known many an honest man do that, if it please your lordship,' said Richie Moniplies, who had been watching for an opportunity to intrude himself on the conversation, and probably remembered what had been his own condition, in respect to cloak and doublet, at a very recent period.

* Note M. Pages in the Seventeenth Century.

† Note N. Lord Henry Howard.

Lord Dalgarno stared at him, as if surprised at his assurance; but immediately answered, 'You may have known many things, friend, but, in the meanwhile, you do not know what principally concerns your master, namely, how to carry his cloak, so as to show to advantage the gold-laced seams, and the lining of sables. See how Lutin holds the sword, with the cloak cast partly over it, yet so as to set off the embossed hilt, and the silver work of the mounting.—Give your familiar your sword, Nigel,' he continued, addressing Lord Glenvarloch, 'that he may practise a lesson in an art so necessary.'

'Is it altogether prudent,' said Nigel, unclasping his weapon, and giving it to Richie, 'to walk entirely unarmed?'

'And wherefore not?' said his companion. 'You are thinking now of Auld Reekie, as my father fondly calls your good Scottish capital, where there is such bandying of private feuds and public factions, that a man of any note shall not cross your High Street twice, without endangering his life thrice.* Here, sir, no brawling in the street is permitted. Your bull-headed citizen takes up the case so soon as the sword is drawn, and *clubs* is the word.

'And a hard word it is,' said Richie, 'as my brain-pan kens at this blessed moment.'

'Were I your master, sirrah,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'I would make your brain-pan, as you call it, boil over, were you to speak a word in my presence before you were spoken to.'

Richie murmured some indistinct answer, but took the hint, and ranked himself behind his master along with Lutin, who failed not to expose his new companion to the ridicule of the passers-by, by mimicking, as often as he could do so unobserved by Richie, his stiff and upright stalking gait and discontented physiognomy.

'And tell me now, my dear Malcolm,' said Nigel, 'where we are bending our course, and whether we shall dine at an apartment of yours?'

'An apartment of mine—yes, surely,' answered Lord Dalgarno, 'you shall dine at an apartment of mine, and an apartment of yours, and of twenty gallants besides; and where the board shall present better cheer, better wine, and better attendance, than if our whole united exhibitions went to maintain it. We are going to the most noted ordinary of London.'

'That is, in common language, an inn, or a tavern,' said Nigel.

'An inn, or a tavern, my most green and simple friend!' exclaimed Lord Dalgarno. 'No, no—these are places where greasy citizens take pipe and pot, where the knavish pettifoggers of the law spunge on their most unhappy victims, where Templars crack jests as empty as their nuts, and where small gentry imbibe such thin potations, that they get dropsies instead of getting drunk. An ordinary is a late invented institution, sacred to Bacchus and Comus, where the choicest noble gallants of the time meet with the first and most ethereal wits of the age,—where the wine is the very soul of the choicest grape, refined as the genius of the poet, and ancient and generous as the blood of the nobles. And then the fare is something beyond your ordinary gross terrestrial food! Sea and land are ransacked to supply it; and the invention of six ingenious cooks kept eternally upon the rack to make their art hold pace with, and if possible enhance, the exquisite quality of the materials.'

'By all which rhapsody,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'I can only understand, as I did before, that we are going to a choice tavern, where we shall be handsomely entertained, on paying probably as handsome a reckoning.'

'Reckoning!' exclaimed Lord Dalgarno in the same tone as before, 'perish the peasantly phrase! What profanation! Monsieur le Chevalier de Beaujeu, pink of Paris and flower of Gascony—he who can tell the age of his wine by the bare smell, who distils his sauces in an alembic by the aid of Lully's philosophy, who carves with such exquisite precision, that he gives to noble, knight, and squire the portion of the pheasant which exactly accords with his rank—nay, he who shall divide a beccafico into twelve parts with such scrupulous exactness, that of twelve guests not one shall have the advantage of the other in a hairsbreadth, or the twentieth part of a drachm, yet you talk of him and of a reckoning in the same breath! Why, man, he is the well-known and general referee in all matters affecting the mysteries of passage, hazard, in-and-in, penneeck, and verquire, and what not—why, Beaujeu is king of the card-pack, and duke of the dice-box—*he* call a reckoning like a green-aproned, red-nosed son of the vulgar spigot! O, my dearest Nigel, what a word you have spoken, and of what a person! That you know him not, is your only apology for such blasphemy; and yet I scarce hold it adequate, for to have been a day in London, and not to know Beaujeu, is a crime of its own kind. But you *shall* know him this blessed moment, and shall learn to hold yourself in horror for the enormities you have uttered.'

'Well, but mark you,' said Nigel, 'this worthy chevalier keeps not all this good cheer at his own cost, does he?'

'No, no,' answered Lord Dalgarno; 'there is a sort of ceremony which my chevalier's friends and intimates understand, but with which you have no business at present. There is, as Majesty might say, a *symbolum* to be disbursed—in other words, a mutual exchange of courtesies takes place betwixt Beaujeu and his guests. He makes them a free present of the dinner and wine, as often as they choose to consult their own felicity by frequenting his house at the hour of noon, and they, in gratitude, make the chevalier a present of a jacobus. Then you must know that, besides Comus and Bacchus, that princess of sublunary affairs, the Diva Fortuna, is frequently worshipped at Beaujeu's, and he, as officiating high priest, hath, as in reason he should, a considerable advantage from a share of the sacrifice.'

'In other words,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'this man keeps a gaming-house.'

'A house in which you may certainly game,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'as you may in your own chamber, if you have a mind; nay, I remember old Tom Tally played a hand at put for a

* Note O. Skirmishes in the Public Street.

wager with Quinze le Va the Frenchman, during morning prayers in Saint Paul's; the morning was misty, and the parson drowsy, and the whole audience consisted of themselves and a blind woman, and so they escaped detection.'

'For all this, Malcolm,' said the young lord gravely, 'I cannot dine with you to-day at this same ordinary.'

'And wherefore, in the name of Heaven, should you draw back from your word?' said Lord Dalgarno.

'I do not retract my word, Malcolm; but I am bound by an early promise to my father never to enter the doors of a gaming-house.'

'I tell you this is none,' said Lord Dalgarno; 'it is but, in plain terms, an eating-house, arranged in civiller terms, and frequented by better company, than others in this town; and if some of them do amuse themselves with cards and hazard, they are men of honour, and who play as such, and for no more than they can well afford to lose. It was not and could not be such houses that your father desired you to avoid. Besides, he might as well have made you swear you would never take the accommodation of an inn, tavern, eating-house, or place of public reception of any kind; for there is no such place of public resort but where your eyes may be contaminated by the sight of a pack of pieces of painted pasteboard, and your ears profaned by the rattle of those little spotted cubes of ivory. The difference is, that where we go we may happen to see persons of quality amusing themselves with a game; and in the ordinary houses you will meet bullies and sharpers, who will strive either to cheat or to swagger you out of your money.'

'I am sure you would not willingly lead me to do what is wrong,' said Nigel; 'but my father had a horror of games of chance, religious, I believe, as well as prudential. He judged, from I know not what circumstance, a fallacious one, I should hope, that I had a propensity to such courses, and I have told you the promise which he exacted from me.'

'Now, by my honour,' said Dalgarno, 'what you have said affords the strongest reason for my insisting that you go with me. A man who would shun any danger should first become acquainted with its real bearing and extent, and that in the company of a confidential guide and guard. Do you think I myself game? Good faith, my father's oaks grow too far from London, and stand too fast rooted in the rocks of Perthshire, for me to troll them down with a die, though I have seen whole forests go down like ninepins. No, no—these are sports for the wealthy Southron, not for the poor Scottish noble. The place is an eating-house, and as such you and I will use it. If others use it to game in, it is their fault, but neither that of the house nor ours.'

Unsatisfied with this reasoning, Nigel still insisted upon the promise he had given to his father, until his companion appeared rather displeased, and disposed to impute to him injurious and unhandsome suspicions. Lord Glenvarloch could not stand this change of tone. He recollected that much was due from him to Lord Dalgarno on account of his father's ready and efficient friendship, and something also on account of the frank manner in which the young man himself had offered him his intimacy. He had no reason to doubt his assurances that the house where they were about to dine did not fall under the description of places to which his father's prohibition referred; and finally, he was strong in his own resolution to resist every temptation to join in games of chance. He therefore pacified Lord Dalgarno by intimating his willingness to go along with him, and the good-humour of the young courtier instantaneously returning, he again ran off in a grotesque and rodomontade account of the host, Monsieur de Beaujeu, which he did not conclude until they had reached the temple of hospitality over which that eminent professor presided.

CHAPTER XII.

——This is the very barnyard
Where muster daily the prime cocks o' the game,
Ruffle their pinions, crow till they are hoarse,
And spar about a barleycorn. Here, too, chickens,
The callow, unfledged brood of forward folly,
Learn first to rear the crest and aim the spur,
And tune their note like full-plumed chanticleer.
THE BEAR-GARDEN.

THE ordinary, now an ignoble sound, was, in the days of James, a new institution, as fashionable among the youth of that age as the first-rate modern club-houses are amongst those of the present day. It differed chiefly in being open to all whom good clothes and good assurance combined to introduce there. The company usually dined together at an hour fixed, and the manager of the establishment presided as master of the ceremonies.

Monsieur le Chevalier (as he qualified himself) Saint Priest de Beaujeu was a sharp, thin Gascon, about sixty years old, banished from his own country, as he said, on account of an affair of honour, in which he had the misfortune to kill his antagonist, though the best swordsman in the south of France. His pretensions to quality were supported by a feathered hat, a long rapier, and a suit of embroidered taffeta, not much the worse for wear, in the extreme fashion of the Parisian court, and fluttering like a Maypole with many knots of ribbon, of which it was computed he bore at least five hundred yards about his person. But notwithstanding this profusion of decoration, there were many who thought Monsieur le Chevalier so admirably calculated for his present situation, that nature could never have meant to place him an inch above it. It was, however, part of the amusement of the place for Lord Dalgarno and other young men of quality to treat Monsieur de Beaujeu with a great deal of mock ceremony, which, being observed by the herd of more ordinary and simple gulls, they paid him, in clumsy imitation, much real deference. The Gascon's natural forwardness being much enhanced by these circumstances, he was often guilty of presuming beyond the limits of his situation, and of course had sometimes the mortification to be disagreeably driven back into them.

When Nigel entered the mansion of this eminent person, which had been but of late the

residence of a great baron of Queen Elizabeth's court, who had retired to his manors in the country on the death of that princess, he was surprised at the extent of the accommodation which it afforded, and the number of guests who were already assembled. Feathers waved, spurs jingled, lace and embroidery glanced everywhere; and, at first sight at least, it certainly made good Lord Dalgarno's encomium, who represented the company as composed almost entirely of youth of the first quality. A more close review was not quite so favourable. Several individuals might be discovered who were not exactly at their ease in the splendid dresses which they wore, and who, therefore, might be supposed not habitually familiar with such finery. Again, there were others whose dress, though on a general view it did not seem inferior to that of the rest of the company, displayed, on being observed more closely, some of those petty expedients by which vanity endeavours to disguise poverty.

Nigel had very little time to make such observations, for the entrance of Lord Dalgarno excited an immediate bustle and sensation among the company, as his name passed from one mouth to another. Some stood forward to gaze, others stood back to make way; those of his own rank hastened to welcome him—those of inferior degree endeavoured to catch some point of his gesture or of his dress, to be worn and practised upon a future occasion, as the newest and most authentic fashion.

The *genius loci*, the chevalier himself, was not the last to welcome this prime stay and ornament of his establishment. He came shuffling forward with a hundred apish *congés* and *chers milors*, to express his happiness at seeing Lord Dalgarno again. 'I hope you do bring back the sun with you, milor. You did carry away the sun and moon from your pauvre chevalier when you leave him for so long. Pardieu, I believe you take them away in your pockets.'

'That must have been because you left me nothing else in them, chevalier,' answered Lord Dalgarno; 'but, Monsieur le Chevalier, I pray you to know my countryman and friend—Lord Glenvarloch.'

'Ah, ha! très honoré—Je m'en souviens.—Oui. J'ai connu autrefois un Milor Kenfuloque en Ecosse. Yes, I have memory of him—le père de milor, apparemment—we were very intimate when I was at Oly Root with Monsieur de la Motte—I did often play at tennis wit Milor Kenfarloque at L'Abbaie d'Oly Root—il étoit même plus fort que moi—Ah le beaucoup de revers qu'il avoit!—I have memory, too, that he was among the pretty girls—ah, un vrai diable déchainé—Aha, I have memory'——

'Better have no more memory of the late Lord Glenvarloch,' said Lord Dalgarno, interrupting the chevalier without ceremony; who perceived that the encomium which he was about to pass on the deceased was likely to be as disagreeable to the son, as it was totally undeserved by the father, who, far from being either a gamester or libertine, as the chevalier's reminiscences falsely represented him, was, on the contrary, strict and severe in his course of life, almost to the extent of rigour.

'You have the reason, milor,' answered the chevalier, 'you have the right—Qu'est-ce que nous avons à faire avec le tems passé? the time past did belong to our fathers—our ancêtres—very well—the time present is to us—they have their pretty tombs, with their memories and armorials, all in brass and marbre—we have the petits plats exquis, and the soupe à Chevalier, which I will cause to mount up immediately.'

So saying, he made a pirouette on his heel, and put his attendants in motion to place dinner on the table. Dalgarno laughed, and, observing his young friend looked grave, said to him, in a tone of reproach—'Why, what! you are not gull enough to be angry with such an ass as that?'

'I keep my anger, I trust, for better purposes,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'but I confess I was moved to hear such a fellow mention my father's name; and you, too, who told me this was no gaming-house, talked to him of having left it with emptied pockets.'

'Pshaw, man!' said Lord Dalgarno, 'I spoke but according to the trick of the time; besides, a man must set a piece or two sometimes, or he would be held a cullionly niggard. But here comes dinner, and we will see whether you like the chevalier's good cheer better than his conversation.'

Dinner was announced accordingly, and the two friends, being seated in the most honourable station at the board, were ceremoniously attended to by the chevalier, who did the honours of his table to them and to the other guests, and seasoned the whole with his agreeable conversation. The dinner was really excellent, in that piquant style of cookery which the French had already introduced, and which the home-bred young men of England, when they aspired to the rank of connoisseurs and persons of taste, were under the necessity of admiring. The wine was also of the first quality, and circulated in great variety, and no less abundance. The conversation among so many young men was, of course, light, lively, and amusing; and Nigel, whose mind had been long depressed by anxiety and misfortune, naturally found himself at ease, and his spirits raised and animated.

Some of the company had real wit, and could use it both politely and to advantage; others were coxcombs, and were laughed at without discovering it; and, again, others were originals, who seemed to have no objection that the company should be amused with their folly instead of their wit. And almost all the rest who played any prominent part in the conversation, had either the real tone of good society which belonged to the period, or the jargon which often passes current for it.

In short, the company and conversation was so agreeable, that Nigel's rigour was softened by it, even towards the master of ceremonies, and he listened with patience to various details which the Chevalier de Beaujeu, seeing, as he said, that milor's taste lay for the 'curieux and l'utile,' chose to address to him in particular, on the subject of cookery. To gratify, at the same time, the taste for antiquity which he somehow supposed that his new guest possessed, he launched out in commendation of the great artists of former days, particularly one whom he had known in his

youth, 'maître de cuisine to the Maréchal Strozzi—très bon gentilhomme pourtant;' who had maintained his master's table with twelve covers every day during the long and severe blockade of le petit Leyth, although he had nothing better to place on it than the quarter of a carrion-horse now and then, and the grass and weeds that grew on the ramparts. 'Despardieux c'étoit un homme superbe! With on tistle-head, and a nettle or two, he could make a soupe for twenty guests—an haunch of a little puppy-dog made a rôti des plus excellens; but his coup de maître was when the rendition—what you call the surrender, took place and appened; and then, dieu me damme, he made out of the hind quarter of one salted horse, forty-five couverts; that the English and Scottish officers and nobility, who had the honour to dine with Monseigneur upon the rendition, could not tell what the devil any one of them were made upon at all.'*

The good wine had by this time gone so merrily round, and had such genial effect on the guests, that those of the lower end of the table, who had hitherto been listeners, began, not greatly to their own credit, or that of the ordinary, to make innovations.

'You speak of the siege of Leith,' said a tall, raw-boned man, with thick moustaches turned up with a military twist, a broad buff belt, a long rapier, and other outward symbols of the honoured profess on which lives by killing other people,—'you talk of the siege of Leith, and I have seen the place,—a pretty kind of a hamlet it is, with a plain wall, or rampart, and a pigeon-house or so of a tower at every angle. Uds daggers and scabbards, if a leaguer of our days had been twenty-four hours, not to say so many months, before it, without carrying the place and all its cocklofts, one after another, by pure storm, they would have deserved no better grace than the provost-marshal gives when his noose is reeved.'

'Saar,' said the chevalier, 'Monsieur le Capitaine, I vas not at the siege of the petit Leyth, and I know not what you say about the cockloft; but I will say for Monseigneur de Strozzi, that he understood the grand guerre, and was grand capitaine—plus grand—that is, more great, it may be, than some of the capitaines of Angleterre, who do speak very loud—tenez, monsieur, car c'est à vous!'

'O, monsieur,' answered the swordsman, 'we know the Frenchman will fight well behind his barrier of stone, or when he is armed with back, breast, and pot.'

'Pot!' exclaimed the chevalier, 'what do you mean by pot—do you mean to insult me among my noble guests? Saar, I have done my duty as a pauvre gentilhomme under the Grand Henri Quatre, both at Courtrai and Yvry, and, ventre saint gris! we had neither pot nor marmite, but did always charge in our shirt.'

'Which refutes another base scandal,' said Lord Dalgarno, laughing, 'alleging that linen was scarce among the French gentlemen-at-arms.'

'Gentlemen out at arms and elbows both, you mean, my lord,' said the captain, from the bottom of the table. 'Craving your lordship's pardon, I do know something of these same gens-d'armes.'

'We will spare your knowledge at present, captain, and save your modesty at the same time the trouble of telling us how that knowledge was acquired,' answered Lord Dalgarno, rather contemptuously.

'I need not speak of it, my lord,' said the man of war; 'the world knows it—all, perhaps, but the men of mohair—the poor sneaking citizens of London, who would see a man of valour eat his very hilts for hunger, ere they would draw a farthing from their long purses to relieve them. O, if a band of the honest fellows I have seen were once to come near that cuckoo's nest of theirs!'

'A cuckoo's nest!—and that said of the city of London!' said a gallant who sat on the opposite side of the table, and who, wearing a splendid and fashionable dress, seemed yet scarce at home in it—'I will not brook to hear that repeated.'†

'What!' said the soldier, bending a most terrific frown from a pair of broad black eyebrows, handling the hilt of his weapon with one hand, and twirling with the other his huge moustaches; 'will you quarrel for your city?'

'Ay, marry will I,' replied the other. 'I am a citizen, I care not who knows it; and he who shall speak a word in dispraise of the city, is an ass and a peremptory gull, and I will break his pate, to teach him sense and manners.'

The company, who probably had their reasons for not valuing the captain's courage at the high rate which he himself put upon it, were much entertained at the manner in which the quarrel was taken up by the indignant citizen; and they exclaimed on all sides, 'Well rung, Bow-bell!'—'Well crowed, the cock of Saint Paul's!'—'Sound a charge there, or the soldier will mistake his signals, and retreat when he should advance.'

'You mistake me, gentlemen,' said the captain, looking round with an air of dignity. 'I will but inquire whether this cavaliero citizen is of rank and degree fitted to measure swords with a man of action (for, conceive me, gentlemen, it is not with every one that I can match myself without loss of reputation); and in that case he shall soon hear from me honourably, by way of cartel.'

'You shall feel me most dishonourably in the way of cudgel,' said the citizen, starting up, and taking his sword, which he had laid in a corner. 'Follow me.'

'It is my right to name the place of combat, by all the rules of the sword,' said the captain; 'and I do nominate the Maze, in Tothill Fields, for place—two gentlemen, who shall be indifferent judges, for witnesses;—and for time—let me say this day fortnight, at daybreak.'

'And I,' said the citizen, 'do nominate the bowling-alley behind the house for place, the present good company for witnesses, and for time the present moment.'

So saying, he cast on his beaver, struck the

* Note P. French Cookery.

† Note Q. Cuckoo's Nest.

soldier across the shoulders with his sheathed sword, and ran down stairs. The captain showed no instant alacrity to follow him, yet, at last, roused by the laugh and sneer around him, he assured the company that what he did, he would do deliberately, and, assuming his hat, which he put on with the air of Ancient Pistol, he descended the stairs to the place of combat, where his more prompt adversary was already stationed, with his sword unsheathed. Of the company, all of whom seemed highly delighted with the approaching fray, some ran to the windows which overlooked the bowling alley, and others followed the combatants down stairs. Nigel could not help asking Dalgarno whether he would not interfere to prevent mischief.

'It would be a crime against the public interest,' answered his friend, 'there can no mischief happen between two such originals, which will not be a positive benefit to society, and particularly to the chevalier's establishment, as he calls it. I have been as sick of that captain's buff belt and red doublet, for this month past, as ever I was of aught, and now I hope this bold burgher will cudgel the ass out of that filthy lion's hide. See, Nigel, see, the gallant citizen has taken the ground about a bowl's cast forward in the midst of the alley—the very model of a hog in armour. Behold how he prances with his manly foot, and brandishes his blade much as if he were about to measure forth cambric with it. See, they bring on the reluctant soldado, and plant him opposite to his fiery antagonist, twelve paces still dividing them. Lo, the captain draws his tool, but, like a good general, looks over his shoulder to secure his retreat in case the worst come on't. Behold the valiant shopkeeper stoops his head, confident doubtless, in the civic helmet with which his spouse has fortified his skull.—Why, this is the rarest of sport. By Heaven, he will run a tilt at him like a ram!'

It was even as Lord Dalgarno had anticipated; for the citizen, who seemed quite serious in his zeal for combat, perceiving that the man of war did not advance towards him, rushed on him with as much good fortune as courage, beat down the captain's guard, and, pressing on thrust, as it seemed, his sword clean through the body of his antagonist, who with a deep groan measured his length on the ground. A score of voices cried to the conqueror, as he stood fixed in astonishment at his own feat, 'Away, away with you!—fly, fly—fly by the back door! get into the Whitefriars, or cross the water to the Bankside, while we keep off the mob and the constables.' And the conqueror, leaving his vanquished foeman on the ground, fled accordingly, with all speed.

'By Heaven,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'I could never have believed that the fellow would have stood to receive a thrust—he has certainly been arrested by positive terror, and lost the use of his limbs. See, they are raising him.'

Stiff and stark seemed the corpse of the swordsman, as one or two of the guests raised him from the ground; but, when they began to open his waistcoat to search for the wound which nowhere existed, the man of war collected his scattered spirits, and, conscious that the ordinary was no longer a stage on which to display his valour, took to his heels as fast as he could run, pursued by the laughter and shouts of the company.

'By my honour,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'he takes the same course with his conqueror. I trust in Heaven he will overtake him, and then the valiant citizen will suppose himself haunted by the ghost of him he has slain.'

'Despardieux, milor,' said the chevalier, 'if he had stayed one moment, he should have had a *torchon*, what you call a dishclout, pinned to him for a piece of shroud, to show he be de ghost of one grand fanfaron.'

'In the meanwhile,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'you will oblige us, Monsieur le Chevalier, as well as maintain your own honoured reputation, by letting your drawers receive the man at arms with a cudgel, in case he should venture to come this way again.'

'Ventre saint gris, milor,' said the chevalier, 'leave that to me. Begar, the maid shall throw the wash-suds upon the grand poltron!'

When they had laughed sufficiently at this ludicrous occurrence, the party began to divide themselves into little knots; some took possession of the alley, late the scene of combat, and put the field to its proper use of a bowling ground, and it soon resounded with all the terms of the game, as 'Run, run—rub, rub—hold bias, you infernal trundling timber!' thus making good the saying, that three things are thrown away in a bowling green, namely, time, money, and oaths.

In the house, many of the gentlemen betook themselves to cards or dice, and parties were formed at ombre, at basset, at gleek, at primero, and other games then in fashion; while the dice were used at various games, both with and without the tables, as hazard, in and in, passage, and so forth. The play, however, did not appear to be extravagantly deep; it was certainly conducted with great decorum and fairness; nor did there appear anything to lead the younger Scotsman in the least to doubt his companion's assurance that the place was frequented by men of rank and quality, and that the recreations they adopted were conducted upon honourable principles.

Lord Dalgarno neither had proposed play to his friend, nor joined in the amusement himself, but sauntered from one table to another, remarking the luck of the different players, as well as their capacity to avail themselves of it, and exchanging conversation with the highest and most respectable of the guests. At length, as if tired of what in modern phrase would have been termed lounging, he suddenly remembered that Burbage was to act Shakespeare's King Richard, at the Fortune, that afternoon, and that he could not give a stranger in London like Lord Glenvarloch, a higher entertainment than to carry him to that exhibition. 'unless, indeed,' he added, in a whisper, 'there is a paternal interdiction of the theatre, as well as of the ordinary.'

'I never heard my father speak of stage plays,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'for they are shows of a modern date, and unknown in Scotland. Yet,

if what I have heard to their prejudice be true, I doubt much whether he would have approved of them.'

'Approved of them!' exclaimed Lord Dalgarno 'why, George Buchanan wrote tragedies, and his pupil, learned and wise as himself, goes to see them, so it is next door to treason to abstain; and the cleverest men in England write for the stage, and the prettiest women in London resort to the playhouses, and I have a brace of nags at the door which will carry us along the streets like wildfire, and the ride will digest our venison and ortolans, and dissipate the fumes of the wine, and so let's to horse. - Godd'en to you, gentlemen- Godd'en, Chevalier de la Fortune.'

Lord Dalgarno's grooms were in attendance with two horses, and the young men mounted, the proprietor upon a favourite barb, and Nigel upon a high-dressed jennet, scarce less beautiful. As they rode towards the theatre, Lord Dalgarno endeavoured to discover his friend's opinion of the company to which he had introduced him, and to combat the exceptions which he might suppose him to have taken. 'And wherefore lookest thou sad,' he said, 'my pensive neophyte? Sage son of the Alma Mater of Low Dutch learning, what aileth thee? Is the leaf of the living world which we have turned over in company less fairly written than thou hadst been taught to expect? Be comforted, and pass over one little blot or two; thou wilt be doomed to read through many a page, as black as infamy, with her sooty pinion, can make them. Remember, most immaculate Nigel, that we are in London, not Leyden—that we are studying life, not lore. Stand buff against the reproach of thine over-tender conscience, man, and when thou summest up, like a good arithmetician, the actions of the day, before you balance the account upon your pillow, tell the accusing spirit, to his brimstone beard, that if thine ears have heard the clatter of the devil's bones, thy hand hath not trowled them—that if thine eye hath seen the brawling of two angry boys, thy blade hath not been bared in their fray.'

'Now all this may be wise and witty,' replied Nigel; 'yet I own I cannot but think that your lordship, and other men of good quality with whom we dined, might have chosen a place of meeting free from the intrusion of bullies, and a better master of your ceremonial than yonder foreign adventurer.'

'All shall be amended, Sancte Nigelle, when thou shalt come forth a new Peter the Hermit, to preach a crusade against dicing, drabbing, and company-keeping. We will meet for dinner in Saint Sepulchre's Church; we will dine in the chancel, drink our flask in the vestry, the parson shall draw every cork, and the clerk say amen to every health. Come, man, cheer up, and get rid of this sour and unsocial humour. Credit me, that the Puritans who object to us the follies and the frailties incident to human nature, have themselves the vices of absolute devils, privy malice and backbiting hypocrisy, and spiritual pride in all its presumption. There is much, too, in life which we must see, were it only to learn to shun it. Will Shakespeare, who lives after death, and who is presently to afford thee such pleasure as none but himself can confer, has described the gallant Falconbridge as calling that man

> A bastard to the time,
> That doth not smack of observation;
> Which, though I will not practise to deceive,
> Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn.

But here we are at the door of the Fortune, where we shall have matchless Will speaking for himself. - Goblin, and you other lout, leave the horses to the grooms, and make way for us through the press.'

They dismounted, and the assiduous efforts of Lutin, elbowing, bullying, and proclaiming his master's name and title, made way, through a crowd of murmuring citizens and clamorous apprentices, to the door, where Lord Dalgarno speedily procured a brace of stools upon the stage for his companion and himself, where, seated among other gallants of the same class, they had an opportunity of displaying their fair dresses and fashionable manners, while they criticised the piece during its progress: thus forming, at the same time, a conspicuous part of the spectacle, and an important proportion of the audience.

Nigel Olifaunt was too eagerly and deeply absorbed in the interest of the scene to be capable of playing his part as became the place where he was seated. He felt all the magic of that sorcerer, who had displayed, within the [illegible] circle of a wooden booth, the long wars of [illegible]k and Lancaster, compelling the heroes of either line to stalk across the scene in language and fashion as they lived, as if the grave had given up the dead for the amusement and instruction of the living. Burbage,* esteemed the best Richard until Garrick arose, played the tyrant and usurper with such truth and liveliness, that when the battle of Bosworth seemed concluded by his death, the ideas of reality and deception were strongly contending in Lord Glenvarloch's imagination, and it required him to rouse himself from his reverie, so strange did the proposal at first sound when his companion declared King Richard should sup with them at the Mermaid.

They were joined, at the same time, by a small party of the gentlemen with whom they had dined, which they recruited by inviting two or three of the most accomplished wits and poets, who seldom failed to attend the Fortune Theatre,† and were even but too ready to conclude a day of amusement with a night of pleasure. Thither the whole party adjourned, and betwixt fertile cups of sack, excited spirits, and the emulous wit of their lively companions, seemed to realize the joyous boast of one of Ben Jonson's contemporaries, when reminding the bard of

> Those lyric feasts,
> Where men such clusters had,
> As made them nobly wild, not mad;
> While yet each verse of thine
> Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.

* Note R. Burbage.

† [This theatre was situate near Playhouse Yard, Golden Lane.]

CHAPTER XIII.

Let the proud salmon gorge the feather'd hook,
Then strike, and then you have him—He will wince;
Spin out your line that it shall whistle from you
Some twenty yards or so, yet you shall have him—
Marry! you must have patience—the stout rock,
Which is his trust, hath edges something sharp;
And the deep pool hath ooze and sludge enough
To mar your fishing—'less you are more careful.
ALBION, OR THE DOUBLE KINGS

It is seldom that a day of pleasure upon review seems altogether so exquisite as the partaker of the festivity may have felt it while passing over him. Nigel Olifaunt, at least, did not feel it so, and it required a visit from his new acquaintance Lord Dalgarno to reconcile him entirely to himself. But this visit took place early after breakfast, and his friend's discourse was prefaced with a question—'How he liked the company of the preceding evening?'

'Why, excellently well,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'only I should have liked the wit better had it seemed to flow more freely. Every man's invention seemed on the stretch, and each extravagant simile seemed to set one half of your men of wit into a brown study to produce something which should out-herod it.'

'And wherefore not?' said Lord Dalgarno, 'or what are these fellows fit for but to play the intellectual gladiators before us? He of them who declares himself recreant should, d--n him, be restricted to muddy ale, and the patronage of the waterman's company. I promise you that many a pretty fellow has been mortally wounded with a quibble or a carwitchet at the Mermaid, and sent from thence, in a pitiable estate, to Wit's Hospital in the Vintry, where they languish to this day amongst fools and aldermen.'

'It may be so,' said Lord Nigel; 'yet I could swear by my honour that last night I seemed to be in company with more than one man whose genius and learning ought either to have placed him higher in our company, or to have withdrawn him altogether from a scene where, sooth to speak, his part seemed unworthily subordinate.'

'Now, out upon your tender conscience,' said Lord Dalgarno; 'and the fico for such outcasts of Parnassus! Why, these are the very leavings of that noble banquet of pickled herrings and Rhenish, which lost London so many of her principal witmongers and bards of misrule. What would you have said had you seen Nash or Greene, when you interest yourself about the poor mimes you supped with last night? Suffice it, they had their drench and their dose, and they drank and slept as much as may save them from any necessity of eating till evening, when, if they are industrious, they will find patrons or players to feed them.* For the rest of their wants, they can be at no loss for cold water while the New River head holds good; and your doublets of Parnassus are eternal in duration.'

'Virgil and Horace had more efficient patronage,' said Nigel.

'Ay,' replied his countryman, 'but these fellows are neither Virgil nor Horace; besides, we have other spirits of another sort, to whom I will introduce you on some early occasion. Our Swan of Avon hath sung his last; but we have stout old Ben, with as much learning and genius as ever prompted the treader of sock and buskin. It is not, however, of him I mean now to speak; but I come to pray you, of dear love, to row up with me as far as Richmond, where two or three of the gallants whom you saw yesterday mean to give music and syllabubs to a set of beauties, with some curious bright eyes among them—such, I promise you, as might win an astrologer from his worship of the galaxy. My sister leads the bevy, to whom I desire to present you. She hath her admirers at court; and is regarded, though I might dispense with sounding her praise, as one of the beauties of the time.'

There was no refusing an engagement where the presence of the party invited, late so low in his own regard, was demanded by a lady of quality, one of the choice beauties of the time. Lord Glenvarloch accepted, as was inevitable, and spent a lively day among the gay and the fair. He was the gallant in attendance, for the day, upon his friend's sister, the beautiful Countess of Blackchester, who aimed at once at superiority in the realms of fashion, of power, and of wit.

She was, indeed, considerably older than her brother, and had probably completed her six lustres; but the deficiency in extreme youth was more than atoned for in the most precise and curious accuracy in attire, an early acquaintance with every foreign mode, and a peculiar gift in adapting the knowledge which she acquired to her own particular features and complexion. At court, she knew as well as any lady in the circle the precise tone, moral, political, learned, or jocose, in which it was proper to answer the monarch, according to his prevailing humour; and was supposed to have been very active, by her personal interest, in procuring her husband a high situation, which the gouty old viscount could never have deserved by any merit of his own commonplace conduct and understanding.

It was far more easy for this lady than for her brother to reconcile so young a courtier as Lord Glenvarloch to the customs and habits of a sphere so new to him. In all civilised society the females of distinguished rank and beauty give the tone to manners, and, through these, even to morals. Lady Blackchester had, besides, interest either in the court or over the court (for its source could not be well traced), which created friends, and overawed those who might have been disposed to play the part of enemies.

At one time she was understood to be closely leagued with the Buckingham family, with whom her brother still maintained a great intimacy; and although some coldness had taken place betwixt the Countess and the Duchess of Buckingham, so that they were little seen together, and the former seemed consider-

* The condition of men of wit and talents was never more melancholy than about this period. Their lives were so irregular, and their means of living so precarious, that they were alternately rioting in debauchery, or encountering and struggling with the meanest necessities. Two or three lost their lives by a surfeit brought on by that fatal banquet of Rhenish wine and pickled herrings, which is familiar to those who study the lighter literature of that age. The whole history is a most melancholy picture of genius, degraded at once by its own debaucheries and the patronage of heartless rakes and profligates.

ably to have withdrawn herself into privacy, it was whispered that Lady Blackchester's interest with the great favourite was not diminished in consequence of her breach with his lady.

Our account of the private court intrigues of that period, and of the persons to whom they were entrusted, are not full enough to enable us to pronounce upon the various reports which arose out of the circumstances we have detailed. It is enough to say that Lady Blackchester possessed great influence on the circle around her, both from her beauty, her abilities, and her reputed talents for court intrigue; and that Nigel Olifaunt was not long of experiencing its power, as he became a slave in some degree to that species of habit, which carries so many men into a certain society at a certain hour, without expecting or receiving any particular degree of gratification, or even amusement.

His life for several weeks may be thus described. The ordinary was no bad introduction to the business of the day; and the young lord quickly found, that if the society there was not always irreproachable, still it formed the most convenient and agreeable place of meeting with the fashionable parties, with whom he visited Hyde Park, the theatres, and other places of public resort, or joined the gay and glittering circle which Lady Blackchester had assembled around her. Neither did he entertain the same scrupulous horror which led him originally even to hesitate entering into a place where gaming was permitted; but, on the contrary, began to admit the idea, that, as there could be no harm in beholding such recreation when only indulged in to a moderate degree, so, from a parity of reasoning, there could be no objection to joining in it, always under the same restrictions. But the young lord was a Scotsman, habituated to early reflection, and totally unaccustomed to any habit which inferred a careless risk or profuse waste of money. Profusion was not his natural vice, or one likely to be acquired in the course of his education; and in all probability, while his father anticipated with noble horror the idea of his son approaching the gaming-table, he was more startled at the idea of his becoming a gaining than a losing adventurer. The second, according to his principles, had a termination, a sad one, indeed, in the loss of temporal fortune—the first quality went on increasing the evil which he dreaded, and perilled at once both body and soul.

However the old lord might ground his apprehension, it was so far verified by his son's conduct, that, from an observer of the various games of chance which he witnessed, he came, by degrees, by moderate hazards, and small bets or wagers, to take a certain interest in them. Nor could it be denied that his rank and expectations entitled him to hazard a few pieces (for his game went no deeper) against persons, who, from the readiness with which they staked their money, might be supposed well able to afford to lose it.

It chanced, or, perhaps, according to the common belief, his evil genius had so decreed, that Nigel's adventures were remarkably successful. He was temperate, cautious, cool-headed, had a strong memory, and a ready power of calculation; was, besides, of a daring and intrepid character, one upon whom no one that had looked even slightly, or spoken to though but hastily, would readily have ventured to practise anything approaching to trick, or which required to be supported by intimidation. While Lord Glenvarloch chose to play, men played with him regularly, or, according to the phrase, upon the square; and, as he found his luck change, or wished to hazard his good fortune no further, the more professed votaries of fortune, who frequented the house of Monsieur le Chevalier de Saint Priest Beaujeu, did not venture openly to express their displeasure at his rising a winner. But when this happened repeatedly, the gamesters murmured amongst themselves equally at the caution and the success of the young Scotsman: and he became far from being a popular character among their society.

It was no slight inducement to the continuance of this most evil habit, when it was once in some degree acquired, that it seemed to place Lord Glenvarloch, haughty as he naturally was, beyond the necessity of subjecting himself to further pecuniary obligations, which his prolonged residence in London must otherwise have rendered necessary. He had to solicit from the ministers certain forms of office, which were to render his sign-manual effectually useful; and these, though they could not be denied, were delayed in such a manner as to lead Nigel to believe there was some secret opposition, which occasioned the demur in his business. His own impulse was, to have appeared at court a second time, with the king's sign-manual in his pocket, and to have appealed to his Majesty himself, whether the delay of the public officers ought to render his royal generosity unavailing. But the Lord Huntinglen, that good old peer, who had so frankly interfered in his behalf on a former occasion, and whom he occasionally visited, greatly dissuaded him from a similar adventure, and exhorted him quietly to await the deliverance of the ministers, which should set him free from dancing attendance in London.

Lord Dalgarno joined his father in deterring his young friend from a second attendance at court, at least till he was reconciled with the Duke of Buckingham— 'a matter in which,' he said, addressing his father, 'I have offered my poor assistance, without being able to prevail on Lord Nigel to make any—not even the least —submission to the Duke of Buckingham.'

'By my faith, and I hold the laddie to be in the right on't, Malcolm!' answered the stout old Scots lord.—'What right hath Buckingham, or, to speak plainly, the son of Sir George Villiers, to expect homage and fealty from one more noble than himself by eight quarters? I heard him myself, on no reason that I could perceive, term Lord Nigel his enemy; and it will never be by my counsel that the lad speaks soft word to him, till he recalls the hard one.'

'That is precisely my advice to Lord Glenvarloch,' answered Lord Dalgarno; 'but then you will admit, my dear father, that it would be the risk of extremity for our friend to return into the presence, the Duke being his enemy—better to leave it with me to take off the heat of

the distemperature with which some pick-thanks have persuaded the Duke to regard our friend.'

'If thou canst persuade Buckingham of his error, Malcolm,' said his father, 'for once I will say there hath been kindness and honesty in court service. I have oft told your sister and yourself that in the general I esteem it as lightly as may be.'

'You need not doubt my doing my best in Nigel's case,' answered Lord Dalgarno; 'but you must think, my dear father, I must needs use slower and gentler means than those by which you became a favourite twenty years ago.'

'By my faith, I am afraid thou wilt,' answered his father.—'I tell thee, Malcolm, I would sooner wish myself in the grave, than doubt thine honesty or honour; yet somehow it hath chanced that honest, ready service hath not the same acceptance at court which it had in my younger time—and yet you rise there.'

'O, the time permits not your old-world service,' said Lord Dalgarno; 'we have now no daily insurrections, no nightly attempts at assassination, as were the fashion in the Scottish court. Your prompt and uncourteous sword-in-hand attendance on the sovereign is no longer necessary, and would be as unbeseeming as your old-fashioned serving-men, with their badges, broadswords, and bucklers, would be at a court masque. Besides, father, loyal haste hath its inconvenience. I have heard, and from royal lips too, that when you struck your dagger into the traitor Ruthven, it was with such little consideration, that the point ran a quarter of an inch into the royal buttock. The King never talks of it but he rubs the injured part, and quotes his "*infandum . . . renovare dolorem.*" But this comes of old fashions, and of wearing a long Liddesdale whinger, instead of a poniard of Parma. Yet this, my dear father, you call prompt and valiant service. The King, I am told, could not sit upright for a fortnight, though all the cushions in Falkland were placed in his chair of state, and the Provost of Dunfermline's borrowed to the boot of all.'

'It is a lie,' said the old earl, 'a false lie, forge it who list! It is true I wore a dagger of service by my side, and not a bodkin like yours, to pick one's teeth withal — and for prompt service—Odds nouns! it should be prompt to be useful, when kings are crying treason and murder with the screech of a half throttled hen. But you young courtiers know nought of these matters, and are little better than the green geese they bring over from the Indies, whose only merit to their masters is to repeat their own words after them—a pack of mouthers, and flatterers, and earwigs.—Well, I am old, and unable to mend, else I would break all off, and hear the Tay once more flinging himself over the Campsie Linn.'

'But there is your dinner-bell, father,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'which, if the venison I sent you prove seasonable, is at least as sweet a sound.'

'Follow me, then, youngsters, if you list,' said the old earl; and strode on from the alcove in which this conversation was held, towards the house, followed by the two young men.

In their private discourse, Lord Dalgarno had little trouble in dissuading Nigel from going immediately to court; while, on the other hand, the offers he made him of a previous introduction to the Duke of Buckingham were received by Lord Glenvarloch with a positive and contemptuous refusal. His friend shrugged his shoulders, as one who claims the merit of having given to an obstinate friend the best counsel, and desires to be held free of the consequences of his pertinacity.

As for the father, his table, indeed, and his best liquor, of which he was more profuse than necessary, were at the command of his young friend, as well as his best advice and assistance in the prosecution of his affairs. But Lord Huntinglen's interest was more apparent than real; and the credit he had acquired by his gallant defence of the king's person was so carelessly managed by himself, so easily eluded by the favourites and ministers of the sovereign, that, except upon one or two occasions, when the king was in some measure taken by surprise, as in the case of Lord Glenvarloch, the royal bounty was never efficiently extended, either to himself or to his friends.

'There never was a man,' said Lord Dalgarno, whose shrewder knowledge of the English court saw where his father's deficiency lay, 'that had it so perfectly in his power to have made his way to the pinnacle of fortune as my poor father. He had acquired a right to build up the staircase, step by step, slowly and surely, letting every boon, which he begged year after year, become in its turn the resting place for the next annual grant. But your fortunes shall not shipwreck upon the same coast, Nigel,' he would conclude. 'If I have fewer means of influence than my father has, or rather had, till he threw them away for butts of sack, hawks, hounds, and such carrion, I can, far better than he, improve that which I possess; and that, my dear Nigel, is all engaged in your behalf. Do not be surprised or offended that you now see me less than formerly. The stag-hunting is commenced, and the Prince looks that I should attend him more frequently. I must also maintain my attendance on the Duke, that I may have an opportunity of pleading your cause when occasion shall permit.'

'I have no cause to plead before the Duke,' said Nigel gravely; 'I have said so repeatedly.'

'Why, I meant the phrase no otherwise, thou churlish and suspicious disputant,' answered Dalgarno, 'than as I am now pleading the Duke's cause with thee. Surely I only mean to claim a share in our royal master's favourite benediction, *Beati pacifici*.'

Upon several occasions, Lord Glenvarloch's conversations, both with the old earl and his son, took a similar turn, and had a like conclusion. He sometimes felt as if, betwixt the one and the other, not to mention the more unseen and unboasted, but scarce less certain influence of Lady Blackchester, his affair, simple as it had become, might have been somehow accelerated. But it was equally impossible to doubt the rough honesty of the father, and the eager and officious friendship of Lord Dalgarno; nor was it easy to suppose that the countenance of the lady, by whom he was

received with such distinction, would be wanting, could it be effectual in his service.

Nigel was further sensible of the truth of what Lord Dalgarno pointed out, that, the favourite being supposed to be his enemy, every petty officer, through whose hands his affair must necessarily pass, would desire to make a merit of throwing obstacles in his way, which he could only surmount by steadiness and patience, unless he preferred closing the breach, or, as Lord Dalgarno called it, making his peace with the Duke of Buckingham.

Nigel might, and doubtless would, have had recourse to the advice of his friend George Heriot upon this occasion, having found it so advantageous formerly; but the only time he saw him after their visit to court, he found the worthy citizen engaged in hasty preparation for a journey to Paris, upon business of great importance in the way of his profession, and by an especial commission from the court and the Duke of Buckingham, which was likely to be attended with considerable profit. The good man smiled as he named the Duke of Buckingham. He had been, he said, pretty sure that his disgrace in that quarter would not be of long duration.

Lord Glenvarloch expressed himself rejoiced at their reconciliation, observing, that it had been a most painful reflection to him, that Master Heriot should, in his behalf, have incurred the dislike, and perhaps exposed himself to the ill offices, of so powerful a favourite.

'My lord,' said Heriot, 'for your father's son I would do much: and yet truly, if I know myself, I would do as much and risk as much, for the sake of justice, in the case of a much more insignificant person, as I have ventured for yours. But, as we shall not meet for some time, I must commit to your own wisdom the further prosecution of this matter.'

And thus they took a kind and affectionate leave of each other.

There were other changes in Lord Glenvarloch's situation, which require to be noticed. His present occupations, and the habits of amusement which he had acquired, rendered his living so far in the city a considerable inconvenience. He may also have become a little ashamed of his cabin on Paul's Wharf, and desirous of being lodged somewhat more according to his quality. For this purpose he had hired a small apartment near the Temple. He was, nevertheless, almost sorry for what he had done, when he observed that his removal appeared to give some pain to John Christie, and a great deal to his cordial and officious landlady. The former, who was grave and saturnine in everything he did, only hoped that all had been to Lord Glenvarloch's mind, and that he had not left them on account of any unbeseeming negligence on their part. But the tear twinkled in Dame Nelly's eye, while she recounted the various improvements she had made in the apartment, of express purpose to render it more convenient to his lordship.

'There was a great sea-chest,' she said, 'had been taken up-stairs to the shopman's garret, though it left the poor lad scarce eighteen inches of opening to creep betwixt it and his bed; and Heaven knew—she did not—whether it could ever be brought down that narrow stair again. Then the turning the closet into an alcove had cost a matter of twenty round shillings; and, to be sure, to any other lodger but his lordship, the closet was more convenient. There was all the linen, too, which she had bought on purpose—But Heaven's will be done—she was resigned.'

Everybody likes marks of personal attachment, and Nigel, whose heart really smote him, as if in his rising fortunes he were disdaining the lowly accommodations and the civilities of the humble friends which had been but lately actual favours, failed not by every assurance in his power, and by as liberal payment as they could be prevailed upon to accept, to alleviate the soreness of their feelings at his departure; and a parting kiss from the fair lips of his hostess sealed his forgiveness.

Richie Moniplies lingered behind his master, to ask whether, in case of need, John Christie could help a canny Scotsman to a passage back to his own country; and receiving assurance of John's interest to that effect, he said at parting, he would remind him of his promise soon.—'For,' said he, 'if my lord is not weary of this London life, I ken one that is, videlicet, mysel'; and I am weel determined to see Arthur's Seat again ere I am many weeks older.'

CHAPTER XIV.

Bingo, why, Bingo! hey, boy—here, sir, here—
He's gone and off, but he'll be home before us;—
'Tis the most wayward cur e'er mumbled bone,
Or dogg'd a master's footstep.—Bingo loves me
Better than ever beggar loved his alms;
Yet, when he takes such humour, you may coax
Sweet Mistress Fantasy, your worship's mistress,
Out of her sullen moods, as soon as Bingo.

THE DOMINIE AND HIS DOG.

RICHIE MONIPLIES was as good as his word. Two or three mornings after the young lord had possessed himself of his new lodgings, he appeared before Nigel, as he was prepared to dress, having left his pillow at an hour much later than had formerly been his custom.

As Nigel looked upon his attendant, he observed there was a gathering gloom upon his solemn features, which expressed either additional importance, or superadded discontent, or a portion of both.

'How now,' he said, 'what is the matter this morning, Richie, that you have made your face so like that grotesque mask on one of the spouts yonder?' pointing to the Temple Church, of which Gothic building they had a view from the window.

Richie swivelled his head a little to the right with as little alacrity as if he had the crick in his neck, and instantly resuming his posture, replied,—'Mask here, mask there—it were nae such matters that I have to speak anent.'

'And what matters have you to speak anent, then?' said his master, whom circumstances had inured to tolerate a good deal of freedom from his attendant.

'My lord,'—said Richie, and then stopped to cough and hem, as if what he had to say stuck somewhat in his throat.

'I guess the mystery,' said Nigel, 'you want a little money, Richie; will five pieces serve the present turn?'

'My lord,' said Richie, 'I may, it is like, want a trifle of money; and I am glad at the same time and sorry, that it is mair plenty with your lordship than formerly.'

'Glad and sorry, man?' said Lord Nigel; 'why, you are reading riddles to me, Richie.'

'My riddle will be briefly read,' said Richie; 'I come to crave of your lordship your commands for Scotland.'

'For Scotland!—why, art thou mad, man?' said Nigel; 'canst thou not tarry to go down with me?'

'I could be of little service,' said Richie, 'since you purpose to hire another page and groom.'

'Why, thou jealous ass,' said the young lord, 'will not thy load of duty lie the lighter?—Go, take thy breakfast, and drink thy ale double strong, to put such absurdities out of thy head—I could be angry with thee for thy folly, man, but I remember how thou hast stuck to me in adversity.'

'Adversity, my lord, should never have parted us,' said Richie; 'methinks, had the warst come to warst, I could have starved as gallantly as your lordship, or more so, being in some sort used to it; for, though I was bred at a flesher's stall, I have not through my life had a constant intimacy with collops.'

'Now, what is the meaning of all this trash?' said Nigel; 'or has it no other end than to provoke my patience? You know well enough that, had I twenty serving-men, I would hold the faithful follower that stood by me in my distress the most valued of them all. But it is totally out of reason to plague me with your solemn capriccios.'

'My lord,' said Richie, 'in declaring your trust in me, you have done what is honourable to yourself, if I may with humility say so much, and in no way undeserved on my side. Nevertheless, we must part.'

'Body of me, man, why?' said Lord Nigel; 'what reason can there be for it, if we are mutually satisfied?'

'My lord,' said Richie Moniplies, 'your lordship's occupations are such as I cannot own or countenance by my presence.'

'How now, sirrah?' said his master angrily.

'Under favour, my lord,' replied his domestic, 'it is unequal dealing to be equally offended by my speech and by my silence. If you can hear with patience the grounds of my departure, it may be, for aught I know, the better for you here and hereafter—if not, let me have my licence of departure in silence, and so no more about it.'

'Go to, sir!' said Nigel; 'speak out your mind—only remember to whom you speak it.'

'Weel, weel, my lord—I speak it with humility' (never did Richie look with more starched dignity than when he uttered the word); 'but do you think this dicing and card shuffling, and haunting of taverns and playhouses, suits your lordship?—for I am sure it does not suit me.'

'Why, you are not turned precisian or puritan, fool?' said Lord Glenvarloch, laughing, though, betwixt resentment and shame, it cost him some trouble to do so.

'My lord,' replied the follower, 'I ken the purport of your query. I am, it may be, a little of a precisian, and I wish to Heaven I was mair worthy of the name; but let that be a passover,—I have stretched the duties of a serving-man as far as my northern conscience will permit. I can give my gude word to my master, or to my native country, when I am in a foreign land, even though I should leave downright truth a wee bit behind me. Ay, and I will take or give a slash with ony man that speaks to the derogation of either. But this chambering, dicing, and play-hunting is not my element—I cannot draw breath in it—and when I hear of your lordship winning the siller that some poor creature may full sairly miss—by my saul, if it wad serve your necessity, rather than you gained it from him, I wad tak a jump over the hedge with your lordship, and cry "Stand!" to the first grazier we met that was coming from Smithfield with the price of his Essex calves in his leathern pouch!'

'You are a simpleton,' said Nigel, who felt, however, much conscience-struck; 'I never play but for small sums.'

'Ay, my lord,' replied the unyielding domestic, 'and—still with reverence—it is even sae much the waur. If you played with your equals, there might be like sin, but there wad be mair warldly honour in it. Your lordship kens, or may ken, by experience of your ain, whilk is not as yet mony weeks auld, that small sums can ill be missed by those that have nane larger; and I maun e'en be plain with you, that men notice it of your lordship, that ye play wi' nane but the misguided creatures that can but afford to lose bare stakes.'

'No man dare say so!' replied Nigel, very angrily. 'I play with whom I please, but I will only play for what stake I please.'

'That is just what they say, my lord,' said the unmerciful Richie, whose natural love of lecturing, as well as his bluntness of feeling, prevented him from having any idea of the pain which he was inflicting on his master; 'these are even their own very words. It was but yesterday your lordship was pleased, at that same ordinary, to win from yonder young hafflins gentleman with the crimson velvet doublet and the cock's feather in his beaver—him, I mean, who fought with the ranting captain—a matter of five pounds or thereby. I saw him come through the hall; and if he was not cleaned out of cross and pile, I never saw a ruined man in my life.'

'Impossible!' said Lord Glenvarloch. 'Why, who is he? he looked like a man of substance.'

'All is not gold that glistens, my lord,' replied Richie; ''broidery and bullion buttons make bare pouches. And if you ask who he is—maybe I have a guess, and care not to tell.'

'At least, if I have done any such fellow an injury,' said the Lord Nigel, 'let me know how I can repair it.'

'Never fash your beard about that, my lord—with reverence always,' said Richie—'he shall be suitably cared after. Think on him but as ane wha was running post to the devil, and got a shouldering from your lordship to help him on his journey. But I will stop him, if reason can;

and so your lordship needs ask nae mair about it, for there is no use in your knowing it, but much the contrair.'

'Hark you, sirrah,' said his master; 'I have borne with you thus far for certain reasons; but abuse my good nature no further—and since you must needs go, why, go a God's name, and here is to pay your journey.' So saying, he put gold into his hand, which Richie told over, piece by piece, with the utmost accuracy.

'Is it all right—or are they wanting in weight—or what the devil keeps you, when your hurry was so great five minutes since?' said the young lord, now thoroughly nettled at the presumptuous precision with which Richie dealt forth his canons of morality.

'The tale of coin is complete,' said Richie, with the most imperturbable gravity; 'and for the weight, though they are sae scrupulous in this town, as make mouths at a piece that is a wee bit light, or that has been cracked within the ring, my sooth, they will jump at them in Edinburgh like a cock at a grosart. Gold pieces are not so plenty there, the mair the pity!'

'The more is your folly, then,' said Nigel, whose anger was only momentary, 'that leave the land where there is enough of them.'

'My lord,' said Richie, 'to be round with you, the grace of God is better than gold pieces. When Goblin, as you call yonder Monsieur Lutin—and you might as well call him Gibbet, since that is what he is like to end in—shall recommend a page to you, ye will hear little such doctrine as ye have heard from me. And if they were my last words,' he said, raising his voice, 'I would say you are misled, and are forsaking the paths which your honourable father trod in; and, what is more, you are going—still under correction—to the devil with a dishclout, for you are laughed at by them that lead you into these disordered bypaths.'

'Laughed at!' said Nigel, who, like others of his age, was more sensible to ridicule than to reason—'Who dares laugh at me?'

'My lord, as sure as I live by bread,—nay, more, as I am a true man—and, I think, your lordship never found Richie's tongue bearing aught but the truth, unless that your lordship's credit, my country's profit, or, it may be, some sma' occasion of my ain, made it unnecessary to promulgate the hale veritie—I say, then, as I am a true man, when I saw that puir creature come through the hall at that ordinary, whilk is accurst (Heaven forgive me for swearing!) of God and man, with his teeth set, and his hands clenched, and his bonnet drawn over his brows like a desperate man, Goblin said to me, "There goes a dunghill chicken that your master has plucked clean enough; it will be long ere his lordship ruffle a feather with a cock of the game." And so, my lord, to speak it out, the lackeys and the gallants, and more especially your sworn brother Lord Dalgarno call you the sparrow-hawk. I had some thought to have cracked Lutin's pate for the speech, but, after a', the controversy was not worth it.'

'Do they use such terms of me?' said Lord Nigel. 'Death and the devil!'

'And the devil's dam, my lord,' answered Richie; 'they are all three busy in London. And, besides, Lutin and his master laughed at you, my lord, for letting it be thought that—I shame to speak it—that ye were over well with the wife of the decent, honest man whose house you have but now left, as not sufficient for your new bravery, whereas they said, the licentious scoffers, that you pretended to such favour when you had not courage enough for so fair a quarrel, and that the sparrow-hawk was too craven-crested to fly at the wife of a cheesemonger.'—He stopped a moment, and looked fixedly in his master's face, which was inflamed with shame and anger, and then proceeded. 'My lord, I did you justice in my thought, and myself too; for, thought I, he would have been as deep in that sort of profligacy as in others, if it hadna been Richie's four quarters.'

'What new nonsense have you got to plague me with?' said Lord Nigel. 'But go on, since it is the last time I am to be tormented with your impertinence—go on, and make the most of your time.'

'In troth,' said Richie, 'and so will I even do. And as Heaven has bestowed on me a tongue to speak and to advise'——

'Which talent you can by no means be accused of suffering to remain idle,' said Lord Glenvarloch, interrupting him.

'True, my lord,' said Richie, again waving his hand, as if to bespeak his master's silence and attention; 'so, I trust, you will think some time hereafter. And as I am about to leave your service, it is proper that ye suld know the truth, that ye may consider the snares to which your youth and innocence may be exposed, when aulder and doucer heads are withdrawn from beside you. There has been a lusty, good-looking kimmer, of some forty or bygane, making mony speerings about you, my lord.'

'Well, sir, what did she want with me?' said Lord Nigel.

'At first, my lord,' replied his sapient follower, 'as she seemed to be a well-fashioned woman, and to take pleasure in sensible company, I was in no way reluctant to admit her to my conversation.'

'I daresay not,' said Lord Nigel; 'nor unwilling to tell her about my private affairs.'

'Not I, truly, my lord,' said the attendant;—'for, though she asked me mony questions about your fame, your fortune, your business here, and such like, I did not think it proper to tell her altogether the truth thereanent.'

'I see no call on you whatever,' said Lord Nigel, 'to tell the woman either truth or lies upon what she had nothing to do with.'

'I thought so too, my lord,' replied Richie, 'and so I told her neither.'

'And what *did* you tell her, then, you eternal babbler?' said his master, impatient of his prate, yet curious to know what it was all to end in.

'I told her,' said Richie, 'about your warldly fortune, and sae forth, something whilk is not truth just at this time; but which hath been truth formerly, suld be truth now, and will be truth again—and that was, that you were in possession of your fair lands, whilk ye are but in right of as yet. Pleasant communing we had on that and other topics, until she showed the cloven foot, beginning to confer with me about some

wench that she said had a good will to your lordship, and fain she would have spoken with you in particular anent it; but when I heard of such inklings, I began to suspect she was little better than——whew!' Here he concluded his narrative with a low but very expressive whistle.

'And what did your wisdom do in these circumstances?' said Lord Nigel, who, notwithstanding his former resentment, could now scarcely forbear laughing.

'I put on a look, my lord,' replied Richie, bending his solemn brows, 'that suld give her a heartscald of walking on such errands. I laid her enormities clearly before her, and I threatened her, in sae mony words, that I would have her to the ducking-stool; and she, on the contrair part, misca'ed me for a froward northern tyke—and so we parted never to meet again, as I hope and trust. And so I stood between your lordship and that temptation, which might have been worse than the ordinary, or the playhouse either; since you wot well what Solomon, King of the Jews, sayeth of the strange woman—for, said I to mysel', we have taken to dicing already, and if we take to drabbing next, the Lord kens what we may land in.'

'Your impertinence deserves correction, but it is the last which, for a time at least, I shall have to forgive—and I forgive it,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'and since we are to part, Richie, I will say no more respecting your precautions on my account, than that I think you might have left me to act according to my own judgment.'

'Mickle better not,' answered Richie—'mickle better not; we are a' frail creatures, and can judge better for ilk ither than in our ain cases. And for me, even mysell, saving that case of the sifflication, which might have happened to any one, I have always observed myself to be much more prudential in what I have done in your lordship's behalf, than even in what I have been able to transact for my own interest—whilk last I have, indeed, always postponed, as in duty I ought.'

'I do believe thou hast,' said Lord Nigel, 'having ever found thee true and faithful. And since London pleases you so little, I will bid you a short farewell; and you may go down to Edinburgh until I come thither myself, when I trust you will re-enter into my service.'

'Now, Heaven bless you, my lord!' said Richie Moniplies, with uplifted eyes; 'for that word sounds more like grace than ony his come out of your mouth this fortnight. I give you godd'en, my lord.'

So saying, he thrust forth his immense bony hand, seized on that of Lord Glenvarloch, raised it to his lips, then turned short on his heel, and left the room hastily, as if afraid of showing more emotion than was consistent with his ideas of decorum. Lord Nigel, rather surprised at his sudden exit, called after him to know whether he was sufficiently provided with money; but Richie, shaking his head, without making any other answer, ran hastily down-stairs, shut the street door heavily behind him, and was presently seen striding along the Strand.

His master almost involuntarily watched and distinguished the tall raw-boned figure of his late follower, from the window, for some time, until he was lost among the crowd of passengers. Nigel's reflections were not altogether those of self-approval. It was no good sign of his course of life (he could not help acknowledging this much to himself), that so faithful an adherent no longer seemed to feel the same pride in his service, or attachment to his person, which he had formerly manifested. Neither could he avoid experiencing some twinges of conscience, while he felt in some degree the charges which Richie had preferred against him, and experienced a sense of shame and mortification, arising from the colour given by others to that which he himself would have called his caution and moderation in play. He had only the apology, that it had never occurred to himself in this light.

Then his pride and self-love suggested that, on the other hand, Richie, with all his good intentions, was little better than a conceited, pragmatical domestic, who seemed disposed rather to play the tutor than the lackey, and who, out of sheer love, as he alleged, to his master's person, assumed the privilege of interfering with and controlling his actions, besides rendering him ridiculous in the gay world, from the antiquated formality and intrusive presumption of his manners.

Nigel's eyes were scarce turned from the window, when his new landlord, entering, presented to him a slip of paper, carefully bound round with a string of flox silk, and sealed—it had been given in, he said, by a woman, who did not stop an instant. The contents harped upon the same string which Richie Moniplies had already jar-ed. The epistle was in the following words:—

'For the Right Honourable hands of Lord Glenvarloch,

'These, from a friend unknown:—

'My Lord,

'You are trusting to an unhonest friend, and diminishing an honest reputation. An unknown but real friend of your lordship will speak in one word what you would not learn from flatterers in so many days as should suffice for your utter ruin. He whom you think most true—I say your friend Lord Dalgarno—is utterly false to you, and doth but seek, under pretence of worship, to mar your fortune, and diminish the good name by which you might mend it. The kind countenance which he shows to you is more dangerous than the Prince's frown; even as to gain at Beaujeu's ordinary is more discreditable than to lose. Beware of both.—And this is all from your true but nameless friend,

'Ignoto.'

Lord Glenvarloch paused for an instant, and crushed the paper together—then again unfolded and read it with attention—bent his brows—mused for a moment, and then, tearing it to fragments, exclaimed—'Begone for a vile calumny! But I will watch—I will observe'——

Thought after thought rushed on him; but, upon the whole, Lord Glenvarloch was so little satisfied with the result of his own reflections, that he resolved to dissipate them by a walk in the Park, and, taking his cloak and beaver, went thither accordingly.

CHAPTER XV.

'Twas when fleet Snowball's head was woxen grey,
A luckless leveret met him on his way,—
Who knows not Snowball he, whose race renowned
Is still victorious on each coursing ground?
Swaffham, Newmarket, and the Roman camp
Have seen them victors o'er each meaner stamp.—
In vain the youngling sought, with doubling wile,
The hedge, the hill, the thicket, or the stile.
Experience sage the lack of speed supplied,
And in the gap he sought, the victim died.
So was I once, in thy fair street, Saint James,
Through walking cavaliers and car-borne dames
Descried, pursued, turned o'er again, and o'er,
Coursed, coted, mouthed by an unfeeling bore.
Etc. etc. etc.

THE Park of Saint James's, though enlarged, planted with verdant alleys, and otherwise decorated by Charles II., existed in the days of his grandfather as a public and pleasant promenade; and, for the sake of exercise or pastime, was much frequented by the better class.

Lord Glenvarloch repaired thither to dispel the unpleasant reflections which had been suggested by his parting with his trusty squire, Richie Moniplies, in a manner which was agreeable neither to his pride nor his feelings; and by the corroboration which the hints of his late attendant had received from the anonymous letter mentioned in the end of the last chapter.

There was a considerable number of company in the Park when he entered it, but, his present state of mind inducing him to avoid society, he kept aloof from the more frequented walks towards Westminster and Whitehall, and drew to the north, or, as we should now say, the Piccadilly verge of the enclosure, believing he might there enjoy, or rather combat, his own thoughts unmolested.

In this, however, Lord Glenvarloch was mistaken; for, as he strolled slowly along with his arms folded in his cloak and his hat drawn over his eyes, he was suddenly pounced upon by Sir Mungo Malagrowther, who, either shunning or shunned, had retreated, or had been obliged to retreat, to the same less-frequented corner of the Park.

Nigel started when he heard the high, sharp, and querulous tones of the knight's cracked voice, and was no less alarmed when he beheld his tall thin figure hobbling towards him, wrapped in a threadbare cloak, on whose surface ten thousand varied stains eclipsed the original scarlet, and having his head surmounted with a well-worn beaver, bearing a black velvet band for a chain, and a capon's feather for an ostrich plume.

Lord Glenvarloch would fain have made his escape, but, as our motto intimates a leveret had as little chance to free herself of an experienced greyhound. Sir Mungo, to continue the simile, had long ago learnt to *run cunning*, and make sure of mouthing his game. So Nigel found himself compelled to stand and answer the hackneyed question—'What news to day?'

'Nothing extraordinary, I believe,' answered the young nobleman, attempting to pass on.

'O, ye are ganging to the French ordinary belive,' replied the knight; 'but it is early day yet—we will take a turn in the Park in the meanwhile—it will sharpen your appetite.'

So saying, he quietly slipped his arm under Lord Glenvarloch's, in spite of all the decent reluctance which his victim could exhibit, by keeping his elbow close to his side; and having fairly grappled the prize, he proceeded to take it in tow.

Nigel was sullen and silent, in hopes to shake off his unpleasant companion; but Sir Mungo was determined that, if he did not speak, he should at least hear.

'Ye are bound for the ordinary, my lord?' said the cynic;—'weel, ye canna do better—there is choice company there, and peculiarly selected, as I am tauld, being, dootless, sic as it is desirable that young noblemen should herd withal—and your noble father wad have been blithe to see you keeping such worshipful society.'

'I believe,' said Lord Glenvarloch, thinking himself obliged to say something, 'that the society is as good as generally can be found in such places, where the door can scarcely be shut against those who come to spend their money.'

'Right, my lord—vera right,' said his tormentor, bursting out into a chuckling, but most discordant laugh. 'These citizen chuffs and clowns will press in amongst us, when there is but an inch of a door open. And what remedy? —Just e'en this, that as their cash gives them confidence, we should strip them of it. Flay them, my lord—singe them as the kitchen wench does the rats, and then they winna long to come back again.—Ay, ay—pluck them, plume them —and then the larded capons will not be for flying so high a wing, my lord, among the goss-hawks and sparrow-hawks, and the like.'

And, therewithal, Sir Mungo fixed on Nigel his quick, sharp grey eye, watching the effect of his sarcasm as keenly as the surgeon, in a delicate operation, remarks the progress of his anatomical scalpel.

Nigel, however willing to conceal his sensations, could not avoid gratifying his tormentor by wincing under the operation. He coloured with vexation and anger; but a quarrel with Sir Mungo Malagrowther would, he felt, be unutterably ridiculous; and he only muttered to himself the words, 'Impertinent coxcomb!' which, on this occasion, Sir Mungo's imperfection of organ did not prevent him from hearing and replying to.

'Ay, ay—vera true,' exclaimed the caustic old courtier—'Impertinent coxcombs they are, that thus intrude themselves on the society of their betters; but your lordship kens how to gar them as gude—ye have the trick on't.—They had a braw sport in the presence last Friday, how ye suld have routed a young shopkeeper, horse and foot, ta'en his *spolia opima*, and a' the specie he had about him, down to the very silver buttons of his cloak, and sent him to graze with Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Muckle honour redounded to your lordship thereby.—We were tauld the loon threw himsel' into the Thames in a fit of desperation. There's enow of them behind—there was mair tint on Flodden Edge.'

'You have been told a budget of lies, so far as I am concerned, Sir Mungo,' said Nigel, speaking loud and sternly.

'Vera likely—vera likely,' said the unabashed and undismayed Sir Mungo; 'naething but lies are current in the circle. So the chield is not

drowned, then?—the mair's the pity.—But I never believed that part of the story—a London dealer has mair wit in his anger. I dare swear the lad has a bonnie broom-shank in his hand by this time, and is scrubbing the kennels in quest after rusty nails, to help him to begin his pack again.—He has three bairns, they say; they will help him bravely to grope in the gutters. Your good lordship may have the ruining of him again, my lord, if they have any luck in strand-scouring.'

'This is more than intolerable,' said Nigel, uncertain whether to make an angry vindication of his character, or to fling the old tormentor from his arm. But an instant's recollection convinced him that to do either would only give an air of truth and consistency to the scandals which he began to see were affecting his character, both in the higher and lower circles. Hastily, therefore, he formed the wiser resolution to endure Sir Mungo's studied impertinence, under the hope of ascertaining, if possible, from what source those reports arose which were so prejudicial to his reputation.

Sir Mungo, in the meanwhile, caught up, as usual, Nigel's last words, or rather the sound of them, and amplified and interpreted them in his own way. 'Tolerable luck!' he repeated; 'yes, truly, my lord, I am told that you *have* tolerable luck, and that ye ken weel how to use that jilting quean, Dame Fortune, like a canny douce lad, willing to warm yourself in her smiles, without exposing yourself to her frowns. And that is what I ca' having luck in a bag.'

'Sir Mungo Malagrowther,' said Lord Glenvarloch, turning towards him seriously, 'have the goodness to hear me for a moment.'

'As weel as I can, my lord—as weel as I can,' said Sir Mungo, shaking his head, and pointing the finger of his left hand to his ear.

'I will try to speak very distinctly,' said Nigel, arming himself with patience. 'You take me for a noted gamester; I give you my word that you have not been rightly informed—I am none such. You owe me some explanation, at least, respecting the source from which you have derived such false information.'

'I never heard you were a *great* gamester, and never thought or said you were such, my lord,' said Sir Mungo, who found it impossible to avoid hearing what Nigel said with peculiarly deliberate and distinct pronunciation. 'I repeat it—I never heard, said, or thought that you were a ruffling gamester, such as they call those of the first head.—Look you, my lord, I call *him* a gamester, that plays with equal stakes and equal skill, and stands by the fortune of the game, good or bad; and I call *him* a ruffling gamester, or ane of the first head, who ventures frankly and deeply upon such a wager. But he, my lord, who has the patience and prudence never to venture beyond small game, such as, at most, might crack the Christmas-box of a grocer's 'prentice, who vies with those that have little to hazard, and who, therefore, having the larger stock, can always rook them by waiting for his good fortune, and by rising from the game when luck leaves him—such a one as he, my lord, I do not call a *great* gamester, to whatever other name he may be entitled.'

'And such a mean-spirited, sordid wretch you would infer that I am,' replied Lord Glenvarloch; 'one who fears the skilful, and preys upon the ignorant—who avoids playing with his equals, that he may make sure of pillaging his inferiors?—Is this what I am to understand has been reported of me?'

'Nay, my lord, you will gain nought by speaking big with me,' said Sir Mungo, who, besides that his sarcastic humour was really supported by a good fund of animal courage, had also full reliance on the immunities which he had derived from the broadsword of Sir Rullion Rattray, and the baton of the satellites employed by the Lady Cockpen. 'And for the truth of the matter,' he continued, 'your lordship best knows whether you ever lost more than five pieces at a time since you frequented Beaujeu's—whether you have not most commonly risen a winner—and whether the brave young gallants who frequent the ordinary—I mean those of noble rank, and means conforming—are in use to play upon these terms?'

'My father was right,' said Lord Glenvarloch, in the bitterness of his spirit; 'and his curse justly followed me when I first entered that place. There is contamination in the air, and he whose fortune avoids ruin shall be blighted in his honour and reputation.'

Sir Mungo, who watched his victim with the delighted yet wary eye of an experienced angler, became now aware that, if he strained the line on him too tightly, there was every risk of his breaking hold. In order to give him room, therefore, to play, he protested that Lord Glenvarloch 'should not take his free speech *in malam partem*. If you were a trifle ower sicker in your amusement, my lord, it canna be denied that it is the safest course to prevent further endangerment of your somewhat dilapidated fortunes; and if ye play with your inferiors, ye are relieved of the pain of pouching the siller of your friends and equals; forbye that the plebeian knaves have had the advantage, *tecum certâsse*, as Ajax Telamon sayeth, *apud Metamorphoseos*; and for the like of them to have played with an Scottish nobleman, is an honest and honourable consideration to compensate the loss of their stake, whilk, I daresay, moreover, maist of the churls can weel afford.'

'Be that as it may, Sir Mungo,' said Nigel, 'I would fain know'——

'Ay, ay,' interrupted Sir Mungo; 'and, as you say, who cares whether the fat bulls of Bashan can spare it or no? gentlemen are not to limit their sport for the like of them.'

'I wish to know, Sir Mungo,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'in what company you have learned these offensive particulars respecting me?'

'Dootless—dootless, my lord,' said Sir Mungo; I have ever heard, and I have ever reported, that your lordship kept the best of company in a private way.—There is the fine Countess of Blackchester,—but I think she stirs not much abroad since her affair with his Grace of Buckingham; and there is the gude auld-fashioned Scottish nobleman, Lord Huntinglen, an undeniable man of quality,—it is pity but he could keep caup and can frae his head, whilk now and then doth minish his reputation. And there is

the gay young Lord Dalgarno, that carries the craft of grey hairs under his curled love-locks,—a fair race they are, father, daughter, and son, all of the same honourable family. I think we needna speak of George Heriot, honest man, when we have nobility in question. So that is the company I have heard of your keeping, my lord, out-taken those of the ordinary.'

'My company has not, indeed, been much more extended than amongst those you mention,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'but in short'——

'To court?' said Sir Mungo; 'that was just what I was going to say—Lord Dalgarno says he cannot prevail on ye to come to court, and that does ye prejudice, my lord the King hears of you by others, when he should see you in person—I speak in serious friendship, my lord. His Majesty, when you were named in the circle a short while since, was heard to say, "*Jacta est alea!* Glenvarlochides is turned dicer and drinker." —My Lord Dalgarno took your part, and it was e'en borne down by the popular voice of the courtiers, who spoke of you as one who had betaken yourself to living a town life, and risking your baron's coronet amongst the flatcaps of the city.'

'And this was publicly spoken of me,' said Nigel, 'and in the King's presence?'

'Spoken openly?' repeated Sir Mungo Malagrowther; 'ay, by my troth was it—that is to say, it was whispered privately—whilk is as open promulgation as the thing permitted; for ye may think the court is not like a place where men are as sib as Simmie and his brother,* and roar out their minds as if they were at an ordinary.'

'A curse on the court and the ordinary both!' cried Nigel impatiently.

'With all my heart,' said the knight; 'I have got little by a knight's service in the court; and the last time I was at the ordinary, I lost four angels.'

'May I pray of you, Sir Mungo, to let me know,' said Nigel, 'the names of those who thus make free with the character of one who can be but little known to them, and who never injured any of them?'

'Have I not told you already,' answered Sir Mungo, 'that the King said something to that effect—so did the Prince too;—and such being the case, ye may take it on your corporal oath, that every man in the circle who was not silent, sung the same song as they did.'

'You said but now,' replied Glenvarloch, 'that Lord Dalgarno interfered in my behalf?'

'In good troth did he,' answered Sir Mungo, with a sneer; 'but the young nobleman was soon borne down—by token, he had something of a catarrh, and spoke as hoarse as a roopit raven. Poor gentleman, if he had had his full extent of voice, he would have been as well listened to, dootless, as in a cause of his ain, whilk no man kens better how to plead to purpose.—And let me ask you, by the way,' continued Sir Mungo, 'whether Lord Dalgarno has ever introduced your lordship to the Prince or the Duke of Buckingham, either of whom might soon carry through your suit?'

* See note, p 770, vol. x.

'I have no claim on the favour of either the Prince or the Duke of Buckingham,' said Lord Glenvarloch.—'As you seem to have made my affairs your study, Sir Mungo, although perhaps something unnecessarily, you may have heard that I have petitioned my sovereign for payment of a debt due to my family. I cannot doubt the King's desire to do justice, nor can I in decency employ the solicitation of his Highness the Prince, or his Grace the Duke of Buckingham, to obtain from his Majesty what either should be granted me as a right or refused altogether.'

Sir Mungo twisted his whimsical features into one of his most grotesque sneers, as he replied—

'It is a very clear and parspicuous position of the case, my lord; and in relying thereupon, you show an absolute and unimprovable acquaintance with the King, court, and mankind in general.—But whom have we got here?—Stand up, my lord, and make way—by my word of honour, they are the very men we spoke of—talk of the devil, and—humph!'

It must be here premised that, during the conversation, Lord Glenvarloch, perhaps in the hope of shaking himself free of Sir Mungo, had directed their walk towards the more frequented part of the Park; while the good knight had stuck to him, being totally indifferent which way they went, provided he could keep his talons clutched upon his companion. They were still, however, at some distance from the livelier part of the scene, when Sir Mungo's experienced eye noticed the appearances which occasioned the latter part of his speech to Lord Glenvarloch.

A low respectful murmur arose among the numerous groups of persons which occupied the lower part of the Park. They first clustered together, with their faces turned towards Whitehall, then fell back on either hand to give place to a splendid party of gallants, who, advancing from the palace, came onward through the Park; all the other company drawing off the pathway, and standing uncovered as they passed.

Most of these courtly gallants were dressed in the garb which the pencil of Vandyke has made familiar, even at the distance of nearly two centuries; and which was just at this period beginning to supersede the more fluttering and frivolous dress which had been adopted from the French court of Henri Quatre.

The whole train were uncovered excepting the Prince of Wales, afterwards the most unfortunate of British monarchs, who came onward, having his long curled auburn tresses, and his countenance, which, even in early youth, bore a shade of anticipated melancholy, shaded by the Spanish hat and the single ostrich feather which drooped from it. On his right hand was Buckingham, whose commanding, and at the same time graceful, deportment threw almost into shade the personal demeanour and majesty of the prince on whom he attended. The eye, movements, and gestures of the great courtier were so composed, so regularly observant of all etiquette belonging to his situation, as to form a marked and strong contrast with the forward gaiety and frivolity by which he recommended himself to the favour of his 'dear dad and gossip,' King James. A singular fate attended

this accomplished courtier, in being at once the reigning favourite of a father and son so very opposite in manners, that, to ingratiate himself with the youthful prince, he was obliged to compress within the strictest limits of respectful observance the frolicsome and free humour which captivated his aged father.

It is true Buckingham well knew the different dispositions both of James and Charles, and had no difficulty in so conducting himself as to maintain the highest post in the favour of both. It has indeed been supposed, as we before hinted, that the duke, when he had completely possessed himself of the affections of Charles, retained his hold in those of the father only by the tyranny of custom; and that James, could he have brought himself to form a vigorous resolution, was, in the latter years of his life especially, not unlikely to have discarded Buckingham from his counsels and favour. But if ever the king indeed meditated such a change, he was too timid, and too much accustomed to the influence which the duke had long exercised over him, to summon up resolution enough for effecting such a purpose; and at all events it is certain that Buckingham, though surviving the master by whom he was raised, had the rare chance to experience no wane of the most splendid court favour during two reigns, until it was at once eclipsed in his blood by the dagger of his assassin Felton.

To return from this digression: The prince, with his train, advanced, and was near the place where Lord Glenvarloch and Sir Mungo had stood aside, according to form, in order to give the prince passage, and to pay the usual marks of respect. Nigel could now remark that Lord Dalgarno walked close behind the Duke of Buckingham, and, as he thought, whispered something in his ear as they came onward. At any rate, both the prince's and Duke of Buckingham's attention seemed to be directed by some circumstance towards Nigel, for they turned their heads in that direction and looked at him attentively—the prince with a countenance, the grave, melancholy expression of which was blended with severity; while Buckingham's looks evinced some degree of scornful triumph. Lord Dalgarno did not seem to observe his friend, perhaps because the sunbeams fell from the side of the walk on which Nigel stood, obliging Malcolm to hold up his hat to screen his eyes.

As the prince passed, Lord Glenvarloch and Sir Mungo bowed, as respect required; and the prince, returning their obeisance with that grave ceremony which paid to every rank its due, but not a tittle beyond it, signed to Sir Mungo to come forward. Commencing an apology for his lameness as he started, which he had just completed as his hobbling gait brought him up to the prince, Sir Mungo lent an attentive, and, as it seemed, an intelligent ear to questions, asked in a tone so low, that the knight would certainly have been deaf to them had they been put to him by any one under the rank of Prince of Wales. After about a minute's conversation, the prince bestowed on Nigel the embarrassing notice of another fixed look, touched his hat slightly to Sir Mungo, and walked on.

'It is even as I suspected, my lord,' said Sir Mungo, with an air which he designed to be melancholy and sympathetic, but which, in fact, resembled the grin of an ape when he has mouthed a scalding chestnut—'Ye have back-friends, my lord, that is, unfriends, or, to be plain, enemies—about the person of the Prince.'

'I am sorry to hear it,' said Nigel; 'but I would I knew what they accuse me of.'

'Ye shall hear, my lord,' said Sir Mungo, 'the Prince's vera words—"Sir Mungo," said he, "I rejoice to see you, and am glad your rheumatic troubles permit you to come hither for exercise."—I bowed, as in duty bound—ye might remark, my lord, that I did so, whilk formed the first branch of our conversation.—His Highness then demanded of me, "if he with whom I stood was the young Lord Glenvarloch." I answered, "that you were such, for his Highness's service;" whilk was the second branch. - Thirdly, his Highness, resuming the argument, said, that "truly he had been told so" (meaning that he had been told you were that personage), "but that he could not believe that the heir of that noble and decayed house could be leading an idle, scandalous, and precarious life, in the eating-houses and taverns of London, while the King's drums were beating and colours flying in Germany in the cause of the Palatine, his son-in-law."—I could, your lordship is aware, do nothing but make an obeisance; and a gracious "Give ye good-day, Sir Mungo Malagrowther," licensed me to fall back to your lordship. And now, my lord, if your business or pleasure calls you to the ordinary, or anywhere in the direction of the city—why, have with you; for, dootless, ye will think ye have tarried lang enough in the Park, as they will likely turn at the head of the walk, and return this way—and you have a broad hint, I think, not to cross the Prince's presence in a hurry.'

'*You* may stay or go as you please, Sir Mungo,' said Nigel, with an expression of calm but deep resentment; 'but, for my own part, my resolution is taken. I will quit this public walk for pleasure of no man—still less will I quit it like one unworthy to be seen in places of public resort. I trust that the Prince and his retinue will return this way as you expect; for I will abide, Sir Mungo, and beard them.'

'Beard them!' exclaimed Sir Mungo, in the extremity of surprise,—'Beard the Prince of Wales—the heir-apparent of the kingdoms!—By my saul, you shall beard him yoursel', then.'

Accordingly he was about to leave Nigel very hastily, when some unwonted touch of good-natured interest in his youth and inexperience seemed suddenly to soften his habitual cynicism.

'The devil is in me for an auld fule!' said Sir Mungo; 'but I must needs concern mysel'—I that owe so little either to fortune or my fellow-creatures, must, I say, needs concern mysel'—with this springald, whom I will warrant to be as obstinate as a pig possessed with a devil, for it's the cast of his family; and yet I maun e'en fling away some sound advice on him.—My dainty young Lord Glenvarloch, understand me distinctly, for this is no bairn's play. When the Prince said sae much to me as I have repeated to you, it was equivalent to a command not to appear again in his presence; wherefore, take an auld man's advice that wishes you weel, and

maybe a wee thing better than he has reason to wish onybody. Jouk and let the jaw gae by, like a canny bairn—gang hame to your lodgings, keep your foot frae taverns, and your fingers frae the dice-box; compound your affairs quietly wi' some ane that has better favour than yours about court, and you will get a round spell of money to carry you to Germany, or elsewhere, to push your fortune. It was a fortunate soldier that made your family four or five hundred years syne, and if you are brave and fortunate, you may find the way to repair it. But, take my word for it, that in this court you will never thrive.'

When Sir Mungo had completed his exhortation, in which there was more of sincere sympathy with another's situation than he had been heretofore known to express in behalf of any one, Lord Glenvarloch replied, 'I am obliged to you, Sir Mungo—you have spoken, I think, with sincerity, and I thank you. But, in return for your good advice, I heartily entreat you to leave me; I observe the Prince and his train are returning down the walk, and you may prejudice yourself, but cannot help me, by remaining with me.'

'And that is true,' said Sir Mungo; 'yet, were I ten years younger, I would be tempted to stand by you, and gie them the meeting. But at threescore and upward, men's courage turns cauldrife; and they that canna win a living, must not endanger the small sustenance of their age. I wish you weel through, my lord, but it is an unequal fight.' So saying, he turned and limped away; often looking back, however, as if his natural spirit, even in its present subdued state, aided by his love of contradiction and of debate, rendered him unwilling to adopt the course necessary for his own security.

Thus abandoned by his companion, whose departure he graced with better thoughts of him than those which he bestowed on his appearance, Nigel remained with his arms folded, and reclining against a solitary tree which overhung the path, making up his mind to encounter a moment which he expected to be critical of his fate. But he was mistaken in supposing that the Prince of Wales would either address him, or admit him to expostulation, in such a public place as the Park. He did not remain unnoticed, however, for, when he made a respectful but haughty obeisance, intimating in look and manner that he was possessed of, and undaunted by, the unfavourable opinion which the prince had so lately expressed, Charles returned his reverence with such a frown, as is only given by those whose frown is authority and decision. The train passed on, the Duke of Buckingham not even appearing to see Lord Glenvarloch; while Lord Dalgarno, though no longer incommoded by the sunbeams, kept his eyes, which had perhaps been dazzled by their former splendour, bent upon the ground.

Lord Glenvarloch had difficulty to restrain an indignation, to which, in the circumstances, it would have been madness to have given vent. He started from his reclining posture, and followed the prince's train, so as to keep them distinctly in sight; which was very easy, as they walked slowly. Nigel observed them keep their road towards the palace, where the prince turned at the gate and bowed to the noblemen in attendance, in token of dismissing them, and entered the palace, accompanied only by the Duke of Buckingham, and one or two of his equerries. The rest of the train, having returned in all dutiful humility the farewell of the prince, began to disperse themselves through the Park.

All this was carefully noticed by Lord Glenvarloch, who, as he adjusted his cloak, and drew his sword-belt round so as to bring the hilt closer to his hand, muttered—'Dalgarno shall explain all this to me, for it is evident that he is in the secret!'

CHAPTER XVI.

Give way—give way I must and will have justice.
And tell me not of privilege and place;
Where I am injured, there I'll sue redress.
Look to it, every one who bars my access;
I have a heart to feel the injury,
A hand to right myself, and, by my honour,
That hand shall grasp what grey-beard Law denies me.
THE CHAMBERLAIN.

It was not long ere Nigel discovered Lord Dalgarno advancing towards him in the company of another young man of quality of the prince's train; and as they directed their course towards the south-eastern corner of the Park, he concluded they were about to go to Lord Huntinglen's. They stopped, however, and turned up another path leading to the north; and Lord Glenvarloch conceived that this change of direction was owing to their having seen him, and their desire to avoid him.

Nigel followed them without hesitation by a path which, winding around a thicket of shrubs and trees, once more conducted him to the less frequented part of the Park. He observed which side of the thicket was taken by Lord Dalgarno and his companion, and he himself, walking hastily round the other verge, was thus enabled to meet them face to face.

'Good-morrow, my Lord Dalgarno,' said Lord Glenvarloch sternly.

'Ha! my friend Nigel,' answered Lord Dalgarno, in his usual careless and indifferent tone, 'my friend Nigel, with business on his brow?—but you must wait till we meet at Beaujeu's at noon—Sir Ewes Haldimund and I are at present engaged in the Prince's service.'

'If you were engaged in the King's, my lord,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'you must stand and answer me.'

'Hey-day!' said Lord Dalgarno, with an air of great astonishment, 'what passion is this? Why, Nigel, this is King Cambyses' vein!—You have frequented the theatres too much lately. Away with this folly, man; go, dine upon soup and salad, drink succory-water to cool your blood, go to bed at sundown, and defy those foul fiends, Wrath and Misconstruction.'

'I have had misconstruction enough among you,' said Glenvarloch, in the same tone of determined displeasure, 'and from you, my Lord Dalgarno, in particular, and all under the mask of friendship.'

'Here is a proper business!' said Dalgarno,'

turning as if to appeal to Sir Ewes Haldimund; 'do you see this angry ruffler, Sir Ewes? A month since, he dared not have looked one of yonder sheep in the face, and now he is a prince of roisterers, a plucker of pigeons, a controller of players and poets—and in gratitude for my having shown him the way to the eminent character which he holds upon town, he comes hither to quarrel with his best friend, if not his only one of decent station.'

'I renounce such hollow friendship, my lord,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'I disclaim the character which, even to my very face, you labour to fix upon me, and ere we part I will call you to a reckoning for it.'

'My lords both,' interrupted Sir Ewes Haldimund, 'let me remind you that the Royal Park is no place to quarrel in.'

'I will make my quarrel good,' said Nigel, who did not know, or in his passion might not have recollected, the privileges of the place, 'wherever I find my enemy.'

'You shall find quarrelling enough,' replied Lord Dalgarno calmly, 'so soon as you assign a sufficient cause for it. Sir Ewes Haldimund, who knows the court, will warrant you that I am not backward on such occasions.—But of what is it that you now complain, after having experienced nothing save kindness from me and my family?'

'Of your family I complain not,' replied Lord Glenvarloch; 'they have done for me all they could, more, far more, than I could have expected; but you, my lord, have suffered me, while you called me your friend, to be traduced, where a word of your mouth would have placed my character in its true colours—and hence the injurious message which I just now received from the Prince of Wales. To permit the misrepresentation of a friend, my lord, is to share in the slander.'

'You have been misinformed, my Lord Glenvarloch,' said Sir Ewes Haldimund; 'I have myself often heard Lord Dalgarno defend your character, and regret that your exclusive attachment to the pleasures of a London life prevented your paying your duty regularly to the King and Prince.'

'While he himself,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'dissuaded me from presenting myself at court.'

'I will cut this matter short,' said Lord Dalgarno, with haughty coldness. 'You seem to have conceived, my lord, that you and I were Pylades and Orestes—a second edition of Damon and Pythias—Theseus and Pirithous at the least. You are mistaken, and have given the name of friendship to what, on my part, was mere good-nature and compassion for a raw and ignorant countryman, joined to the cumbersome charge which my father gave me respecting you. Your character, my lord, is of no one's drawing, but of your own making. I introduced you where, as in all such places, there was good and indifferent company to be met with—your habits, or taste, made you prefer the worse. Your holy horror at the sight of dice and cards degenerated into the cautious resolution to play only at those times, and with such persons, as might insure you rising a winner—no man can long do so, and continue to be held a gentleman. Such is the reputation you have made for yourself, and you have no right to be angry that I do not contradict in society what yourself know to be true. Let us pass on, my lord; and if you want further explanation, seek some other time and fitter place.'

'No time can be better than the present,' said Lord Glenvarloch, whose resentment was now excited to the uttermost by the cold-blooded and insulting manner in which Dalgarno vindicated himself,—'no place fitter than the place where we now stand. Those of my house have ever avenged insult at the moment, and on the spot, where it was offered, were it at the foot of the throne.—Lord Dalgarno, you are a villain! draw and defend yourself.' At the same time he unsheathed his rapier.

'Are you mad?' said Lord Dalgarno, stepping back; 'we are in the precincts of the court!'

'The better,' answered Lord Glenvarloch; 'I will cleanse them from a calumniator and a coward.' He then pressed on Lord Dalgarno, and struck him with the flat of the sword.

The fray had now attracted attention, and the cry went round, 'Keep the peace—keep the peace—swords drawn in the Park!—What, ho! guards!—keepers!—yeomen rangers!' and a number of people came rushing to the spot from all sides.

Lord Dalgarno, who had half drawn his sword on receiving the blow, returned it to his scabbard when he observed the crowd thicken, and, taking Sir Ewes Haldimund by the arm, walked hastily away, only saying to Lord Glenvarloch as they left him, 'You shall dearly abye this insult—we will meet again.'

A decent-looking elderly man, who observed that Lord Glenvarloch remained on the spot, taking compassion on his youthful appearance, said to him, 'Are you aware this is a Star Chamber business, young gentleman, and that it may cost you your right hand?—Shift for yourself before the keepers or constables come up—Get into Whitefriars or somewhere, for sanctuary and concealment, till you can make friends or quit the city.'

The advice was not to be neglected. Lord Glenvarloch made hastily towards the issue from the Park by Saint James's Palace, then Saint James's Hospital. The hubbub increased behind him; and several peace-officers of the royal household came up to apprehend the delinquent. Fortunately for Nigel, a popular edition of the cause of the affray had gone abroad. It was said that one of the Duke of Buckingham's companions had insulted a stranger gentleman from the country, and that the stranger had cudgelled him soundly. A favourite, or the companion of a favourite, is always odious to John Bull, who has, besides, a partiality to those disputants who proceed, as lawyers term it, *par voye du fait*, and both prejudices were in Nigel's favour. The officers, therefore, who came to apprehend him, could learn from the spectators no particulars of his appearance, or information concerning the road he had taken; so that, for the moment, he escaped being arrested.

What Lord Glenvarloch heard among the crowd as he passed along, was sufficient to satisfy him that in his impatient passion he had placed himself in a predicament of considerable danger. He was no stranger to the severe

and arbitrary proceedings of the Court of Star Chamber, especially in cases of breach of privilege, which made it the terror of all men; and it was no further back than the queen's time that the punishment of mutilation had been actually awarded and executed, for some offence of the same kind which he had just committed. He had also the comfortable reflection, that, by his violent quarrel with Lord Dalgarno, he must now forfeit the friendship and good offices of that nobleman's father and sister, almost the only persons of consideration in whom he could claim any interest; while all the evil reports which had been put in circulation concerning his character, were certain to weigh heavily against him, in a case where much must necessarily depend on the reputation of the accused. To a youthful imagination, the idea of such a punishment as mutilation seems more ghastly than death itself; and every word which he overheard among the groups which he met, mingled with, or overtook and passed, announced this as the penalty of his offence. He dreaded to increase his pace for fear of attracting suspicion, and more than once saw the rangers officers so near him, that his wrist tingled as if already under the blade of the dismembering knife. At length he got out of the Park, and had a little more leisure to consider what he was next to do.

Whitefriars, adjacent to the Temple, then well known by the cant name of Alsatia, had at this time, and for nearly a century afterwards, the privilege of a sanctuary, unless against the writ of the Lord Chief-Justice, or of the Lords of the Privy Council. Indeed, as the place abounded with desperadoes of every description,--bankrupt citizens, ruined gamesters, irreclaimable prodigals, desperate duellists, bravoes, homicides, and debauched profligates of every description, all leagued together to maintain the immunities of their asylum,- it was both difficult and unsafe for the officers of the law to execute warrants, emanating even from the highest authority, amongst men whose safety was inconsistent with warrants or authority of any kind. This Lord Glenvarloch well knew; and, odious as the place of refuge was, it seemed the only one where, for a space at least, he might be concealed and secure from the immediate grasp of the law, until he should have leisure to provide better for his safety, or to get this unpleasant matter in some shape accommodated.

Meanwhile, as Nigel walked hastily forward towards the place of sanctuary, he bitterly blamed himself for suffering Lord Dalgarno to lead him into the haunts of dissipation; and no less accused his intemperate heat of passion, which now had driven him for refuge into the purlieus of profane and avowed vice and debauchery.

'Dalgarno spoke but too truly in that,' were his bitter reflections; 'I have made myself an evil reputation by acting on his insidious counsels, and neglecting the wholesome admonitions which ought to have claimed implicit obedience from me, and which recommended abstinence even from the slightest approach to evil. But if I escape from the perilous labyrinth in which folly and inexperience, as well as violent passions, have involved me, I will find some noble way of redeeming the lustre of a name which was never sullied until I bore it.'

As Lord Glenvarloch formed these prudent resolutions, he entered the Temple Walks, whence a gate at that time opened into Whitefriars, by which, as by the more private passage, he proposed to betake himself to the sanctuary. As he approached the entrance to that den of infamy, from which his mind recoiled even while in the act of taking shelter there, his pace slackened, while the steep and broken stairs reminded him of the *facilis descensus Averni*, and rendered him doubtful whether it were not better to brave the worst which could befall him in the public haunts of honourable men, than to evade punishment by secluding himself in those of avowed vice and profligacy.

As Nigel hesitated, a young gentleman of the Temple advanced towards him, whom he had often seen, and sometimes conversed with at the ordinary, where he was a frequent and welcome guest, being a wild young gallant, indifferently well provided with money, who spent at the theatres, and other gay places of public resort, the time which his father supposed he was employing in the study of the law. But Reginald Lowestoffe, such was the young Templar's name, was of opinion that little law was necessary to enable him to spend the revenues of the paternal acres which were to devolve upon him at his father's demise, and therefore gave himself no trouble to acquire more of that science than might be imbibed along with the learned air of the region in which he had his chambers. In other respects, he was one of the wits of the place, read Ovid and Martial, aimed at quick repartee and pun (often very far-fetched), danced, fenced, played at tennis, and performed sundry tunes on the fiddle and French horn, to the great annoyance of old Counsellor Barratter, who lived in the chambers immediately below him. Such was Reginald Lowestoffe, shrewd, alert, and well acquainted with the town, through all its recesses, but in a sort of disrespectable way. This gallant, now approaching the Lord Glenvarloch, saluted him by name and title, and asked if his lordship designed for the chevalier's this day, observing it was near noon, and the woodcock would be on the board ere they could reach the ordinary.

'I do not go there to-day,' answered Lord Glenvarloch.

'Which way, then, my lord?' said the young Templar, who was perhaps not undesirous to parade a part at least of the street in company with a lord, though but a Scottish one.

'I - I'-- said Nigel, desiring to avail himself of this young man's local knowledge, yet unwilling and ashamed to acknowledge his intention to take refuge in so disreputable a quarter, or to describe the situation in which he stood—'I have some curiosity to see Whitefriars.'

'What! your lordship is for a frolic into Alsatia?' said Lowestoffe. 'Have with you, my lord -you cannot have a better guide to the infernal regions than myself. I promise you there are bona-robas to be found there—good wine, too, ay, and good fellows to drink it with, though somewhat suffering under the frowns of fortune. But your lordship will pardon me—

you are the last of our acquaintance to whom I would have proposed such a voyage of discovery.'

'I am obliged to you, Master Lowestoffe, for the good opinion you have expressed in the observation,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'but my present circumstances may render even a residence of a day or two in the sanctuary a matter of necessity.'

'Indeed!' said Lowestoffe, in a tone of great surprise, 'I thought your lordship had always taken care not to risk any considerable stake —I beg pardon, but if the bone[illegible]ve proved perfidious, I know just so much law as that a peer's person is sacred from arrest; and for mere impecuniosity, my lord, better shift can be made elsewhere than in Whitefriars, where all are devouring each other for very poverty.'

'My misfortune has no connection with want of money,' said Nigel.

'Why, then, I suppose,' said Lowestoffe, 'you have been tilting, my lord, and have pinked your man; in which case, and with a purse reasonably furnished, you may lie perdu in Whitefriars for a twelvemonth - Marry, but you must be entered and received as a member of their worshipful society, my lord, and a frank burgher of Alsatia - so far you must condescend; there will be neither peace nor safety for you else.'

'My fault is not in a degree so deadly, Master Lowestoffe,' answered Lord Glenvarloch, 'as you seem to conjecture—I have stricken a gentleman in the Park, that is all.'

'By my hand, my lord, and you had better have struck your sword through him at Barns Elms,' said the Templar. 'Strike within the verge of the court! You will find that a weighty dependence upon your hands, especially if your party be of rank and have favour.'

'I will be plain with you, Master Lowestoffe,' said Nigel, 'since I have gone thus far. The person whom I struck was Lord Dalgarno, whom you have seen at Beaujeu's.'

'A follower and favourite of the Duke of Buckingham!—It is a most unhappy chance, my lord; but my heart was formed in England, and cannot bear to see a young nobleman borne down, as you are like to be. We converse here greatly too open for your circumstances. The Templars would suffer no bailiff to execute a writ, and no gentleman to be arrested for a duel, within their precincts; but in such a matter between Lord Dalgarno and your lordship, there might be a party on either side. You must away with me instantly to my poor chambers here, hard by, and undergo some little change of dress ere you take sanctuary; for else you will have the whole rascal rout of the Friars about you, like crows upon a falcon that strays into their rookery. We must have you arrayed something more like the natives of Alsatia, or there will be no life there for you.'

While Lowestoffe spoke, he pulled Lord Glenvarloch along with him into his chambers, where he had a handsome library, filled with all the poems and playbooks which were then in fashion. The Templar then despatched a boy, who waited upon him, to procure a dish or two from the next cook's shop; 'and this,' he said, 'must be your lordship's dinner, with a glass of old sack, of which my grandmother (the Heavens requite her!) sent me a dozen bottles, with charge to use the liquor only with clarified whey, when I felt my breast ache with over study. Marry, we will drink the good lady's health in it, if it is your lordship's pleasure, and you shall see how we poor students eke out our mutton-commons in the hall.'

The outward door of the chambers was barred so soon as the boy had re-entered with the food; the boy was ordered to keep close watch, and admit no one; and Lowestoffe, by example and precept, pressed his noble guest to partake of his hospitality. His frank and forward manners, though much differing from the courtly ease of Lord Dalgarno, were calculated to make a favourable impression; and Lord Glenvarloch, though his experience of Dalgarno's perfidy had taught him to be cautious of reposing faith in friendly professions, could not avoid testifying his gratitude to the young Templar, who seemed so anxious for his safety and accommodation.

'You may spare your gratitude any great sense of obligation, my lord,' said the Templar. 'No doubt I am willing to be of use to any gentleman that has cause to sing *Fortune my foe*, and particularly proud to serve your lordship's turn; but I have also an old grudge, to speak Heaven's truth, at your opposite, Lord Dalgarno.'

'May I ask upon what account, Master Lowestoffe?' said Lord Glenvarloch.

'O, my lord,' replied the Templar, 'it was for a hap that chanced after you left the ordinary, one evening about three weeks since,—at least I think you were not by, as your lordship always left us before deep play began—I mean no offence, but such was your lordship's custom,—when there were words between Lord Dalgarno and me concerning a certain game at gleek, and a certain mournival of aces held by his lordship, which went for eight—tib, which went for fifteen—twenty-three in all. Now I held king and queen, being three—a natural towser, making fifteen—and tiddy, nineteen. We vied the ruff, and revied, as your lordship may suppose, till the stake was equal to half my yearly exhibition, fifty as fair yellow canary birds as e'er chirped in the bottom of a green silk purse. Well, my lord, I gained the cards, and lo you! it pleases his lordship to say that we played without tiddy; and as the rest stood by and backed him, and especially the sharking Frenchman, why, I was obliged to lose more than I shall gain all the season.—So judge if I have not a crow to pluck with his lordship. Was it ever heard there was a game at gleek at the ordinary before, without counting tiddy?—marry quep upon his lordship!—every man who comes there with his purse in his hand is as free to make new laws as he, I hope, since touch pot touch penny makes every man equal.'

As Master Lowestoffe ran over this jargon of the gaming-table, Lord Glenvarloch was both ashamed and mortified, and felt a severe pang of aristocratic pride, when he concluded in the sweeping clause, that the dice, like the grave, levelled those distinguishing points of society to which Nigel's early prejudices clung perhaps but too fondly. It was impossible, however, to object anything to the learned reasoning of the

young Templar, and therefore Nigel was contented to turn the conversation, by making some inquiries respecting the present state of Whitefriars. There also his host was at home.

'You know, my lord,' said Master Lowestoffe, 'that we Templars are a power and a dominion within ourselves, and I am proud to say that I hold some rank in our republic—was treasurer to the Lord of Misrule last year, and am at this present moment in nomination for that dignity myself. In such circumstances, we are under the necessity of maintaining an amicable intercourse with our neighbours of Alsatia, even as the Christian States find themselves often, in mere policy, obliged to make alliance with the Grand Turk, or the Barbary States.'

'I should have imagined you gentlemen of the Temple more independent of your neighbours?' said Glenvarloch.

'You do us something too much honour, my lord,' said the Templar; 'the Alsatians and we have some common enemies, and we have, under the rose, some common friends. We are in the use of blocking all bailiffs out of our bounds, and we are powerfully aided by our neighbours, who tolerate not a rag belonging to them within theirs. Moreover, the Alsatians have—I beg you to understand me—the power of protecting or distressing our friends, male or female, who may be obliged to seek sanctuary within their bounds. In short, the two communities serve each other, though the league is between states of unequal quality, and I may myself say, that I have treated of sundry weighty affairs, and have been a negotiator well approved on both sides.—But hark—hark—what is that?'

The sound by which Master Lowestoffe was interrupted, was that of a distant horn, winded loud and keenly, and followed by a faint and remote huzza.

'There is something doing,' said Lowestoffe, 'in the Whitefriars at this moment. That is the signal when their privileges are invaded by tipstaff or bailiff; and at the blast of the horn they all swarm out to the rescue, as bees when their hive is disturbed.—Jump, Jem,' he said, calling out to the attendant, 'and see what they are doing in Alsatia.—That bastard of a boy,' he continued, as the lad, accustomed to the precipitate haste of his master, tumbled rather than ran out of the apartment, and so downstairs, 'is worth gold in this quarter—he serves six masters—four of them in distinct Numbers, and you would think him present like a fairy at the mere wish of him that for the time most needs his attendance. No scout in Oxford, no gip in Cambridge, ever matched him in speed and intelligence. He knows the step of a dun from that of a client, when it reaches the very bottom of the staircase; can tell the trip of a pretty wench from the step of a bencher, when at the upper end of the court; and is, take him all in all—But I see your lordship is anxious—May I press another cup of my kind grandmother's cordial, or will you allow me to show you my wardrobe, and act as your valet and groom of the chamber?'

Lord Glenvarloch hesitated not to acknowledge that he was painfully sensible of his present situation, and anxious to do what must needs be done for his extrication.

The good-natured and thoughtless young Templar readily acquiesced, and led the way into his little bed-room, where, from bandboxes, portmanteaus, mail-trunks, not forgetting an old walnut-tree wardrobe, he began to select the articles which he thought more suited effectually to disguise his guest in venturing into the lawless and turbulent society of Alsatia.

CHAPTER XVII.

Come hither, young one—Mark me! Thou art now
'Mongst men o' the sword, that live by reputation
More than by constant income—Single-suited
They are, I grant you; yet each single suit
Maintains, on the rough guess, a thousand followers,—
And they be men who, hazarding their all,
Needful apparel, necessary income,
And human body, and immortal soul,
Do in the very deed but hazard nothing—
So strictly is that ALL bound in reversion;
Clothes to the broker, income to the usurer—
And body to disease, and soul to the foul fiend;
Who laughs to see Soldadoes and Fooladoes
Play better than himself his game on earth.

THE MOHOCKS.

'YOUR lordship,' said Reginald Lowestoffe, 'must be content to exchange your decent and court-beseeming rapier, which I will retain in safe keeping, for this broadsword, with an hundredweight of rusty iron about the hilt, and to wear these huge-paned slops, instead of your civil and moderate hose. We allow no cloak, for your ruffian always walks *in cuerpo;* and the tarnished doublet of bald velvet, with its discoloured embroidery, and—I grieve to speak it—a few stains from the blood of the grape, will best suit the garb of a roaring boy. I will leave you to change your suit for an instant, till I can help to truss you.'

Lowestoffe retired, while slowly, and with hesitation, Nigel obeyed his instructions. He felt displeasure and disgust at the scoundrelly disguise which he was under the necessity of assuming; but when he considered the bloody consequences which law attached to this rash act of violence, the easy and indifferent temper of James, the prejudices of his son, the overbearing influence of the Duke of Buckingham, which was sure to be thrown into the scale against him; and, above all, when he reflected that he must now look upon the active, assiduous, and insinuating Lord Dalgarno as a bitter enemy, reason told him he was in a situation of peril which authorized all honest means, even the most unseemly in outward appearance, to extricate himself from so dangerous a predicament.

While he was changing his dress, and musing on these particulars, his friendly host re-entered the sleeping apartment—'Zounds!' he said, 'my lord, it was well you went not straight into that same Alsatia of ours at the time you proposed, for the hawks have stooped upon it. Here is Jem come back with tidings, that he saw a pursuivant there with a Privy Council warrant, and half a score of yeomen assistants, armed to the teeth, and the horn which we heard was sounded to call out the posse of the Friars,

Indeed, when old Duke Hildebrod saw that the quest was after some one of whom he knew nothing, he permitted, out of courtesy, the man-catcher to search through his domains; quite certain that they would take little by their motions; for Duke Hildebrod is a most judicious potentate.—Go back, you bastard, and bring us word when all is quiet.'

'And who may Duke Hildebrod be?' said Lord Glenvarloch.

'Nouns! my lord,' said the Templar, 'have you lived so long on the town, and never heard of the valiant, and as wise and politic as valiant, Duke Hildebrod, grand protector of the liberties of Alsatia? I thought the man had never whirled a die but was familiar with his fame.'

'Yet I have never heard of him, Master Lowestoffe,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'or, what is the same thing, I have paid no attention to aught that may have passed in conversation respecting him.'

'Why, then,' said Lowestoffe—'but, first, let me have the honour of trussing you. Now, observe, I have left several of the points untied of set purpose; and if it please you to let a small portion of your shirt be seen betwixt your doublet and the band of your upper stock, it will have so much the more rakish effect, and will attract you respect in Alsatia, where linen is something scarce. Now, I tie some of the points carefully asquint, for your ruffianly gallant never appears too accurately trussed—so.'

'Arrange it as you will,' said Nigel; 'but let me hear at least something of the conditions of the unhappy district into which, with other wretches, I am compelled to retreat.'

'Why, my lord,' replied the Templar, 'our neighbouring state of Alsatia, which the law calls the Sanctuary of Whitefriars, has had its mutations and revolutions like greater kingdoms; and, being in some sort a lawless, arbitrary government, it follows, of course, that these have been more frequent than our own better-regulated commonwealth of the Templars, that of Gray's Inn, and other similar associations, have had the fortune to witness. Our traditions and records speak of twenty revolutions within the last twelve years, in which the aforesaid state has repeatedly changed from absolute despotism to republicanism, not forgetting the intermediate stages of oligarchy, limited monarchy, and even gynocracy; for I myself remember Alsatia governed for nearly nine months by an old fish-woman. Then it fell under the dominion of a broken attorney, who was dethroned by a reformado captain, who, proving tyrannical, was deposed by a hedge-parson, who was succeeded, upon resignation of his power, by Duke Jacob Hildebrod, of that name the first, whom Heaven long preserve.'

'And is this potentate's government,' said Lord Glenvarloch, forcing himself to take some interest in the conversation, 'of a despotic character?'

'Pardon me, my lord,' said the Templar; 'this said sovereign is too wise to incur, like many of his predecessors, the odium of wielding so important an authority by his own sole will. He has established a council of state, who regularly meet for their morning's draught at seven o'clock; convene a second time at eleven for their *ante-meridiem*, or whet; and, assembling in solemn conclave at the hour of two afternoon, for the purpose of consulting for the good of the commonwealth, are so prodigal of their labour in the service of the state, that they seldom separate before midnight. Into this worthy senate, composed partly of Duke Hildebrod's predecessors in his high office, whom he has associated with him to prevent the envy attending sovereign and sole authority, I must presently introduce your lordship, that they may admit you to the immunities of the Friars, and assign you a place of residence.'

'Does their authority extend to such regulation?' said Lord Glenvarloch.

'The council account it a main point of their privileges, my lord,' answered Lowestoffe; 'and in fact, it is one of the most powerful means by which they support their authority. For, when Duke Hildebrod and his senate find a topping householder in the Friars become discontented and factious, it is but assigning him for a lodger some fat bankrupt, or new residenter, whose circumstances require refuge, and whose purse can pay for it, and the malcontent becomes as tractable as a lamb. As for the poorer refugees, they let them shift as they can; but the registration of their names in the Duke's entry-book, and the payment of garnish conforming to their circumstances, is never dispensed with; and the Friars would be a very unsafe residence for the stranger who should dispute these points of jurisdiction.'

'Well, Master Lowestoffe,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'I must be controlled by the circumstances which dictate to me this state of concealment—of course I am desirous not to betray my name and rank.'

'It will be highly advisable, my lord,' said Lowestoffe; 'and is a case thus provided for in the statutes of the republic, or monarchy, or whatsoever you call it.—He who desires that no questions shall be asked him concerning his name, cause of refuge, and the like, may escape the usual interrogations upon payment of double the garnish otherwise belonging to his condition. Complying with this essential stipulation, your lordship may register yourself as King of Bantam if you will, for not a question will be asked of you. —But here comes our scout, with news of peace and tranquillity. Now, I will go with your lordship myself, and present you to the council of Alsatia, with all the influence which I have over them as an office-bearer in the Temple, which is not slight; for they have come halting off upon all occasions when we have taken part against them, and that they well know. The time is propitious, for as the council is now met in Alsatia, so the Temple Walks are quiet. Now, my lord, throw your cloak about you, to hide your present exterior. You shall give it to the boy at the foot of the stairs that go down to the sanctuary; and as the ballad says that Queen Eleanor sunk at Charing Cross and rose at Queenhithe, so you shall sink a nobleman in the Temple Gardens, and rise an Alsatian at Whitefriars.'

They went out accordingly, attended by the little scout, traversed the gardens, descended the

stairs, and at the bottom the young Templar exclaimed,—'And now let us sing, with Ovid,

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas—

Off, off, ye lendings!' he continued, in the same vein. 'Via the curtain that shadowed Borgia! —But how now, my lord?' he continued, when he observed Lord Glenvarloch was really distressed at the degrading change in his situation. 'I trust you are not offended at my rattling folly? I would but reconcile you to your present circumstances, and give you the tone of this strange place. Come, cheer up; I trust it will only be your residence for a very few days.'

Nigel was only able to press his hand, and reply in a whisper, 'I am sensible of your kindness. I know I must drink the cup which my own folly has filled for me. Pardon me, that, at the first taste, I feel its bitterness.'

Reginald Lowestoffe was bustlingly officious and good-natured; but, used to live a scrambling, rakish course of life himself, he had not the least idea of the extent of Lord Glenvarloch's mental sufferings, and thought of his temporary concealment as if it were merely the trick of a wanton boy, who plays at hide-and-seek with his tutor. With the appearance of the place, too, he was familiar - but on his companion it produced a deep sensation.

The ancient sanctuary at Whitefriars lay considerably lower than the elevated terraces and gardens of the Temple, and was therefore generally involved in the damps and fogs arising from the Thames. The brick buildings by which it was occupied crowded closely on each other, for in a place so rarely privileged, every foot of ground was valuable; but, erected in many cases by persons whose funds were inadequate to their speculations, the houses were generally insufficient, and exhibited the lamentable signs of having become ruinous while they were yet new. The wailing of children, the scolding of their mothers, the miserable exhibition of ragged linens hung from the windows to dry, spoke the wants and distresses of the wretched inhabitants; while the sounds of complaint were mocked and overwhelmed in the riotous shouts, oaths, profane songs, and boisterous laughter that issued from the alehouses and taverns, which, as the signs indicated, were equal in number to all the other houses; and, that the full character of the place might be evident, several faded, tinselled, and painted females looked boldly at the strangers from their open lattices, or more modestly seemed busied with the cracked flower-pots, filled with mignonette and rosemary, which were disposed in front of the windows to the great risk of the passengers.

'*Semi-reducta Venus*,' said the Templar, pointing to one of these nymphs, who seemed afraid of observation, and partly concealed herself behind the casement, as she chirped to a miserable blackbird, the tenant of a wicker prison, which hung outside on the black brick wall.—'I know the face of yonder waistcoateer,' continued the guide; 'and I could wager a rose-noble, from the posture she stands in, that she has clean head-gear, and a soiled night-rail.—But here come two of the male inhabitants, smoking like moving volcanoes! These are roaring blades, whom Nicotia and Trinidado serve, I dare swear, in lieu of beef and pudding; for be it known to you, my lord, that the King's counterblast against the Indian weed will no more pass current in Alsatia, than will his writ of *capias*.'

As he spoke, the two smokers approached; shaggy, uncombed ruffians, whose enormous moustaches were turned back over their ears, and mingled with the wild elf-locks of their hair, much of which was seen under the old beavers which they wore aside upon their heads, while some straggling portion escaped through the rents of the hats aforesaid. Their tarnished plush jerkins, large slops, or trunk-breeches, their broad, greasy shoulder-belts and discoloured scarfs, and, above all, the ostentatious manner in which the one wore a broadsword, and the other an extravagantly long rapier and poniard, marked the true Alsatian bully, then, and for a hundred years afterwards, a well-known character.

'Tour out,' said the one ruffian to the other; 'tour the bien mort twiring at the gentry cove!'*

'I smell a spy,' replied the other, looking at Nigel. 'Chalk him across the peepers with your cheery.'†

'Bing avast, bing avast!' replied his companion; 'yon other is rattling Reginald Lowestoffe of the Temple—I know him; he is a good boy, and free of the province.'

So saying, and enveloping themselves in another thick cloud of smoke, they went on without further greeting.

'*Grasso in aere!*' said the Templar. 'You hear what a character the impudent knaves give me; but, so it serves your lordship's turn, I care not. —And now, let me ask your lordship what name you will assume, for we are near the ducal palace of Duke Hildebrod.'

'I will be called Grahame,' said Nigel; 'it was my mother's name.'

'Grime,' repeated the Templar, 'will suit Alsatia well enough—both a grim and grimy place of refuge.'

'I said Grahame, sir, not Grime,' said Nigel, something shortly, and laying an emphasis on the vowel—for few Scotsmen understand raillery upon the subject of their names.

'I beg pardon, my lord,' answered the undisconcerted punster; 'but *Graum* will suit the circumstance too—it signifies tribulation in the High Dutch, and your lordship must be considered as a man under trouble.'

Nigel laughed at the pertinacity of the Templar; who, proceeding to point out a sign representing, or believed to represent, a dog attacking a bull, and running at its head in the true scientific style of onset,—'There,' said he, 'doth faithful Duke Hildebrod deal forth laws, as well as ale and strong waters, to his faithful Alsatians. Being a determined champion of Paris Garden, he has chosen a sign corresponding to his habits, and he deals in giving drink to the thirsty, that he himself may drink without paying, and receive pay for what is drunken by others.—Let us enter the ever-open gate of this second Axylus.'

* Look sharp. See how the girl is coquetting with the strange gallants!

† Slash him over the eyes with your dagger.

As they spoke, they entered the dilapidated tavern, which was, nevertheless, more ample in dimensions, and less ruinous, than many houses in the same evil neighbourhood. Two or three haggard, ragged drawers ran to and fro, whose looks, like those of owls, seemed only adapted for midnight, when other creatures sleep, and who by day seemed bleared, stupid, and only half-awake. Guided by one of these blinking Ganymedes, they entered a room, where the feeble rays of the sun were almost wholly eclipsed by volumes of tobacco smoke, rolled from the tubes of the company, while out of the cloudy sanctuary arose the old chant of—

> Old Sir Simon the king,
> And old Sir Simon the king,
> With his malmsey nose,
> And his ale dropped hose,
> And sing hey ding-a-ding ding.

Duke Hildebrod, who himself condescended to chant this ditty to his loving subjects, was a monstrously fat old man, with only one eye, and a nose which bore evidence to the frequency, strength, and depth of his potations. He wore a murrey-coloured plush jerkin, stained with the overflowings of the tankard, and much the worse for wear, and unbuttoned at bottom for the ease of his enormous paunch. Behind him lay a favourite bull-dog, whose round head and single black glancing eye, as well as the creature's great corpulence, gave it a burlesque resemblance to its master.

The well beloved counsellors who surrounded the ducal throne, incensed it with tobacco, pledged its occupier in thick, clammy ale, and echoed back his choral songs, were satraps worthy of such a Soldan. The buff jerkin, broad belt, and long sword of one, showed him to be a Low Country soldier, whose look of scowling importance and drunken impudence were designed to sustain his title to call himself a roving blade. It seemed to Nigel that he had seen this fellow somewhere or other. A hedge-parson, or buckle beggar, as that order of priesthood has been irreverently termed, sat on the duke's left, and was easily distinguished by hi torn band, flapped hat, and the remnants of a rusty cassock. Beside the parson sat a most wretched and meagre-looking old man, with a threadbare hood of coarse kersey upon his head, and buttoned about his neck, while his pinched features, like those of old Daniel, were illuminated by

> ——an eye,
> Though the last look of dotage still cunning and sly.

On his left was placed a broken attorney, who, for some malpractices, had been struck from the roll of practitioners, and who had nothing left of his profession excepting its roguery. One or two persons of less figure, amongst whom there was one face, which, like that of the soldier, seemed not unknown to Nigel, though he could not recollect where he had seen it, completed the council board of Jacob Duke Hildebrod.

The strangers had full time to observe all this; for his grace the duke, whether irresistibly carried on by the full tide of harmony, or whether to impress the strangers with a proper idea of his consequence, chose to sing his ditty to an end before addressing them, though, during the whole time, he closely scrutinized them with his single optic.

When Duke Hildebrod had ended his song, he informed his peers that a worthy officer of the Temple attended them, and commanded the captain and parson to abandon their easy-chairs in behalf of the two strangers, whom he placed on his right and left hand. The worthy representatives of the army and the church of Alsatia went to place themselves on a crazy form at the bottom of the table, which, ill calculated to sustain men of such weight, gave way under them, and the man of the sword and man of the gown were rolled over each other on the floor, amidst the exulting shouts of the company. They arose in wrath, contending which should vent his displeasure in the loudest and deepest oaths, a strife in which the parson's superior acquaintance with theology enabled him greatly to excel the captain, and were at length with difficulty tranquillized by the arrival of the alarmed waiters with more stable chairs, and by a long draught of the cooling tankard. When this commotion was appeased, and the strangers courteously accommodated with flagons, after the fashion of the others present, the duke drank prosperity to the Temple in the most gracious manner, together with a cup of welcome to Master Reginald Lowestoffe; and, this courtesy having been thankfully accepted, the party honoured prayed permission to call for a gallon of Rhenish, over which he proposed to open his business.

The mention of a liquor so superior to their usual potations had an instant and most favourable effect upon the little senate; and its immediate appearance might be said to secure a favourable reception of Master Lowestoffe's proposition, which, after a round or two had circulated, he explained to be the admission of his friend Master Nigel Grahame to the benefit of the sanctuary and other immunities of Alsatia, in the character of a grand compounder; for so were those termed who paid a double fee at their matriculation, in order to avoid laying before the senate the peculiar circumstances which compelled them to take refuge there.

The worthy duke heard the proposition with glee, which glittered in his single eye; and no wonder, as it was a rare occurrence, and of peculiar advantage to his private revenue. Accordingly, he commanded his ducal register to be brought him, a huge book, secured with brass clasps like a merchant's ledger, and whose leaves, stained with wine and slabbered with tobacco juice, bore the names probably of as many rogues as are to be found in the Calendar of Newgate.

Nigel was then directed to lay down two nobles as his ransom, and to claim privilege by reciting the following doggerel verses, which were dictated to him by the duke:—

> Your suppliant, by name
> Nigel Grahame,
> In fear of mishap
> From a shoulder-tap;
> And dreading a claw
> From the talons of law,
> That are sharper than briers;

His freedom to sue,
And rescue by you—
Through weapon and wit,
From warrant and writ,
From bailiff's hand,
From tipstaff's wand,
Is come hither to Whitefriars.

As Duke Hildebrod with a tremulous hand began to make the entry, and had already, with superfluous generosity, spelled Nigel with two g's instead of one, he was interrupted by the parson.* This reverend gentleman had been whispering for a minute or two, not with the captain, but with that other individual who dwelt imperfectly, as we have already mentioned, in Nigel's memory, and being, perhaps, still something malcontent on account of the late accident, he now requested to be heard before the registration took place.

'The person,' he said, 'who hath now had the assurance to propose himself as a candidate for the privileges and immunities of this honourable society, is, in plain terms, a beggarly Scot, and we have enough of these locusts in London already—if we admit such palmer-worms and caterpillars to the sanctuary, we shall soon have the whole nation.'

'We are not entitled to inquire,' said Duke Hildebrod, 'whether he be Scot, or French, or English: seeing he has honourably laid down his garnish, he is entitled to our protection.'

'Word of denial, most sovereign Duke,' replied the parson, 'I ask him no questions—his speech bewrayeth him—he is a Galilean—and his garnish is forfeited for his assurance in coming within this our realm; and I call on you, Sir Duke, to put the laws in force against him!'

The Templar here rose, and was about to interrupt the deliberations of the court, when the duke gravely assured him that he should be heard in behalf of his friend, so soon as the council had finished their deliberations.

The attorney next rose, and, intimating that he was to speak to the point of law, said—'It was easy to be seen that this gentlemen did not come here in any civil case, and that he believed it to be the story they had already heard of, concerning a blow given within the verge of the Park—that the sanctuary would not bear out the offender in such case—and that the queer old chief would send down a broom which should sweep the streets of Alsatia from the Strand to the Stairs; and it was even policy to think what evil might come to their republic, by sheltering an alien in such circumstances.'

The captain, who had sat impatiently while these opinions were expressed, now sprung on his feet with the vehemence of a cork bouncing from a bottle of brisk beer, and, turning up his moustaches with a martial air, cast a glance of contempt on the lawyer and churchman, while he thus expressed his opinion :—

'Most noble Duke Hildebrod! When I hear such base, skeldering, coistril propositions come from the counsellors of your Grace, and when I remember the Huffs, the Muns, and the Tityretus by whom your Grace's ancestors and predecessors were advised on such occasions, I begin to think the spirit of action is as dead in Alsatia as in my old grannam; and yet who thinks so thinks a lie, since I will find as many roaring boys in the Friars as shall keep the liberties against all the scavengers of Westminster. And if we should be overborne for a turn, death and darkness! have we not time to send the gentleman off by water, either to Paris Garden or to the bank-side? and if he is a gallant of true breed, will he not make us full amends for all the trouble we have? Let other societies exist by the law, I say that we brisk boys of the Fleet live in spite of it; and thrive best when we are in right opposition to sign and seal, writ and warrant, sergeant and tipstaff, catchpoll and bum-bailey.'

This speech was followed by a murmur of approbation, and Lowestoffe, striking in before the favourable sound had subsided, reminded the duke and his council how much the security of their state depended upon the amity of the Templars, who, by closing their gates, could at pleasure shut against the Alsatians the communication betwixt the Friars and the Temple, and that as they conducted themselves on this occasion, so would they secure or lose the benefit of his interest with his own body, which they knew to be not inconsiderable. 'And in respect of my friend being a Scotsman and alien, as has been observed by the reverend divine and learned lawyer, you are to consider,' said Lowestoffe, 'for what he is pursued hither—why, for giving the bastinado, not to an Englishman, but to one of his own countrymen. And for my own simple part,' he continued, touching Lord Glenvarloch at the same time, to make him understand he spoke but in jest, 'if all the Scots in London were to fight a Welsh main, and kill each other to a man, the survivor would, in my humble opinion, be entitled to our gratitude, as having done a most acceptable service to poor Old England.'

A shout of laughter and applause followed this ingenious apology for the client's state of alienage; and the Templar followed up his plea with the following pithy proposition :—'I know well,' said he, 'it is the custom of the fathers of this old and honourable republic, ripely and well to consider all their proceedings over a proper allowance of liquor; and far be it from me to propose the breach of so laudable a custom, or to pretend that such an affair as the present can be well and constitutionally considered during the discussion of a pitiful gallon of sack. But, as it is the same thing to this honourable conclave whether they drink first and determine afterwards, or whether they determine first and drink afterwards, I propose your Grace, with the advice of your wise and potent senators, shall pass your edict, granting to mine honourable friend the immunities of the place, and assigning him a lodging, according to your wise forms, to which he will presently retire, being somewhat spent with this day's action; whe-

* This curious register is still in existence, being in possession of that eminent antiquary, Dr. Dryasdust, who liberally offered the Author permission to have the autograph of Duke Hildebrod engraved as an illustration of this passage. Unhappily, being rigorous as Ritson himself in adhering to the very letter of his copy, the worthy doctor clogged his munificence with the condition that we adopt the duke's orthography, and entitle the work The Fortunes of Niggle, with which stipulation we did not think it necessary to comply.

upon I will presently order you a rundlet of Rhenish, with a corresponding quantity of neats' tongues and pickled herrings, to make you all as glorious as George a Green!'

This overture was received with a general shout of applause, which altogether drowned the voice of the dissidents, if any there were amongst the Alsatian senate who could have resisted a proposal so popular. 'The words of, 'Kind heart!—noble gentleman!—generous gallant!' flew from mouth to mouth; the inscription of the petitioner's name in the great book was hastily completed, and the oath administered to him by the worthy Doge. Like the laws of the Twelve Tables, of the ancient Cambro Britons, and other primitive nations, it was couched in poetry, and ran as follows:—

By spigot and barrel,
By bilboe and buff;
Thou art sworn to the quarrel
Of the Blades of the Huff.
For Whitefriars and its claims
To be champion or martyr,
And to fight for its dames
Like a Knight of the Garter.

Nigel felt, and indeed exhibited, some disgust at this mummery; but the Templar reminding him that he was too far advanced to draw back, he repeated the words, or rather assented as they were repeated by Duke Hildebrod, who concluded the ceremony by allowing him the privilege of sanctuary, in the following form of prescriptive doggrel:—

From the touch of the tip,
From the blight of the warrant,
From the watchmen who skip
On the Harman Beck's errand;
From the bailiff's cramp speech,
That makes man a thrall,
I charm thee from each,
And I charm thee from all.
Thy freedom's complete
As a Blade of the Huff,
To be cheated and cheat,
To be cuff'd and to cuff;
To stride, swear, and swagger,
To drink till you stagger,
To stare and to stab,
And to brandish your dagger
In the cause of your drab;
To walk wi' the wall in winter,
Drink brandy and smoke,
And go *fresco* in summer
For want of a cloak;
To eke out your living
By the wag of your elbow,
By fulham and gourd,
And by baring of bilboe;
To live by your shift,
And to swear by your honour,—
Are the freedom and gifts
Of which I am the donor.*

This homily being performed, a dispute arose concerning the special residence to be assigned the new brother of the sanctuary; for, as the Alsatians held it a maxim in their commonwealth that asses' milk fattens, there was usually a competition among the inhabitants which should have the managing, as it was termed, of a new member of the society.

The Hector who had spoken so warmly and critically in Nigel's behalf, stood out now chivalrously in behalf of a certain Blowselinda, or Bonstrops, who had, it seems, a room to hire, once the occasional residence of Slicing Dick of Paddington, who lately suffered at Tyburn, and whose untimely exit had been hitherto mourned by the damsel in solitary widowhood, after the fashion of the turtle dove.

The captain's interest was, however, overruled in behalf of the old gentleman in the kersey hood, who was believed, even at his extreme age, to understand the plucking of a pigeon as well, or better, than any man of Alsatia.

This venerable personage was a usurer of some notoriety, called Trapbois, and had very lately done the state considerable service, in advancing a subsidy necessary to secure a fresh importation of liquors to the duke's cellars, the wine merchant at the Vintry being scrupulous to deal with so great a man for anything but ready money.

When, therefore, the old gentleman arose, and, with much coughing, reminded the duke that he had a poor apartment to let, the claims of all others were set aside, and Nigel was assigned to Trapbois as his guest.

No sooner was this arrangement made, than Lord Glenvarloch expressed to Lowestoffe his impatience to leave this discreditable assembly, and took his leave with a careless haste, which, but for the rundlet of Rhenish wine that entered just as he left the apartment, might have been taken in bad part. The young Templar accompanied his friend to the house of the old usurer, with the road to which he and some other youngsters about the Temple were even but too well acquainted. On the way, he assured Lord Glenvarloch that he was going to the only clean house in Whitefriars, a property which it owed solely to the exertions of the old man's only daughter, an elderly damsel, ugly enough to frighten sin, yet likely to be wealthy enough to tempt a puritan, so soon as the devil had got her old dad for his due. As Lowestoffe spoke thus, they knocked at the door of the house, and the sour, stern countenance of the female by whom it was opened fully confirmed all that the Templar had said of the hostess. She heard, with an ungracious and discontented air, the young Templar's information, that the gentleman, his companion, was to be her father's lodger, muttered something about the trouble it was likely to occasion, but ended by showing the stranger's apartment, which was better than could have been augured from the general appearance of the place, and much larger in extent than that which he had occupied at Paul's Wharf, though inferior to it in neatness.

Lowestoffe, having thus seen his friend fairly installed in his new apartment, and having obtained for him a note of the rate at which he could be accommodated with victuals from a neighbouring cook's shop, now took his leave, offering, at the same time, to send the whole, or any part of Lord Glenvarloch's baggage, from his former place of residence to his new lodging. Nigel mentioned so few articles, that the Templar could not help observing that his lordship, it would seem, did not intend to enjoy his new privileges long.

'They are too little suited to my habits and

* Of the cant words used in this inauguratory oration, some are obvious in their meaning, others, as Harman (constable), and the like, derive their source from that ancient piece of lexicography, the Slang Dictionary.

taste that I should do so,' replied Lord Glenvarloch.

'You may change your opinion to-morrow,' said Lowestoffe; 'and so I wish you good-even. To-morrow I will visit you betimes.'

The morning came, but, instead of the Templar, it brought only a letter from him. The epistle stated that Lowestoffe's visits to Alsatia had drawn down the animadversions of some crabbed old pantaloons among the benchers, and that he judged it wise not to come hither at present, for fear of attracting too much attention to Lord Glenvarloch's place of residence. He stated that he had taken measures for the safety of his baggage, and would send him, by a safe hand, his money-casket, and what articles he wanted. Then followed some sage advices, dictated by Lowestoffe's acquaintance with Alsatia and its manners. He advised him to keep the usurer in the most absolute uncertainty concerning the state of his funds—never to throw a main with the captain, who was in the habit of playing dry-fisted, and paying his losses with three vowels; and, finally, to beware of Duke Hildebrod, who was as sharp, he said, as a needle, though he had no more eyes than are possessed by that necessary implement of female industry.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mother. What! dazzled by a flash of Cupid's mirror,
With which the boy, as mortal urchins wont,
Flings back the sunbeam in the eye of passengers—
Then laughs to see them stumble!
Daughter. Mother! no—
It was a lightning flash which dazzled me,
And never shall these eyes see true again.
BEEF AND PUDDING—AN OLD ENGLISH COMEDY.

It is necessary that we should leave our hero Nigel for a time, although in a situation neither safe, comfortable, nor creditable, in order to detail some particulars which have immediate connection with his fortunes.

It was but the third day after he had been forced to take refuge in the house of old Trapbois, the noted usurer of Whitefriars, commonly called Golden Trapbois, when the pretty daughter of old Ramsay, the watchmaker, after having piously seen her father finish his breakfast (from the fear that he might, in an abstruse fit of thought, swallow the salt-cellar instead of a crust of the brown loaf), set forth from the house as soon as he was again plunged into the depth of calculation, and, accompanied only by that faithful old drudge, Janet, the Scots laundress, to whom her whims were laws, made her way to Lombard Street, and disturbed, at the unusual hour of eight in the morning, Aunt Judith, the sister of her worthy god-father.

The venerable maiden received her young visitor with no great complacency; for, naturally enough, she had neither the same admiration of her very pretty countenance, nor allowance for her foolish and girlish impatience of temper, which Master George Heriot entertained. Still, Mistress Margaret was a favourite of her brother's, whose will was to Aunt Judith a supreme law; and she contented herself with asking her untimely visitor, 'what she made so early with her pale, chitty face, in the streets of London?'

'I would speak with the Lady Hermione,' answered the almost breathless girl, while the blood ran so fast to her face as totally to remove the objection of paleness which Aunt Judith had made to her complexion.

'With the Lady Hermione?' said Aunt Judith—'with the Lady Hermione? and at this time of the morning, when she will scarce see any of the family even at seasonable hours? You are crazy, you silly wench, or you abuse the indulgence which my brother and the lady have shown to you.'

'Indeed, indeed, I have not,' repeated Margaret, struggling to retain the unbidden tear which seemed ready to burst out on the slightest occasion. 'Do but say to the lady that your brother's god-daughter desires earnestly to speak to her, and I know she will not refuse to see me.'

Aunt Judith bent an earnest, suspicious, and inquisitive glance on her young visitor. 'You might make me your secretary, my lassie,' she said, 'as well as the Lady Hermione. I am older, and better skilled to advise. I live more in the world than one who shuts herself up within four rooms, and I have the better means to assist you.'

'O, no—no—no!' said Margaret eagerly, and with more earnest sincerity than complaisance; 'there are some things to which you cannot advise me, Aunt Judith. It is a case—pardon me, my dear aunt—a case beyond your counsel.'

'I am glad on't, maiden,' said Aunt Judith, somewhat angrily; 'for I think the follies of the young people of this generation would drive mad an old brain like mine. Here you come on the viretot, through the whole streets of London, to talk some nonsense to a lady, who scarce sees God's sun, but when he shines on a brick wall. But I will tell her you are here.'

She went away, and shortly returned with a dry—'Mistress Marget, the lady will be glad to see you; and that's more, my young madam, than you had a right to count upon.'

Mistress Margaret hung her head in silence, too much perplexed by the train of her own embarrassed thoughts, for attempting either to conciliate Aunt Judith's kindness, or, which on other occasions would have been as congenial to her own humour, to retaliate on her cross-tempered remarks and manner. She followed Aunt Judith, therefore, in silence and dejection, to the strong oaken door which divided the Lady Hermione's apartments from the rest of George Heriot's spacious house.

At the door of this sanctuary it is necessary to pause, in order to correct the reports with which Richie Moniplies had filled his master's ear, respecting the singular appearance of that lady's attendance at prayers, whom we now own to be by name the Lady Hermione. Some part of these exaggerations had been communicated to the worthy Scotsman by Jenkin Vincent, who was well experienced in the species of wit which has been long a favourite in the city, under the names of crossbiting, giving the dor, bantering, boozling, cramming, hoaxing, humbugging, and

quizzing; for which sport Richie Moniplies, with his solemn gravity, totally unapprehensive of a joke, and his natural propensity to the marvellous, formed an admirable subject. Further ornaments the tale had received from Richie himself, whose tongue, especially when oiled with good liquor, had a considerable tendency to amplification, and who failed not, while he retailed to his master all the wonderful circumstances narrated by Vincent, to add to them many conjectures of his own, which his imagination had over-hastily converted into facts.

Yet the life which Lady Hermione had led for two years, during which she had been the inmate of George Heriot's house, was so singular as almost to sanction many of the wild reports which went abroad. The house which the worthy goldsmith inhabited had in former times belonged to a powerful and wealthy baronial family, which, during the reign of Henry VIII., terminated in a dowager lady, very wealthy, very devout, and most inalienably attached to the Catholic faith. The chosen friend of the Honourable Lady Foljambe was the Abbess of Saint Roque's Nunnery, like herself a conscientious, rigid, and devoted Papist. When the house of Saint Roque was despotically dissolved by the *fiat* of the impetuous monarch, the Lady Foljambe received her friend into her spacious mansion, together with two vestal sisters, who, like their abbess, were determined to follow the tenor of their vows, instead of embracing the profane liberty which the monarch's will had thrown in their choice. For their residence, the Lady Foljambe contrived, with all secrecy,—for Henry might not have relished her interference,—to set apart a suite of four rooms, with a little closet fitted up as an oratory, or chapel; the whole apartment fenced by a strong oaken door to exclude strangers, and accommodated with a turning-wheel to receive necessaries, according to the practice of all nunneries. In this retreat the Abbess of Saint Roque and her attendants passed many years, communicating only with the Lady Foljambe, who, in virtue of their prayers, and of the support she afforded them, accounted herself little less than a saint on earth. The abbess, fortunately for herself, died before her munificent patroness, who lived deep in Queen Elizabeth's time, ere she was summoned by fate.

The Lady Foljambe was succeeded in this mansion by a sour fanatic knight, a distant and collateral relation, who claimed the same merit for expelling the priestess of Baal, which his predecessor had founded on maintaining the votaresses of Heaven. Of the two unhappy nuns, driven from their ancient refuge, one went beyond sea; the other, unable from old age to undertake such a journey, died under the roof of a faithful Catholic widow of low degree. Sir Paul Crambagge, having got rid of the nuns, spoiled the chapel of its ornaments, and had thoughts of altogether destroying the apartment, until checked by the reflection that the operation would be an unnecessary expense, since he only inhabited three rooms of the large mansion, and had not, therefore, the slightest occasion for any addition to its accommodations. His son proved a waster and a prodigal, and from him the house was bought by our friend George Heriot, who, finding, like Sir Paul, the house more than sufficiently ample for his accommodation, left the Foljambe apartment, or Saint Roque's rooms, as they were called, in the state in which he found them.

About two years and a half before our history opened, when Heriot was absent upon an expedition to the Continent, he sent special orders to his sister and his cash-keeper, directing that the Foljambe apartment should be fitted up handsomely, though plainly, for the reception of a lady, who would make it her residence for some time; and who would live more or less with his own family according to her pleasure. He also directed that the necessary repairs should be made with secrecy, and that as little should be said as possible upon the subject of his letter.

When the time of his return came nigh, Aunt Judith and the household were on the tenterhooks of impatience. Master George came, as he had intimated, accompanied by a lady, so eminently beautiful, that, had it not been for her extreme and uniform paleness, she might have been reckoned one of the loveliest creatures on earth. She had with her an attendant or humble companion, whose business seemed only to wait upon her. This person, a reserved woman, and by her dialect a foreigner, aged about fifty, was called by the lady Monna Paula, and by Master Heriot and others, Mademoiselle Pauline. She slept in the same room with her patroness at night, ate in her apartment, and was scarcely ever separated from her during the day.

These females took possession of the nunnery of the devout abbess, and, without observing the same rigorous seclusion, according to the letter, seemed well-nigh to restore the apartment to the use to which it had been originally designed. The new inmates lived and took their meals apart from the rest of the family. With the domestics, Lady Hermione, for so she was termed, held no communication, and Mademoiselle Pauline only such as was indispensable, which she despatched as briefly as possible. Frequent and liberal largesses reconciled the servants to this conduct; and they were in the habit of observing to each other, that to do a service for Mademoiselle Pauline was like finding a fairy treasure.

To Aunt Judith the Lady Hermione was kind and civil, but their intercourse was rare; on which account the elder lady felt some pangs both of curiosity and injured dignity. But she knew her brother so well, and loved him so dearly, that his will, once expressed, might be truly said to become her own. The worthy citizen was not without a spice of the dogmatism which grows on the best disposition, when a word is a law to all around. Master George did not endure to be questioned by his family, and, when he had generally expressed his will, that the Lady Hermione should live in the way most agreeable to her, and that no inquiries should be made concerning her history, or her motives for observing such strict seclusion, his sister well knew that he would have been seriously displeased with any attempt to pry into the secret.

But, though Heriot's servants were bribed, and his sister awed into silent acquiescence in these arrangements, they were not of a nature to escape the critical observation of the neighbourhood. Some opined that the wealthy goldsmith was about to turn Papist, and re-establish Lady Foljambe's nunnery—others, that he was going mad—others, that he was either going to marry, or to do worse. Master George's constant appearance at church, and the knowledge that the supposed votaress always attended when the prayers of the English ritual were read in the family, liberated him from the first of these suspicions; those who had to transact business with him upon 'Change, could not doubt the soundness of Master Heriot's mind; and, to confute the other rumours, it was credibly reported by such as made the matter their particular interest, that Master George Heriot never visited his guest but in the presence of Mademoiselle Pauline, who sat with her work in a remote part of the same room in which they conversed. It was also ascertained that these visits scarcely ever exceeded an hour in length, and were usually only repeated once a-week, an intercourse too brief and too long interrupted to render it probable that love was the bond of their union.

The inquirers were therefore at fault, and compelled to relinquish the pursuit of Master Heriot's secret, while a thousand ridiculous tales were circulated amongst the ignorant and superstitious, with some specimens of which our friend Richie Moniplies had been *crammed*, as we have seen, by the malicious apprentice of worthy David Ramsay.

There was one person in the world who, it was thought, could (if she would) have said more of the Lady Hermione than any one in London, except George Heriot himself; and that was the said David Ramsay's only child, Margaret.

The girl was not much past the age of fifteen when the Lady Hermione first came to England, and was a very frequent visitor at her god-father's, who was much amused by her childish sallies, and by the wild and natural beauty with which she sung the airs of her native country. Spoilt she was on all hands; by the indulgence of her god-father, and the absent habits and indifference of her father, and the deference of all around to her caprices, as a beauty and as an heiress. But though, from these circumstances, the city beauty had become as wilful, as capricious, and as affected as unlimited indulgence seldom fails to render those to whom it is extended; and although she exhibited upon many occasions that affectation of extreme shyness, silence, and reserve, which misses in their teens are apt to take for an amiable modesty; and, upon others, a considerable portion of that flippancy, which youth sometimes confounds with wit, Mistress Margaret had much real shrewdness and judgment, which wanted only opportunities of observation to refine it—a lively, good-humoured, playful disposition, and an excellent heart. Her acquired follies were much increased by reading plays and romances, to which she devoted a great deal of her time, and from which she adopted ideas as different as possible from those which she might have obtained from the invaluable and affectionate instructions of an excellent mother; and the freaks of which she was sometimes guilty rendered her not unjustly liable to the charge of affectation and coquetry. But the little lass had sense and shrewdness enough to keep her failings out of sight of her god-father, to whom she was sincerely attached; and so high she stood in his favour, that, at his recommendation, she obtained permission to visit the recluse Lady Hermione.

The singular mode of life which that lady observed, her great beauty, rendered even more interesting by her extreme paleness; the conscious pride of being admitted further than the rest of the world into the society of a person who was wrapped in so much mystery, made a deep impression on the mind of Margaret Ramsay; and though their conversations were at no time either long or confidential, yet, proud of the trust reposed in her, Margaret was as secret respecting their tenor as if every word repeated had been to cost her life. No inquiry, however artfully backed by flattery and insinuation, whether on the part of Dame Ursula, or any other person equally inquisitive, could wring from the little maiden one word of what she heard or saw, after she entered these mysterious and secluded apartments. The slightest question concerning Master Heriot's ghost was sufficient, at her gayest moment, to check the current of her communicative prattle, and render her silent.

We mention this, chiefly to illustrate the early strength of Margaret's character—a strength concealed under a hundred freakish whims and humours, as an ancient and massive buttress is disguised by its fantastic covering of ivy and wild-flowers. In truth, if the damsel had told all she heard or saw within the Foljambe apartments, she would have said but little to gratify the curiosity of inquirers.

At the earlier period of their acquaintance, the Lady Hermione was wont to reward the attentions of her little friend with small but elegant presents, and entertain her by a display of foreign rarities and curiosities, many of them of considerable value. Sometimes the time was passed in a way much less agreeable to Margaret, by her receiving lessons from Pauline in the use of the needle. But, although her preceptress practised these arts with a dexterity then only known in foreign convents, the pupil proved so incorrigibly idle and awkward, that the task of needlework was at length given up, and lessons of music substituted in their stead. Here also Pauline was excellently qualified as an instructress, and Margaret, more successful in a science for which nature had gifted her, made proficiency both in vocal and instrumental music. These lessons passed in presence of the Lady Hermione, to whom they seemed to give pleasure. She sometimes added her own voice to the performance, in a pure, clear stream of liquid melody; but this was only when the music was of a devotional cast. As Margaret became older, her communications with the recluse assumed a different character. She was allowed, if not encouraged, to tell whatever she had remarked out of doors, and the Lady Hermione, while she remarked the quick, sharp, and retentive powers of observa-

tion possessed by her young friend, often found sufficient reason to caution her against rashness in forming opinions, and giddy petulance in expressing them.

The habitual awe with which she regarded this singular personage, induced Mistress Margaret, though by no means delighting in contradiction or reproof, to listen with patience to her admonitions, and to make full allowance for the good intentions of the patroness by whom they were bestowed; although in her heart she could hardly conceive how Madame Hermione, who never stirred from the Foljambe apartments, should think of teaching knowledge of the world to one who walked twice a-week between Temple Bar and Lombard Street, besides parading in the Park every Sunday that proved to be fair weather. Indeed, pretty Mistress Margaret was so little inclined to endure such remonstrances, that her intercourse with the inhabitants of the Foljambe apartments would have probably slackened as her circle of acquaintance increased in the external world, had she not, on the one hand, entertained a habitual reverence for her monitress, of which she could not divest herself, and been flattered, on the other, by being, to a certain degree, the depositary of a confidence for which others thirsted in vain. Besides, although the conversation of Hermione was uniformly serious, it was not in general either formal or severe; nor was the lady offended by flights of levity which Mistress Margaret sometimes ventured on in her presence, even when they were such as made Monna Paula cast her eyes upwards, and sigh with that compassion which a devotee extends towards the votaries of a trivial and profane world. Thus, upon the whole, the little maiden was disposed to submit, though not without some wincing, to the grave admonitions of the Lady Hermione; and the rather that the mystery annexed to the person of her monitress was in her mind early associated with a vague idea of wealth and importance, which had been rather confirmed than lessened by many accidental circumstances which she had noticed since she was more capable of observation.

It frequently happens, that the counsel which we reckon intrusive when offered to us unasked, becomes precious in our eyes when the pressure of difficulties renders us more diffident of our own judgment than we are apt to find ourselves in the hours of ease and indifference; and this is more especially the case if we suppose that our adviser may also possess power and inclination to back his counsel with effectual assistance. Mistress Margaret was now in that situation. She was, or believed herself to be, in a condition where both advice and assistance might be necessary; and it was therefore, after an anxious and sleepless night, that she resolved to have recourse to the Lady Hermione, who she knew would readily afford her the one, and, as she hoped, might also possess means of giving her the other. The conversation between them will best explain the purport of the visit.

CHAPTER XXI.

> By this good light, a wench of matchless mettle!
> This were a leaguer-lass to love a soldier,
> To bind his wounds, and kiss his bloody brow,
> And sing a roundel as she helped to arm him,
> Though the rough foeman's drums were beat so nigh,
> They seem'd to bear the burden.
>
> OLD PLAY.

WHEN Mistress Margaret entered the Foljambe apartment, she found the inmates employed in their usual manner; the lady in reading, and her attendant in embroidering a large piece of tapestry, which had occupied her ever since Margaret had been first admitted within these secluded chambers.

Hermione nodded kindly to her visitor, but did not speak; and Margaret, accustomed to this reception, and in the present case not sorry for it, as it gave her an interval to collect her thoughts, stooped over Monna Paula's frame, and observed, in a half-whisper, 'You were just so far as that rose, Monna, when I first saw you—see, there is the mark where I had the bad luck to spoil the flower in trying to catch the stitch—I was little above fifteen then. These flowers make me an old woman, Monna Paula.'

'I wish they could make you a wise one, my child,' answered Monna Paula, in whose esteem pretty Mistress Margaret did not stand quite so high as in that of her patroness; partly owing to her natural austerity, which was something intolerant of youth and gaiety, and partly to the jealousy with which a favourite domestic regards any one whom she considers as a sort of rival in the affections of her mistress.

'What is it you say to Monna, little one?' asked the lady.

'Nothing, madam,' replied Mistress Margaret, 'but that I have seen the real flowers blossom three times over since I first saw Monna Paula working in her canvas garden, and her violets have not budded yet.'

'True, lady-bird,' replied Hermione; 'but the buds that are longest in blossoming will last the longest in flower. You have seen them in the garden bloom thrice, but you have seen them fade thrice also; now, Monna Paula's will remain in blow for ever—they will fear neither frost nor tempest.'

'True, madam,' answered Mistress Margaret; 'but neither have they life or odour.'

'That, little one,' replied the recluse, 'is to compare a life agitated by hope and fear, and chequered with success and disappointment, and fevered by the effects of love and hatred, a life of passion and of feeling, saddened and shortened by its exhausting alternations, to a calm and tranquil existence, animated but by a sense of duties, and only employed, during its smooth and quiet course, in the unwearied discharge of them. Is that the moral of your answer?'

'I do not know, madam,' answered Mistress Margaret; 'but of all birds in the air, I would rather be the lark that sings while he is drifting down the summer breeze, than the weathercock that sticks fast yonder upon his iron perch, and just moves so much as to dis-

charge his duty, and tell us which way the wind blows.'

'Metaphors are no arguments, my pretty maiden,' said the Lady Hermione, smiling.

'I am sorry for that, madam,' answered Margaret; 'for they are such a pretty indirect way of telling one's mind when it differs from one's betters—besides, on this subject there is no end of them, and they are so civil and becoming withal.'

'Indeed?' replied the lady; 'let me hear some of them, I pray you.'

'It would be, for example, very bold in me,' said Margaret, 'to say to your ladyship, that, rather than live a quiet life, I would like a little variety of hope and fear, and liking and disliking —and—and—and the other sort of feelings which your ladyship is pleased to speak of; but I may say freely, and without blame, that I like a butterfly better than a beetle, or a trembling aspen better than a grim Scots fir, that never wags a leaf—or that, of all the wood, brass, and wire that ever my father's fingers put together, I do hate and detest a certain huge old clock of the German fashion, that rings hours and half-hours, and quarters and half-quarters, as if it was of such consequence that the world should know it was wound up and going. Now, dearest lady, I wish you would only compare that clumsy, clanging, Dutch-looking piece of lumber, with the beautiful timepiece that Master Heriot caused my father to make for your ladyship, which uses to play a hundred merry tunes, and turns out, when it strikes the hour, a whole band of morrice-dancers to trip the hays to the measure.'

'And which of these timepieces goes the truest, Margaret?' said the lady.

'I must confess, the old Dutchman has the advantage in that,' said Margaret. 'I fancy you are right, madam, and that comparisons are no arguments; at least mine has not brought me through.

'Upon my word maiden Margaret,' said the lady, smiling, 'you have been of late thinking very much of these matters.'

'Perhaps too much, madam,' said Margaret, so low as only to be heard by the lady, behind the back of whose chair she had now placed herself. The words were spoken very gravely, and accompanied by a half-sigh which did not escape the attention of her to whom they were addressed. The Lady Hermione turned immediately round, and looked earnestly at Margaret, then paused for a moment, and finally commanded Monna Paula to carry her frame and embroidery into the antechamber. When they were left alone, she desired her young friend to come from behind the chair, on the back of which she still rested, and sit down beside her upon a stool.

'I will remain thus, madam, under your favour,' answered Margaret, without changing her posture; 'I would rather you heard me without seeing me.'

'In God's name, maiden,' returned her patroness, 'what is it you can have to say, that may not be uttered face to face, to so true a friend as I am?'

Without making any direct answer, Margaret only replied, 'You were right, dearest lady, when you said I had suffered my feelings too much to engross me of late. I have done very wrong, and you will be angry with me—so will my god-father, but I cannot help it—he must be rescued.'

'*He?*' repeated the lady, with emphasis; 'that brief little word does, indeed, so far explain your mystery;—but come from behind the chair, you silly popinjay! I will wager you have suffered yonder gay young apprentice to sit too near your heart. I have not heard you mention young Vincent for many a day—perhaps he has not been out of mouth and out of mind both. Have you been so foolish as to let him speak to you seriously?—I am told he is a bold youth.'

'Not bold enough to say anything that could displease me, madam,' said Margaret.

'Perhaps, then, you were *not* displeased,' said the lady; 'or perhaps he has not *spoken*, which would be wiser and better. Be open-hearted, my love—your god-father will soon return, and we will take him into our consultations. If the young man is industrious, and come of honest parentage, his poverty may be no such insurmountable obstacle. But you are both of you very young, Margaret—I know your god-father will expect that the youth shall first serve out his apprenticeship.'

Margaret had hitherto suffered the lady to proceed, under the mistaken impression which she had adopted, simply because she could not tell how to interrupt her: but pure despite at hearing her last words gave her boldness at length to say, 'I crave your pardon, madam; but neither the youth you mention, nor any apprentice or master within the city of London'——

'Margaret,' said the lady in reply, 'the contemptuous tone with which you mention those of your own class (many hundreds, if not thousands, of whom are in all respects better than yourself, and would greatly honour you by thinking of you), is, methinks, no warrant for the wisdom of your choice—for a choice, it seems, there is. Who is it, maiden, to whom you have thus rashly attached yourself?—rashly, I fear it must be.'

'It is the young Scottish Lord Glenvarloch, madam,' answered Margaret, in a low and modest tone, but sufficiently firm considering the subject.

'The young Lord of Glenvarloch!' repeated the lady, in great surprise—'Maiden, you are distracted in your wits.'

'I knew you would say so, madam,' answered Margaret. 'It is what another person has already told me—it is, perhaps, what all the world would tell me—it is what I am sometimes disposed to tell myself. But look at me, madam, for I will now come before you, and tell me if there is madness or distraction in my look and word, when I repeat to you again, that I have fixed my affections on this young nobleman.'

'If there is not madness in your look or word, maiden, there is infinite folly in what you say,' answered the Lady Hermione sharply. 'When did you ever hear that misplaced love brought anything but wretchedness? Seek a match among your equals, Margaret, and escape the countless kinds of risk and misery that must attend an affection beyond your degree.—Why do you

smile, maiden? Is there aught to cause scorn in what I say?'

'Surely no, madam,' answered Margaret. 'I only smiled to think how it should happen, that while rank made such a wide difference between creatures formed from the same clay, the wit of the vulgar should, nevertheless, jump so exactly the same length with that of the accomplished and exalted. It is but the variation of the phrase which divides them. Dame Ursley told me the very same thing which your ladyship has but now uttered; only you, madam, talk of countless misery, and Dame Ursley spoke of the gallows, and Mistress Turner, who was hanged upon it.'

'Indeed?' answered the Lady Hermione; 'and who may Dame Ursley be, that your wise choice has associated with me in the difficult task of advising a fool?'

'The barber's wife at next door, madam,' answered Margaret, with feigned simplicity, but far from being sorry at heart that she had found an indirect mode of mortifying her monitress. 'She is the wisest woman that I know, next to your ladyship.'

'A proper confidant,' said the lady, 'and chosen with the same delicate sense of what is due to yourself and others!—But what ails you, maiden—where are you going?'

'Only to ask Dame Ursley's advice,' said Margaret, as if about to depart; 'for I see your ladyship is too angry to give me any, and the emergency is pressing.'

'What emergency, thou simple one?' said the lady, in a kinder tone. 'Sit down, maiden, and tell me your tale. It is true you are a fool, and a pettish fool to boot; but then you are a child—an amiable child, with all your self-willed folly, and we must help you, if we can.—Sit down, I say, as you are desired, and you will find me a safer and wiser counsellor than the barber-woman. And tell me how you come to suppose that you have fixed your heart unalterably upon a man whom you have seen, as I think, but once.'

'I have seen him oftener,' said the damsel, looking down; 'but I have only spoken to him once. I should have been able to get that once out of my head, though the impression was so deep that I could even now repeat every trifling word he said; but other things have since riveted it in my bosom for ever.'

'Maiden,' replied the lady, '*for ever* is the word which comes most lightly on the lips in such circumstances, but which, not the less, is almost the last that we should use. The fashion of this world, its passions, its joys, and its sorrows, pass away like the winged breeze—there is nought for ever, but that which belongs to the world beyond the grave.'

'You have corrected me justly, madam,' said Margaret calmly; 'I ought only to have spoken of my present state of mind, as what will last me for my lifetime, which unquestionably may be but short.'

'And what is there in this Scottish lord that can rivet what concerns him so closely in your fancy?' said the lady. 'I admit him a person able man, for I have seen him; and I will suppose him courteous and agreeable. But what are his accomplishments besides, for these surely are not uncommon attributes?'

'He is unfortunate, madam—most unfortunate—and surrounded by snares of different kinds, ingeniously contrived to ruin his character, destroy his estate, and, perhaps, to reach even his life. These schemes have been devised by avarice, originally, but they are now followed close by vindictive ambition, animated, I think, by the absolute and concentrated spirit of malice; for the Lord Dalgarno——'

'Here, Monna Paula—Monna Paula!' exclaimed the Lady Hermione, interrupting her young friend's narrative. 'She hears me not,' she answered, rising and going out, 'I must seek her.—I will return instantly.' She returned accordingly very soon after. 'You mentioned a name which I thought was familiar to me,' she said; 'but Monna Paula has put me right. I know nothing of your lord—how was it you named him?'

'Lord Dalgarno,' said Margaret;—'the wickedest man who lives. Under pretence of friendship he introduced the Lord Glenvarloch to a gambling-house, with the purpose of engaging him in deep play; but he with whom the perfidious traitor had to deal was too virtuous, moderate, and cautious to be caught in a snare so open. What did they next but turn his own moderation against him, and persuade others that because he would not become the prey of wolves, he herded with them for a share of their booty! And, while this base Lord Dalgarno was thus undermining his unsuspecting countryman, he took every measure to keep him surrounded by creatures of his own, to prevent him from attending court, and mixing with those of his proper rank. Since the Gunpowder Treason, there never was a conspiracy more deeply laid, more basely and more deliberately pursued.'

The lady smiled sadly at Margaret's vehemence, but sighed the next moment, while she told her young friend how little she knew the world she was about to live in, since she testified so much surprise at finding it full of villany.

'But by what means,' she added, 'could you, maiden, become possessed of the secret views of a man so cautious as Lord Dalgarno—as villains in general are?'

'Permit me to be silent on that subject,' said the maiden; 'I could not tell you without betraying others—let it suffice that my tidings are as certain as the means by which I acquired them are secret and sure. But I must not tell them even to you.'

'You are too bold, Margaret,' said the lady, 'to traffic in such matters at your early age. It is not only dangerous, but even unbecoming and unmaidenly.'

'I knew you would say that also,' said Margaret, with more meekness and patience than she usually showed on receiving reproof; 'but God knows, my heart acquits me of every other feeling save that of the wish to assist this most innocent and betrayed man. I contrived to send him warning of his friend's falsehood;—alas! my care has only hastened his utter ruin, unless speedy aid be found. He charged his false friend with treachery, and drew on him in

the Park, and is now liable to the fatal penalty due for breach of privilege of the King's palace.'

'This is indeed an extraordinary tale,' said Hermione; 'is Lord Glenvarloch then in prison?'

'No, madam, thank God, but in the sanctuary at Whitefriars—it is matter of doubt whether it will protect him in such a case—they speak of a warrant from the Lord Chief-Justice. A gentleman of the Temple has been arrested, and is in trouble, for having assisted him in his flight.—Even his taking temporary refuge in that base place, though from extreme necessity, will be used to the further defaming him. All this I know, and yet I cannot rescue him—cannot rescue him save by your means.'

'By my means, maiden!' said the lady—'you are beside yourself!—What means can I possess, in this secluded situation, of assisting this unfortunate nobleman?'

'You *have* means,' said Margaret eagerly; 'you have those means, unless I mistake greatly, which can do anything—can do everything, in this city, in this world—you have wealth, and the command of a small portion of it will enable me to extricate him from his present danger. He will be enabled and directed how to make his escape—and I'——she paused.

'Will accompany him, doubtless, and reap the fruits of your sage exertions in his behalf?' said the Lady Hermione ironically.

'May Heaven forgive you the unjust thought, lady,' answered Margaret. 'I will never see him more—but I shall have saved him, and the thought will make me happy.'

'A cold conclusion to so bold and warm a flame,' said the lady, with a smile which seemed to intimate incredulity.

'It is, however, the only one which I expect, madam—I could almost say the only one which I wish—I am sure I will use no efforts to bring about any other; if I am bold in his cause, I am timorous enough in my own. During our only interview I was unable to speak a word to him. He knows not the sound of my voice—and all that I have risked, and must yet risk, I am doing for one who, were he asked the question, would say he has long since forgotten that he ever saw, spoke to, or sat beside a creature of so little signification as I am.'

'This is a strange and unreasonable indulgence of a passion equally fanciful and dangerous,' said the Lady Hermione.

'You will *not* assist me, then?' said Margaret; 'have good-day, then, madam—my secret, I trust, is safe in such honourable keeping.'

'Tarry yet a little,' said the lady, 'and tell me what resource you have to assist this youth if you were supplied with money to put it in motion.'

'It is superfluous to ask me the question, madam,' answered Margaret, 'unless you purpose to assist me; and if you do so purpose, it is still superfluous. You could not understand the means I must use, and time is too brief to explain.'

'But have you in reality such means?' said the lady.

'I have, with the command of a moderate sum,' answered Margaret Ramsay, 'the power of baffling all his enemies—of eluding the passion of the irritated King—the colder but more determined displeasure of the Prince—the vindictive spirit of Buckingham, so hastily directed against whomsoever crosses the path of his ambition—the cold, concentrated malice of Lord Dalgarno—all, I can baffle them all!'

'But is this to be done without your own personal risk, Margaret?' replied the lady; 'for, be your purpose what it will, you are not to peril your own reputation or person in the romantic attempt of serving another; and I, maiden, am answerable to your god-father—to your benefactor, and my own—not to aid you in any dangerous or unworthy enterprise.'

'Depend upon my word,—my oath,—dearest lady,' replied the supplicant, 'that I will act by the agency of others, and do not myself design to mingle in any enterprise in which my appearance might be either perilous or unwomanly.'

'I know not what to do,' said the Lady Hermione; 'it is perhaps incautious and inconsiderate in me to aid so wild a project, yet the end seems honourable, if the means be sure.—What is the penalty, if he fall into their power?'

'Alas, alas! the loss of his right hand!' replied Margaret, her voice almost stifled with sobs.

'Are the laws of England so cruel? Then there is mercy in Heaven alone,' said the lady, 'since, even in this free land, men are wolves to each other.—Compose yourself, Margaret, and tell me what money is necessary to secure Lord Glenvarloch's escape.'

'Two hundred pieces,' replied Margaret; 'I would speak to you of restoring them,—and I must one day have the power,—only that I know—that is, I think—your ladyship is indifferent on that score.'

'Not a word more of it,' said the lady; 'call Monna Paula hither.'

CHAPTER XX.

Credit me, friend, it hath been ever thus,
Since the ark rested on Mount Ararat,
False man hath sworn, and woman hath believed—
Repented and reproach'd, and then believed once more.

THE NEW WORLD.

By the time that Margaret returned with Monna Paula, the Lady Hermione was rising from the table at which she had been engaged in writing something on a small slip of paper, which she gave to her attendant.

'Monna Paula,' she said, 'carry this paper to Roberts the cash-keeper; let him give you the money mentioned in the note, and bring it hither presently.'

Monna Paula left the room, and her mistress proceeded.

'I do not know,' she said, 'Margaret, if I have done, and am doing, well in this affair. My life has been one of strange seclusion, and I am totally unacquainted with the practical ways of this world—an ignorance which I know, be remedied by mere reading.—I fear doing wrong to you, and perhaps to the law, the country which affords me refuge, by

indulging you; and yet there is something in my heart which cannot resist your entreaties.'

'O, listen to it—listen to it, dear, generous lady!' said Margaret, throwing herself on her knees and grasping those of her benefactress, and looking in that attitude like a beautiful mortal in the act of supplicating her tutelary angel; 'the laws of men are but the injunctions of mortality, but what the heart prompts is the echo of the voice from heaven within us.'

'Rise, rise, maiden,' said Hermione; 'you affect me more than I thought I should have been moved by aught that should approach me. Rise, and tell me whence it comes that, in so short a time, your thoughts, your looks, your speech, and even your slightest actions, are changed from those of a capricious and fanciful girl, to all this energy and impassioned eloquence of word and action?'

'I am sure I know not, dearest lady,' said Margaret, looking down; 'but I suppose that when I was a trifler I was only thinking of trifles. What I now reflect is deep and serious, and I am thankful if my speech and manner bear reasonable proportion to my thoughts.'

'It must be so,' said the lady; 'yet the change seems a rapid and strange one. It seems to be as if a childish girl had at once shot up into a deep-thinking and impassioned woman, ready to make exertions alike, and sacrifices, with all that vain devotion to a favourite object of affection, which is often so basely rewarded.'

The Lady Hermione sighed bitterly, and Monna Paula entered ere the conversation proceeded further. She spoke to her mistress in the foreign language in which they frequently conversed, but which was unknown to Margaret.

'We must have patience for a time,' said the lady to her visitor; 'the cash-keeper is abroad on some business, but he is expected home in the course of half-an-hour.'

Margaret wrung her hands in vexation and impatience.

'Minutes are precious,' continued the lady, 'that I am well aware of; and we will at least suffer none of them to escape us. Monna Paula shall remain below, and transact our business the very instant that Roberts returns home.'

She spoke to her attendant accordingly, who again left the room.

'You are very kind, madam—very good,' said the poor little Margaret, while the anxious trembling of her lip and of her hand showed all that sickening agitation of the heart which arises from hope deferred.

'Be patient, Margaret, and collect yourself,' said the lady; 'you may, you must have much to do to carry through this your bold purpose—reserve your spirits, which you may need so much—be patient—it is the only remedy against the evils of life.'

'Yes, madam,' said Margaret, wiping her eyes, and endeavouring in vain to suppress the natural impatience of her temper—'I have heard so—very often, indeed; and I daresay I have myself, Heaven forgive me, said so to people in perplexity and affliction; but it was before I had suffered perplexity and vexation myself, and I am sure I will never preach patience to any human being again, now that I know how much the medicine goes against the stomach.'

'You will think better of it, maiden,' said the Lady Hermione. 'I also, when I first felt distress, thought they did me wrong who spoke to me of patience; but my sorrows have been repeated and continued till I have been taught to cling to it as the best, and—religious duties excepted, of which, indeed, patience forms a part—the only alleviation which life can afford them.'

Margaret, who neither wanted sense nor feeling, wiped her tears hastily, and asked her patroness's forgiveness for her petulance.

'I might have thought,' she said,—'I ought to have reflected, that even from the manner of your life, madam, it is plain you must have suffered sorrow; and yet, God knows, the patience which I have ever seen you display, well entitles you to recommend your own example to others.'

The lady was silent for a moment, and then replied—

'Margaret, I am about to repose a high confidence in you. You are no longer a child, but a thinking and a feeling woman. You have told me as much of your secret as you dared—I will let you know as much of mine as I may venture to tell. You will ask me, perhaps, why, at a moment when your own mind is agitated, I should force upon you the consideration of my sorrows? and I answer, that I cannot withstand the impulse which now induces me to do so. Perhaps from having witnessed, for the first time these three years, the natural effects of human passion, my own sorrows have been awakened, and are for the moment too big for my own bosom—perhaps I may hope that you, who seem driving full sail on the very rock on which I was wrecked for ever, will take warning by the tale I have to tell. Enough, if you are willing to listen, I am willing to tell you who the melancholy inhabitant of the Foljambe apartment really is, and why she resides here. It will serve, at least, to while away the time until Monna Paula shall bring us the reply from Roberts.'

At any other moment of her life, Margaret Ramsay would have heard with undivided interest a communication so flattering in itself, and referring to a subject upon which the general curiosity had been so strongly excited. And even at this agitating moment, although she ceased not to listen with an anxious ear and throbbing heart for the sound of Monna Paula's returning footsteps, she nevertheless, as gratitude and policy, as well as a portion of curiosity dictated, composed herself, in appearance at least, to the strictest attention to the Lady Hermione, and thanked her with humility for the high confidence she was pleased to repose in her. The Lady Hermione, with the same calmness which always attended her speech and actions, thus recounted her story to her young friend:—

'My father,' she said, 'was a merchant, but he was of a city whose merchants are princes. I am the daughter of a noble house in Genoa, whose name stood as high in honour and in

antiquity as any inscribed in the Golden Register of that famous aristocracy.

'My mother was a noble Scottish woman. She was descended—I do not stint—and not remotely descended, of the house of Glenvarloch—no wonder that I was easily led to take concern in the misfortunes of this young lord. He is my near relation, and my mother, who was more than sufficiently proud of her descent, early taught me to take an interest in the name. My maternal grandfather, a cadet of that house of Glenvarloch, had followed the fortunes of an unhappy fugitive, Francis Earl of Bothwell,* who, after showing his miseries in many a foreign court, at length settled in Spain upon a miserable pension which he earned by conforming to the Catholic faith. Ralph Olifaunt, my grandfather, separated from him in disgust, and settled at Barcelona, where, by the friendship of the governor, his heresy, as it was termed, was connived at. My father, in the course of his commerce, resided more at Barcelona than in his native country, though at times he visited Genoa.

'It was at Barcelona that he became acquainted with my mother, loved her, and married her; they differed in faith, but they agreed in affection. I was their only child. In public I conformed to the doctrines and ceremonial of the Church of Rome; but my mother, by whom these were regarded with horror, privately trained me up in those of the reformed religion; and my father, either indifferent in the matter, or unwilling to distress the woman whom he loved, overlooked or connived at my secretly joining in her devotions.

'But when, unhappily, my father was attacked, while yet in the prime of life, by a slow, wasting disease, which he felt to be incurable, he foresaw the hazard to which his widow and orphan might be exposed, after he was no more, in a country so bigoted to Catholicism as Spain. He made it his business, during the two last years of his life, to realize and to remit to England a large part of his fortune, which, by the faith and honour of his correspondent, the excellent man under whose roof I now reside, was employed to great advantage. Had my father lived to complete his purpose, by withdrawing his whole fortune from commerce, he himself would have accompanied us to England, and would have beheld us settled in peace and honour before his death. But Heaven had ordained it otherwise. He died, leaving several sums engaged in the hands of his Spanish debtors; and in particular, he had made a large and extensive consignment to a certain wealthy society of merchants at Madrid, who showed no willingness after his death to account for the proceeds. Would to God we had left these covetous and wicked men in possession of their booty, for such they seemed to hold the property of their deceased correspondent and friend! We had enough for comfort, and even splendour, already secured in England; but friends exclaimed upon the folly of permitting these unprincipled men to plunder us of our rightful property. The sum itself was large, and the claim having been made, my mother thought that my father's memory was interested in its being enforced, especially as the defences set up for the mercantile society went, in some degree, to impeach the fairness of his transactions.

'We went therefore to Madrid. I was then, my Margaret, about your age, young and thoughtless as you have hitherto been.—We went, I say, to Madrid, to solicit the protection of the court and of the king, without which, we were told, it would be in vain to expect justice against an opulent and powerful association.

Our residence at the Spanish metropolis drew on from weeks to months. For my part, my natural sorrow for a kind, though not a fond father, having abated, I cared not if the lawsuit had detained us at Madrid for ever. My mother permitted herself and me rather more liberty than we had been accustomed to. She found relations among the Scottish and Irish officers, many of whom held a high rank in the Spanish armies; their wives and daughters became our friends and companions, and I had perpetual occasion to exercise my mother's native language, which I had learned from my infancy. By degrees, as my mother's spirits were low, and her health indifferent, she was induced, by her partial fondness for me, to suffer me to mingle occasionally in society which she herself did not frequent, under the guardianship of such ladies as she imagined she could trust, and particularly under the care of the lady of a general officer, whose weakness or falsehood was the original cause of my misfortune. I was as gay, Margaret, and thoughtless—I again repeat it—as you were but lately, and my attention, like yours, became suddenly riveted to one object, and to one set of feelings.

'The person by whom they were excited was young, noble, handsome, accomplished, a soldier, and a Briton. So far our cases are nearly parallel; but may Heaven forbid that the parallel should become complete! This man, so noble, so fairly formed, so gifted, and so brave—this *villain*, for that, Margaret, was his fittest name, spoke of love to me, and I listened. Could I suspect his sincerity? If he was wealthy, noble, and long descended, I also was a noble and an opulent heiress. It is true, that he neither knew the extent of my father's wealth, nor did I communicate to him (I do not even remember if I myself knew it at the time) the important circumstance that the greater part of that wealth was beyond the grasp of arbitrary power, and not subject to the precarious award of arbitrary judges. My lover might think, perhaps, as my mother was desirous the world at large should believe, that almost our whole fortune depended on the precarious suit which we had come to Madrid to prosecute—a belief which she had countenanced out of policy, being well aware that a knowledge of my father's having remitted such a large part of his fortune to England would in no shape aid the recovery of further sums in the Spanish courts. Yet, with no more extensive views of my fortune than were possessed by the public, I believe that he of whom I am speaking was at first sincere in his pretensions. He had himself interest sufficient to have o

a decision in our favour in the courts,

* Note S. Earl of Bothwell.

fortune, reckoning only what was in Spain, would then have been no inconsiderable sum. To be brief, whatever might be his motives or temptation for so far committing himself, he applied to my mother for my hand, with my consent and approval. My mother's judgment had become weaker, but her passions had become more irritable, during her increasing illness.

'You have heard of the bitterness of the ancient Scottish feuds, of which it may be said, in the language of Scripture, that the fathers eat sour grapes, and the teeth of the children are set on edge. Unhappily—I should say *happily*, considering what this man has now shown himself to be—some such strain of bitterness had divided his house from my mother's, and she had succeeded to the inheritance of hatred. When he asked her for my hand, she was no longer able to command her passions—she raked up every injury which the rival families had inflicted upon each other during a bloody feud of two centuries—heaped him with epithets of scorn, and rejected his proposal of alliance, as if it had come from the basest of mankind.

'My lover retired in passion; and I remained to weep and murmur against fortune, and—I will confess my fault—against my affectionate parent. I had been educated with different feelings, and the traditions of the feuds and quarrels of my mother's family in Scotland, which were to her monuments and chronicles, seemed to me as insignificant and unmeaning as the actions and fantasies of Don Quixote; and I blamed my mother bitterly for sacrificing my happiness to an empty dream of family dignity.

'While I was in this humour, my lover sought a renewal of our intercourse. We met repeatedly in the house of the lady whom I have mentioned, and who, in levity, or in the spirit of intrigue, countenanced our secret correspondence. At length we were secretly married—so far did my blinded passion hurry me. My lover had secured the assistance of a clergyman of the English Church. Monna Paula, who had been my attendant from infancy, was one witness of our union. Let me do the faithful creature justice—she conjured me to suspend my purpose till my mother's death should permit us to celebrate our marriage openly; but the entreaties of my lover, and my own wayward passion, prevailed over her remonstrances. The lady I have spoken of was another witness, but whether she was in full possession of my bridegroom's secret, I had never the means to learn. But the shelter of her name and roof afforded us the means of frequently meeting, and the love of my husband seemed as sincere and as unbounded as my own.

'He was eager, he said, to gratify his pride, by introducing me to one or two of his noble English friends. This could not be done at Lady D——'s; but by his command, which I was now entitled to consider as my law, I contrived twice to visit him at his own hotel, accompanied only by Monna Paula. There was a very small party of two ladies and two gentlemen. There was music, mirth, and dancing. I had heard of the frankness of the English nation, but I could not help thinking it bordered on licence during these entertainments, and in the course of the collation which followed; but I imputed my scruples to my inexperience, and would not doubt the propriety of what was approved by my husband.

'I was soon summoned to other scenes; my poor mother's disease drew to a conclusion—Happy I am that it took place before she discovered what would have cut her to the soul.

'In Spain you may have heard how the Catholic priests, and particularly the monks, besiege the beds of the dying to obtain bequests for the good of the Church. I have said that my mother's temper was irritated by disease, and her judgment impaired in proportion. She gathered spirits and force from the resentment which the priests around her bed excited by their importunity, and the boldness of the stern sect of Reformers, to which she had secretly adhered, seemed to animate her dying tongue. She avowed the religion she had so long concealed; renounced all hope and aid which did not come by and through its dictates; rejected with contempt the ceremonial of the Romish Church; loaded the astonished priests with reproaches for their greediness and hypocrisy, and commanded them to leave her house. They went in bitterness and rage, but it was to return with the inquisitorial power, its warrants, and its officers; and they found only the cold corpse left of her, on whom they had hoped to work their vengeance. As I was soon discovered to have shared my mother's heresy, I was dragged from her dead body, imprisoned in a solitary cloister, and treated with severity, which the abbess assured me was due to the looseness of my life, as well as my spiritual errors. I avowed my marriage to justify the situation in which I found myself—I implored the assistance of the Superior to communicate my situation to my husband. She smiled coldly at the proposal, and told me the Church had provided a better spouse for me; advised me to secure myself of divine grace hereafter, and deserve milder treatment here, by presently taking the veil. In order to convince me that I had no other resource, she showed me a royal decree, by which all my estate was hypothecated to the Convent of Saint Magdalen, and became their complete property upon my death, or my taking the vows. As I was, both from religious principle, and affectionate attachment to my husband, absolutely immoveable in my rejection of the veil, I believe—may Heaven forgive me if I wrong her!—that the Abbess was desirous to make sure of my spoils, by hastening the former event.

'It was a small and a poor convent, and situated among the mountains of Guadarrama. Some of the sisters were the daughters of neighbouring hidalgoes, as poor as they were proud and ignorant; others were women immured there on account of their vicious conduct. The Superior herself was of a high family, to which she owed her situation; but she was said to have disgraced her connections by her conduct during ——, and now, in advanced age, covetousness and the love of power, a spirit of severity and cruelty, had succeeded to the thirst after licentious pleasure. I suffered much under this woman—and still her dark, glassy eye, her tall, shrouded form, and her rigid features haunt my slumbers.

'I was not destined to be a mother. I was very ill, and my recovery was long doubtful.

The most violent remedies were applied, if remedies they indeed were. My health was restored at length, against my own expectation and that of all around me. But, when I first again beheld the reflection of my own face, I thought it was the visage of a ghost. I was wont to be flattered by all, but particularly by my husband, for the fineness of my complexion—it was now totally gone, and, what is more extraordinary, it has never returned. I have observed that the few who now see me, look upon me as a bloodless phantom—Such has been the abiding effect of the treatment to which I was subjected. May God forgive those who were the agents of it!—I thank Heaven I can say so with as sincere a wish, as that with which I pray for forgiveness of my own sins. They now relented somewhat towards me—moved perhaps to compassion by my singular appearance, which bore witness to my sufferings; or afraid that the matter might attract attention during a visitation of the bishop, which was approaching. One day, as I was walking in the convent garden, to which I had been lately admitted, a miserable old Moorish slave, who was kept to cultivate the little spot, muttered as I passed him, but still keeping his wrinkled face and decrepit form in the same angle with the earth—"There is Heart's Ease near the postern.'

'I knew something of the symbolical language of flowers, once carried to such perfection among the Moriscoes of Spain; but if I had been ignorant of it, the captive would soon have caught at any hint that seemed to promise liberty. With all the haste consistent with the utmost circumspection—for I might be observed by the Abbess or some of the sisters from the window—I hastened to the postern. It was closely barred as usual, but when I coughed slightly, I was answered from the other side—and, O Heaven! it was my husband's voice which said, "Lose not a moment here at present, but be on the spot when the vesper bell has tolled."

'I retired in an ecstasy of joy. I was not entitled or permitted to assist at vespers, but was accustomed to be confined to my cell while the nuns were in the choir. Since my recovery, they had discontinued locking the door; though the utmost severity was denounced against me if I left these precincts. But let the penalty be what it would, I hastened to dare it.—No sooner had the last toll of the vesper bell ceased to sound, than I stole from my chamber, reached the garden unobserved, hurried to the postern, beheld it open with rapture, and in the next moment was in my husband's arms. He had with him another cavalier of noble mien—both were masked and armed. Their horses, with one saddled for my use, stood in a thicket hard by, with two other masked horsemen, who seemed to be servants. In less than two minutes we were mounted, and rode off as fast as we could through rough and devious roads, in which one of the domestics appeared to act as guide.

'The hurried pace at which we rode, and the anxiety of the moment, kept me silent, and prevented my expressing my surprise or my joy save in a few broken words. It also served as an apology for my husband's silence. At length we stopped at a solitary hut—the cavaliers dismounted, and I was assisted from my saddle, not by M—— M——my husband, I would say, who seemed busied about his horse, but by the stranger.

'"Go into the hut," said my husband, "change your dress with the speed of lightning—you will find one to assist you—we must forward instantly when you have shifted your apparel."

'I entered the hut, and was received in the arms of the faithful Monna Paula, who had waited my arrival for many hours, half distracted with fear and anxiety. With her assistance I speedily tore off the detested garments of the convent, and exchanged them for a travelling suit made after the English fashion. I observed that Monna Paula was in a similar dress. I had but just huddled on my change of attire when we were hastily summoned to mount. A horse, I found, was provided for Monna Paula, and we resumed our route. On the way my convent garb, which had been wrapped hastily together round a stone, was thrown into a lake, along the verge of which we were then passing. The two cavaliers rode together in front, my attendant and I followed, and the servants brought up the rear. Monna Paula, as we rode on, repeatedly entreated me to be silent upon the road, as our lives depended on it. I was easily reconciled to be passive, for, the first fever of spirits which attended the sense of liberation and of gratified affection having passed away, I felt, as it were, dizzy with the rapid motion; and my utmost exertion was necessary to keep my place on the saddle, until we suddenly (it was now very dark) saw a strong light before us.

'My husband reined up his horse, and gave a signal by a low whistle twice repeated, which was answered from a distance. The whole party then halted under the boughs of a large cork-tree, and my husband, drawing himself close to my side, said, in a voice which I then thought was only embarrassed by fear for my safety—"We must now part. Those to whom I commit you are *contrabandists*, who only know you as Englishwomen, but who, for a high bribe, have undertaken to escort you through the passes of the Pyrenees as far as Saint Jean de Luz."

'"And do *you* not go with us?" I exclaimed, with emphasis, though in a whisper.

'"It is impossible," he said, "and would ruin all.—See that you speak in English in these people's hearing, and give not the least sign of understanding what they say in Spanish—your life depends on it; for, though they live in opposition to, and evasion of, the laws of Spain, they would tremble at the idea of violating those of the Church—I see them coming—farewell—farewell."

'The last words were hastily uttered—I endeavoured to detain him yet a moment by my feeble grasp on his cloak.

'"You will meet me, then, I trust, at Saint Jean de Luz?"

'"Yes, yes," he answered hastily, "at Saint Jean de Luz you will meet your protector."

'He then extricated his cloak from my grasp, and was lost in the darkness. His companion approached, kissed my hand, which, in the [illegible] of the moment, I was scarce sensible

followed my husband, attended by one of the domestics.'

The tears of Hermione here flowed so fast as to threaten the interruption of her narrative. When she resumed it, it was with a kind of apology to Margaret.

'Every circumstance,' she said, 'occurring in these moments, when I still enjoyed a delusive idea of happiness, is deeply imprinted in my remembrance, which, respecting all that has since happened, is waste and un[illegible]d as an Arabian desert. But I have no ri[illegible] on you, Margaret, agitated as you are with your own anxieties, the unavailing details of my useless recollections.'

Margaret's eyes were full of tears—it was impossible it could be otherwise, considering that the tale was told by her suffering benefactress, and resembled in some respects her own situation; and yet she must not be severely blamed if, while eagerly pressing her patroness to continue her narrative, her eye involuntarily sought the door, as if to chide the delay of Monna Paula.

The Lady Hermione saw and forgave these conflicting emotions; and she, too, must be pardoned if, in her turn, the minute detail of her narrative showed that, in the discharge of feelings so long locked in her own bosom, she rather forgot those which were personal to her auditor, and by which it must be supposed Margaret's mind was principally occupied, if not entirely engrossed.

'I told you, I think, that one domestic followed the gentleman,' thus the lady continued her story, 'the other remained with us for the purpose, as it seemed, of introducing us to two persons whom M—— I say whom my husband's signal had brought to the spot. A word or two of explanation passed between them and the servant, in a sort of *patois*, which I did not understand; and one of the strangers taking hold of my bridle, the other of Monna Paula's, they led us towards the light, which I have already said was the signal of our halting. I touched Monna Paula, and was sensible that she trembled very much, which surprised me, because I knew her character to be so strong and bold as to border upon the masculine.

'When we reached the fire, the gipsy figures of those who surrounded it, with their swarthy features, large sombrero hats, girdles stuck full of pistols and poniards, and all the other apparatus of a roving and perilous life, would have terrified me at another moment. But then I only felt the agony of having parted from my husband almost in the very moment of my rescue. The females of the gang—for there were four or five women amongst these contraband traders—received us with a sort of rude courtesy. They were, in dress and manners, not extremely different from the men with whom they associated—were almost as hardy and adventurous, carried arms like them, and were, as we learned from passing circumstances, scarce less experienced in the use of them.

'It was impossible not to fear these wild people; yet they gave us no reason to complain of them, but used us on all occasions with a kind of clumsy courtesy, accommodating themselves to our wants and our weakness during the journey, even while we heard them grumbling to each other against our effeminacy—like some rude carrier, who, in charge of a package of valuable and fragile ware, takes every precaution for its preservation, while he curses the unwonted trouble which it occasions him. Once or twice, when they were disappointed in their contraband traffic, lost some goods in a rencontre with the Spanish officers of the revenue, and were finally pursued by a military force, their murmurs assumed a more alarming tone in the [illegible] my attendant and myself, when, without d[illegible] seem to understand them, we heard them curse the insular heretics, on whose account God, Saint James, and our Lady of the Pillar, had blighted their hopes of profit. These are dreadful recollections, Margaret.'

'Why, then, dearest lady,' answered Margaret, 'will you thus dwell on them?'

'It is only,' said the Lady Hermione, 'because I linger like a criminal on the scaffold, and would fain protract the time that must inevitably bring on the final catastrophe. Yes, dearest Margaret, I rest and dwell on the events of that journey, marked as it was by fatigue and danger, though the road lay through the wildest and most desolate deserts and mountains, and though our companions, both men and women, were fierce and lawless themselves, and exposed to the most merciless retaliation from those with whom they were constantly engaged—yet would I rather dwell on these hazardous events than tell that which awaited me at Saint Jean de Luz.'

'But you arrived there in safety?' said Margaret.

'Yes, maiden,' replied the Lady Hermione; 'and were guided by the chief of our outlawed band to the house which had been assigned for our reception with the same punctilious accuracy with which he would have delivered a bale of uncustomed goods to a correspondent. I was told a gentleman had expected me for two days—I rushed into the apartment, and, when I expected to embrace my husband—I found myself in the arms of his friend!'

'The villain!' exclaimed Margaret, whose anxiety had, in spite of herself, been a moment suspended by the narrative of the lady.

'Yes,' replied Hermione calmly, though her voice somewhat faltered, 'it is the name that best—that well befits him. He, Margaret, for whom I had sacrificed all—whose love and whose memory were dearer to me than my freedom, when I was in the convent—than my life, when I was on my perilous journey—had taken his measures to shake me off, and transfer me, as a privileged wanton, to the protection of his libertine friend. At first the stranger laughed at my tears and my agony, as the hysterical passion of a deluded and over-reached wanton, or the wily affectation of a courtesan. My claim of marriage he laughed at, assuring me he knew it was a mere farce required by me, and submitted to by his friend, to save some reserve of delicacy, and expressed his surprise that I should consider in any other light a ceremony which could be valid neither in Spain nor England, and insultingly offered to remove my

scruples, by renewing such a union with me himself. My exclamations brought Monna Paula to my aid—she was not, indeed, far distant, for she had expected some such scene.'

'Good Heaven!' said Margaret, 'was she a confidant of your base husband?'

'No,' answered Hermione, 'do her not that injustice. It was her persevering inquiries that discovered the place of my confinement—it was she who gave the information to my husband, and who remarked even then, that the news was so much more interesting to his friend than to him, that she suspected from an early [illegible] it was the purpose of the [illegible] who was to shake me off. On the journey her suspicions were confirmed. She had heard him remark to his companion, with a cold, sarcastic sneer, the total change which my prison and my illness had made on my complexion; and she had heard the other reply, that the defect might be cured by a touch of Spanish red. This and other circumstances having prepared her for such treachery, Monna Paula now entered, completely self-possessed, and prepared to support me. Her calm representations went further with the stranger than the expressions of my despair. If he did not entirely believe our tale, he at least acted the part of a man of honour, who would not intrude himself on defenceless females, whatever was their character; desisted from persecuting us with his presence; and not only directed Monna Paula how we should journey to Paris, but furnished her with money for the purpose of our journey. From the capital I wrote to Master Heriot, my father's most trusted correspondent; he came instantly to Paris on receiving the letter; and——But here comes Monna Paula, with more than the sum you desired. Take it, my dearest maiden—serve this youth if you will. But O, Margaret, look for no gratitude in return!'

The Lady Hermione took the bag of gold from her attendant, and gave it to her young friend, who threw herself into her arms, kissed her on both the pale cheeks, over which the sorrows so newly awakened by her narrative had drawn many tears, then sprung up, wiped her own overflowing eyes, and left the Foljambe apartment with a hasty and resolved step.

CHAPTER XXI.

> Rove not from pole to pole—the man lives here
> Whose razor's only equall'd by his beer;
> And where, in either sense, the cockney-put
> May, if he pleases, get confounded *cut*.
>
> ON THE SIGN OF AN ALEHOUSE KEPT BY A BARBER.

WE are under the necessity of transporting our readers to the habitation of Benjamin Suddlechop, the husband of the active and efficient Dame Ursula, and who also, in his own person, discharged more offices than one. For, besides trimming locks and beards, and turning whiskers upward into the martial and swaggering curl, or downward into the drooping form which became moustaches of civil policy; he also occasionally letting blood either by cupping or by the lancet, extracting a stump, and performing other actions of petty pharmacy, very nearly as well as his neighbour Raredrench, the apothecary; he could, on occasion, draw a cup of beer as well as a tooth, tap a hogshead as well as a vein, and wash, with a draught of good ale, the moustaches which his art had just trimmed. But he carried on these trades apart from each other.

His barber's shop projected its long and mysterious pole into Fleet Street, painted particoloured-wise, to represent the ribbons with which, in elder times, that ensign was garnished. In the [illegible] were seen rows of teeth displayed upon strings like rosaries—cups with a red rag at the bottom, to resemble blood, an intimation that patients might be bled, cupped, or blistered, with the assistance of 'sufficient advice;' while the more profitable but less honourable operations upon the hair of the head and beard were briefly and gravely announced. Within was the well-worn leathern chair for customers, the guitar, then called a ghittern or cittern, with which a customer might amuse himself till his predecessor was dismissed from under Benjamin's hands, and which, therefore, often flayed the ears of the patient metaphorically, while his chin sustained from the razor literal scarification. All, therefore, in this department, spoke the chirurgeon-barber or the barber-chirurgeon.

But there was a little back room, used as a private taproom, which had a separate entrance by a dark and crooked alley, which communicated with Fleet Street, after a circuitous passage through several by-lanes and courts. This retired temple of Bacchus had also a connection with Benjamin's more public shop by a long and narrow entrance, conducting to the secret premises in which a few old topers used to take their morning draught, and a few gill-sippers their modicum of strong waters, in a bashful way, after having entered the barber's shop under pretence of being shaved. Besides, this obscure taproom gave a separate admission to the apartments of Dame Ursley, which she was believed to make use of in the course of her multifarious practice, both to let herself secretly out, and to admit clients and employers who cared not to be seen to visit her in public. Accordingly, after the hour of noon, by which time the modest and timid whetters, who were Benjamin's best customers, had each had his draught, or his thimbleful, the business of the tap was in a manner ended, and the charge of attending the back door passed from one of the barber's apprentices to the little mulatto girl, the dingy Iris of Dame Suddlechop. Then came mystery thick upon mystery; muffled gallants and masked females, in disguises of different fashions, were seen to glide through the intricate mazes of the alley; and even the low tap on the door, which frequently demanded the attention of the little Creole, had in it something that expressed secrecy and fear of discovery.

It was the evening of the same day when Margaret had held the long conference with the Lady Hermione, that Dame Suddlechop had directed her little porteress to 'keep the door fast as a miser's purse-strings; and, as she valued her saffron skin, to let in none but [illegible] the name she added in a whisper, and accompanied it with a nod. The little [illegible]

blinked intelligence, went to her post, and in brief time thereafter admitted and ushered into the presence of the dame, that very city gallant whose clothes sat so awkwardly upon him, and who had behaved so doughtily in the fray which befell at Nigel's first visit to Beaujeu's ordinary. The mulatto introduced him—'Missis, fine young gentleman, all over gold and velvet'—then muttered to herself, as she shut the door, 'Fine young gentleman, he!—apprentice to him who makes the tick tick.'

It was indeed—we are sorry and trust our readers will sympathize with the interest we take in the matter—it was indeed honest Jin Vin, who had been so far left to his own devices, and abandoned by his better angel, as occasionally to travesty himself in this fashion, and to visit, in the dress of a gallant of the day, those places of pleasure and dissipation in which it would have been everlasting discredit to him to have been seen in his real character and condition; that is, had it been possible for him in his proper shape to have gained admission. There was now a deep gloom on his brow, his rich habit was hastily put on, and buttoned awry; his belt buckled in a most disorderly fashion, so that his sword stuck outwards from his side, instead of hanging by it with graceful negligence; while his poniard, though richly hatched and gilded, stuck in his girdle like a butcher's steel in the fold of his blue apron. Persons of fashion had by the way the advantage formerly of being better distinguished from the vulgar than at present; for what the meant farthingale and the modern hoop were to court ladies, the sword was to the gentleman; an article of dress, which only rendered those ridiculous who assumed it for the nonce, without being in the habit of wearing it. Vincent's rapier got between his legs, and as he stumbled over it, he exclaimed, 'Zounds! 'tis the second time it has served me thus. I believe the damned trinket knows I am no true gentleman, and does it of set purpose.'

'Come, come, mine honest Jin Vin—come, my good boy,' said the dame, in a soothing tone, 'never mind these trinkums—a frank and hearty London 'prentice is worth all the gallants of the inns of court.'

'I *was* a frank and hearty London 'prentice before I knew you, Dame Suddlechop,' said Vincent; 'what your advice has made me, you may find a name for since, fore George! I am ashamed to think about it myself.'

'A well a day,' quoth the dame, 'and is it even so with thee?—nay, then, I know but one cure;' and with that, going to a little corner cupboard of carved wainscot, she opened it by the assistance of a key, which, with half a dozen besides, hung in a silver chain at her girdle, and produced a long flask of thin glass cased with wicker, bringing forth at the same time two Flemish rummer glasses, with long stalks and capacious wombs. She filled the one brimful for her guest, and the other more modestly to about two-thirds of its capacity, for her own use, repeating, as the rich cordial trickled forth in a smooth oily stream—'Right Rosa Solis, as ever washed mulligrubs out of a moody brain!'

But though Jin Vin tossed off his glass without scruple, while the lady sipped hers more moderately, it did not appear to produce the expected amendment upon his humour. On the contrary, as he threw himself into the great leathern chair, in which Dame Ursley was wont to solace herself of an evening, he declared himself 'the most miserable dog within the sound of Bow bell.'

'And why should you be so idle as to think yourself so, silly boy?' said Dame Suddlechop; 'but 'tis always thus—fools and children never know when they are well. Why, there is not one that walks in Saint Paul's, whether in flat cap or hat and feather, that has so many kind glances from the wenches as you, when ye swagger along Fleet Street with your bat under your arm, and your cap set aside upon your head. Thou knowest well that, from Mistress Deputy's self down to the waistcoateers in the alley, all of them are twiring and peeping betwixt their fingers when you pass; and yet you call yourself a miserable dog! and I must tell you all this over and over again, as if I were whistling the chimes of London to a pettish child, in order to bring the pretty baby into good humour!'

The flattery of Dame Ursula seemed to have the fate of her cordial—it was swallowed, indeed, by the party to whom she presented it, and that with some degree of relish, but it did not operate as a sedative on the disturbed state of the youth's mind. He laughed for an instant half in scorn and half in gratified vanity, but cast a sullen look on Dame Ursley as he replied to her last words,

'You do treat me like a child indeed, when you sing over and over to me a cuckoo song that I care not a copper filing for.'

'Aha,' said Dame Ursley, 'that is to say, you care not if you please all, unless you please one. You are a true lover, I warrant, and care not for all the city, from here to Whitechapel, so you could write yourself first in your pretty Peg-a-Ramsay's good will. Well, well, take patience, man, and be guided by me, for I will be the hoop will bind you together at last.'

'It is time you were so,' said Jenkin, 'for hitherto you have rather been the wedge to separate us.'

Dame Suddlechop had by this time finished her cordial—it was not the first she had taken that day,—and, though a woman of strong brain, and cautious at least, if not abstemious, in her potations, it may nevertheless be supposed that her patience was not improved by the regimen which she observed.

'Why, thou ungracious and ingrate knave,' said Dame Ursley, 'have I not done everything to put thee in thy mistress's good graces? She loves gentry, the proud Scottish minx, as a Welshman loves cheese, and has her father's descent from that Duke of Daldevil, or whatsoever she calls him, as close in her heart as gold in a miser's chest, though she as seldom shows it—and none she will think of, or have, but a gentleman—and a gentleman I have made of thee, Jin Vin, the devil cannot deny that.'

'You have made a fool of me,' said poor Jenkin, looking at the sleeve of his jacket.

'Never the worse gentleman for that,' said Dame Ursley, laughing.

'And what is worse,' said he tu his back

to her suddenly, and writhing in his chair 'you have made a rogue of me.'

'Never the worse gentleman for that neither,' said Dame Ursley, in the same tone; 'let a man bear his folly gaily and his knavery stoutly, and let me see if gravity or honesty will look him in the face now-a-days. Tut, man, it was only in the time of King Arthur or King Lud that a gentleman was held to blemish his scutcheon by a leap over the line of reason or honesty—It is the bold look, the ready hand, the fine clothes, the brisk oath, and the wild brain, that makes the gallant now-a-days.'

'I know what you [illegible] me,' said Jin Vin; 'since I have given up skittle and trap-ball for tennis and bowls, good English ale for thin Bordeaux and sour Rhenish, roast-beef and pudding for woodcocks and kickshaws,—my bat for a sword, my cap for a beaver, my forsooth for a modish oath, my Christmas-box for a dice-box, my religion for the devil's matins, and mine honest name for—Woman, I could brain thee, when I think whose advice has guided me in all this!

'Whose advice, then? whose advice, then? Speak out, thou poor, petty cloak-brusher, and say who advised thee!' retorted Dame Ursley, flushed and indignant—'Marry come up, my paltry companion—say by whose advice you have made a gamester of yourself, and a thief besides, as your words would bear—The Lord deliver us from evil!' And here Dame Ursley devoutly crossed herself.

'Hark ye, Dame Ursley Suddlechop,' said Jenkin, starting up, his dark eyes flashing with anger; 'remember I am none of your husband—and if I were, you would do well not to forget whose threshold was swept when they last rode the Skimmington * upon such another scolding jade as yourself.'

'I hope to see you ride up Holborn next,' said Dame Ursley, provoked out of all her holiday and sugar-plum expressions, 'with a nosegay at your breast and a parson at your elbow.'

'That may well be,' answered Jin Vin bitterly, 'if I walk by your counsels as I have begun by them; but before that day comes, you shall know that Jin Vin has the brisk boys of Fleet Street still at his wink.—Yes, you jade, you shall be carted for bawd and conjuror, double-dyed in grain, and bing off to Bridewell, and every brass basin betwixt the Bar and Paul's beating before you, as if the devil were banging them with his beef-hook.'

Dame Ursley coloured like scarlet, seized upon the half-emptied flask of cordial, and seemed, by her first gesture, about to hurl it at the head of her adversary; but suddenly, and as if by a strong internal effort, she checked her outrageous resentment, and, putting the bottle to its more legitimate use, filled, with wonderful composure, the two glasses, and, taking up one of them, said, with a smile, which better became her comely and jovial countenance than the fury by which it was animated the moment before—

'Here is to thee, Jin Vin, my lad, in all loving-kindness, whatever spite thou bearest to me, that have always been a mother to thee.'

Jenkin's English good-nature could not resist this forcible appeal; he took up the other glass, and lovingly pledged the dame in her cup of reconciliation, and proceeded to make a kind of grumbling apology for his own violence—

'For you know,' he said, 'it was you persuaded me to get these fine things, and go to that godless ordinary, and ruffle it with the best, and bring you home all the news; and you said, I, that was the cock of the ward, would soon be the cock of the ordinary, and would win ten times [illegible] at gleck and primero, as I used to do at put and beggar-my-neighbour—and turn up doublets with the dice, as busily as I was wont to trowl down the ninepins in the skittle-ground—and then you said I should bring you such news out of the ordinary as should make us all, when used as you knew how to use it—and now you see what is to come of it all!'

''Tis all true thou sayest, lad,' said the dame; 'but thou must have patience. Rome was not built in a day—you cannot become used to your court-suit in a month's time, any more than when you changed your long coat for a doublet and hose; and in gaming you must expect to lose as well as gain—'tis the sitting gamester sweeps the board.'

'The board has swept me, I know,' replied Jin Vin, 'and that pretty clean out.—I would that were the worst; but I owe for all this finery, and settling-day is coming on, and my master will find my accompt worse than it should be, by a score of pieces. My old father will be called in to make them good; and I—may save the hangman a labour, and do the job myself, or go the Virginia voyage.'

'Do not speak so loud, my dear boy,' said Dame Ursley; 'but tell me why you borrow not from a friend to make up your arrear. You could lend him as much when his settling-day came around.'

'No, no—I have had enough of that work,' said Vincent. 'Tunstall would lend me the money, poor fellow, an he had it; but his gentle, beggarly kindred plunder him of all, and keep him as bare as a birch at Christmas. No—my fortune may be spelt in four letters, and these read, RUIN.'

'Now hush, you simple craven,' said the dame; 'did you never hear, that when the need is highest the help is nighest? We may find aid for you yet, and sooner than you are aware of. I am sure I would never have advised you to such a course, but only you had set heart and eye on pretty Mistress Marget, and less would not serve you—and what could I do but advise you to cast your city-slough, and try your luck where folks find fortune?'

'Ay, ay—I remember your counsel well,' said Jenkin; 'I was to be introduced to her by you when I was perfect in my gallantries, and as rich as the King; and then she was to be surprised to find I was poor Jin Vin, that used to watch from matin to curfew for one glance of her eye; and now, instead of that, she has set her soul on that Scottish sparrow-hawk of a lord that won my last tester, and be cursed to him; and so I am bankrupt in love, fortune, and character, before I am out of my time, and all along of you, Mother Midnight.'

* Note T. The Skimmington.

'Do not call me out of my own name, my dear boy, Jin Vin,' answered Ursula, in a tone betwixt rage and coaxing,—'do not; because I am no saint, but a poor sinful woman, with no more patience than she needs, to carry her through a thousand crosses. And if I have done you wrong by evil counsel, I must mend it, and put you right by good advice. And for the score of pieces that must be made up at settling-day, why, here is, in a good green purse, as much as will make that matter good; and we will get old Crosspatch, the tailor, to take
your clothes; and'——

'Mother, are you serious?' said Jin Vin, unable to trust either his eyes or his ears.

'In troth am I,' said the dame; 'and will you call me Mother Midnight now, Jin Vin?'

'Mother Midnight!' exclaimed Jenkin, hugging the dame in his transport, and bestowing on her still comely cheek a hearty and not unacceptable smack, that sounded like the report of a pistol, -'Mother Midday, rather, that has risen to light me out of my troubles a mother more dear than she who bore me; for she, poor soul, only brought me into a world of sin and sorrow, and your timely aid has helped me out of the one and the other.' And the good-natured fellow threw himself back in his chair, and fairly drew his hand across his eyes.

'You would not have me be made to ride the Skimmington, then,' said the dame; 'or parade me in a cart, with all the brass basins of the ward beating the march to Bridewell before me?'

'I would sooner be carted to Tyburn myself,' replied the penitent.

'Why, then, sit up like a man, and wipe thine eyes; and if thou art pleased with what I have done, I will show thee how thou mayest requite me in the highest degree.'

'How?' said Jenkin Vincent, sitting straight up in his chair - 'You would have me, then, do you some service for this friendship of yours?'

'Ay, marry would I,' said Dame Ursley; 'for you are to know, that though I am right glad to stead you with it, this gold is not mine, but was placed in my hands in order to find a trusty agent, for a certain purpose; and so——But what's the matter with you?—are you fool enough to be angry because you cannot get a purse of gold for nothing? I would I knew where such were to be come by. I never could find them lying in my road, I promise you.'

'No, no, dame,' said poor Jenkin, 'it is not for that; for, look you, I would rather work these ten bones to the knuckles, and live by my labour; but'—— (and here he paused).

'But what, man?' said Dame Ursley. 'You are willing to work for what you want; and yet, when I offer you gold for the winning, you look on me as the devil looks over Lincoln.'

'It is ill talking of the devil, mother,' said Jenkin. 'I had him even now in my head—for, look you, I am at that pass, when they say he will appear to wretched ruined creatures, and proffer them gold for the fee-simple of their salvation. But I have been trying these two days to bring my mind strongly up to the thought, that I will rather sit down in shame, and sin, and sorrow, as I am like to do, than hold on ill courses, to get rid of my present straits; and so, take care, Dame Ursula, how you tempt me to break such a good resolution.'

'I tempt you to nothing, young man,' answered Ursula; 'and as I perceive you are too wilful to be wise, I will e'en put my purse in my pocket, and look out for some one that will work my turn with better will, and more thankfulness. And you may go your own course,—break your indenture, ruin your father, lose your character, and bid pretty Mistress Margaret farewell, for ever and a day.'

'Stay, stay,' said Jenkin; 'the woman is in as [redacted] a brown baker when his oven is overheated. [redacted] hear that which you have to propose to me.'

'Why, after all, it is but to get a gentleman of rank and fortune, who is in trouble, carried in secret down the river as far as the Isle of Dogs, or somewhere thereabout, where he may lie concealed until he can escape abroad. I know thou knowest every place by the river's side as well as the devil knows an usurer, or the beggar knows his dish.'

'A plague on your similes, dame,' replied the apprentice; 'for the devil gave me that knowledge, and beggary may be the end on't.—But what has this gentleman done, that he should need to be under hiding? No Papist, I hope—no Catesby and Piercy business—no Gunpowder Plot?'

'Fy, fy!—what do you take me for?' said Dame Ursula. 'I am as good a churchwoman as the parson's wife, save that necessary business will not allow me to go there oftener than on Christmas Day, Heaven help me!—No, no—this is no popish matter. The gentleman hath but struck another in the Park'——

'Ha! what?' said Vincent, interrupting her with a start.

'Ay, ay, I see you guess whom I mean. It is even he we have spoken of so often—just Lord Glenvarloch, and no one else.'

Vincent sprung from his seat, and traversed the room with rapid and disorderly steps.

'There, there it is now - you are always ice or gunpowder. You sit in the great leathern arm-chair, as quiet as a rocket hangs upon the frame in a rejoicing-night, till the match be fired, and then, whizz! you are in the third heaven, beyond the reach of the human voice, eye, or brain.—When you have wearied yourself with padding to and fro across the room, will you tell me your determination, for time presses? Will you aid me in this matter, or not?'

'No—no—no—a thousand times no,' replied Jenkin. 'Have you not confessed to me that Margaret loves him?'

'Ay,' answered the dame, 'that she thinks she does; but that will not last long.'

'And have I not told you but this instant,' replied Jenkin, 'that it was this same Glenvarloch that rooked me, at the ordinary, of every penny I had, and made a knave of me to boot, by gaining more than was my own?—O, that cursed gold, which Shortyard, the mercer, paid me that morning on account, for mending the clock of Saint Stephen's! If I had not, by ill chance, had that about me, I could but have beggared my purse, without blemishing my honesty; and, after I had been rooked of all the

rest amongst them, I must needs risk the last five pieces with that shark among the minnows!'

'Granted,' said Dame Ursula. 'All this I know; and I own that, as Lord Glenvarloch was the last you played with, you have a right to charge your ruin on his head. Moreover, I admit, as already said, that Margaret has made him your rival. Yet surely, now he is in danger to lose his hand, it is not a time to remember all this?'

'By my faith, but it is, though,' said the young citizen. 'Lose his hand, indeed! They may take his head, for what I care; his head and hand have made me a miserable wretch!'

'Now, were it not better, my prince of flat-caps,' said Dame Ursula, 'that matters were squared between you; and that, through means of the same Scottish lord, who has, as you say, deprived you of your money and your mistress, you should in a short time recover both?'

'And how can your wisdom come to that conclusion, dame?' said the apprentice. 'My money, indeed, I can conceive—that is, if I comply with your proposal; but—my pretty Margaret!—how serving this lord, whom she has set her nonsensical head upon, can do me good with her, is far beyond my conception.'

'That is because, in simple phrase,' said Dame Ursula, 'thou knowest no more of a woman's heart than doth a Norfolk gosling. Look you, man. Were I to report to Mistress Marget that the young lord has miscarried through thy lack of courtesy in refusing to help him, why, then, thou wert odious to her for ever. She will loathe thee as she will loathe the very cook who is to strike off Glenvarloch's hand with his cleaver—and then she will be yet more fixed in her affections towards this lord. London will hear of nothing but him—speak of nothing but him—think of nothing but him, for three weeks at least, and all that outcry will serve to keep him uppermost in her mind; for nothing pleases a girl so much as to bear relation to any one who is the talk of the whole world around her. Then, if he suffer the sentence of the law, it is a chance if she ever forgets him. I saw that handsome, proper young gentleman, Babington, suffer in the Queen's time myself, and though I was then but a girl, he was in my head for a year after he was hanged. But, above all, pardoned or punished, Glenvarloch will probably remain in London, and his presence will keep up the silly girl's nonsensical fancy about him. Whereas, if he escapes'——

'Ay, show me how that is to avail me!' said Jenkin.

'If he escapes,' said the dame, resuming her argument, 'he must resign the court for years, if not for life; and you know the old saying, "out of sight, and out of mind."'

'True—most true,' said Jenkin; 'spoken like an oracle, most wise Ursula.'

'Ay, ay, I knew you would hear reason at last,' said the wily dame: 'and then, when this said lord is off and away for once and for ever, who, I pray you, is to be pretty Meg's confidential person, and who is to fill up the void in her affections?—why, who but thou, thou pearl of 'prentices! And then you will have overcome your own inclinations to comply with hers, and every woman is sensible of that—and you will have run some risk, too, in carrying her desires into effect—and what is it that woman likes better than bravery, and devotion to her will? Then you have her secret, and she must treat you with favour and observance, and repose confidence in you, and hold private intercourse with you, till she weeps with one eye for the absent lover whom she is never to see again, and blinks with the other kindly upon him who is in presence; and if you know not how to improve the relation in which you stand with her, you are not the brisk lively lad that all the world takes you for.—Said I well?'

'You have spoken like an empress, most mighty Ursula,' said Jenkin Vincent; 'and your will shall be obeyed.'

'You know Alsatia well?' continued his tutoress.

'Well enough, well enough,' replied he, with a nod; 'I have heard the dice rattle there in my day, before I must set up for gentleman, and go among the gallants at the Shavaleer Bojo's, as they call him,—the worse rookery of the two, though the feathers are the gayest.'

'And they will have a respect for thee yonder, I warrant?'

'Ay, ay,' replied Vin, 'when I am got into my fustian doublet again, with my bit of a trunnion under my arm, I can walk Alsatia at midnight as I could do that there Fleet Street in mid-day—they will not one of them swagger with the prince of 'prentices, and the king of clubs—they know I could bring every tall boy in the ward down upon them.'

'And you know all the watermen, and so forth?'

'Can converse with every sculler in his own language, from Richmond to Gravesend, and know all the water-cocks, from John Taylor the Poet to little Grigg the Grinner, who never pulls but he shows all his teeth from ear to ear, as if he were grimacing through a horse-collar.'

'And you can take any dress or character upon you well, such as a waterman's, a butcher's, a foot soldier's,' continued Ursula, 'or the like?'

'Not such a mummer as I am within the walls, and thou knowest that well enough, dame,' replied the apprentice. 'I can touch the players themselves, at the Ball and at the Fortune, for presenting anything except a gentleman. Take but this d——d skin of frippery off me, which I think the devil stuck me into, and you shall put me into nothing else that I will not become as if I were born to it.'

'Well, we will talk of your transmutation by and by,' said the dame, 'and find you clothes withal, and money besides; for it will take a good deal to carry the thing handsomely through.'

'But where is that money to come from, dame?' said Jenkin; 'there is a question I would fain have answered before I touch it.'

'Why, what a fool art thou to ask such a question! Suppose I am content to advance it to please young madam, what is the harm, then?'

'I will suppose no such thing,' said Jenkin hastily; 'I know that you, dame, have no gold to spare, and maybe would not spare it if you

had—so that cock will not crow. It must be from Margaret herself.'

'Well, thou suspicious animal, and what if it were?' said Ursula.

'Only this,' replied Jenkin, 'that I will presently to her, and learn if she has come fairly by so much ready money; for sooner than connive at her getting it by any indirection, I would hang myself at once. It is enough what I have done myself, no need to engage poor Margaret in such villany—I'll to her, and tell her of the danger—I will, by Heaven!'

'You are mad to think of it,' said Dame Suddlechop, considerably alarmed—'hear me but a moment. I know not precisely from whom she got the money; but sure I am that she obtained it at her god-father's.'

'Why, Master George Heriot is not returned from France,' said Jenkin.

'No,' replied Ursula; 'but Dame Judith is at home—and the strange lady whom they call Master Heriot's ghost—she never goes abroad.'

'It is very true, Dame Suddlechop,' said Jenkin; 'and I believe you have guessed right—they say that lady has coin at will: and if Margaret can get a handful of fairy gold, why, she is free to throw it away at will.'

'Ah, Jin Vin,' said the dame, reducing her voice almost to a whisper, 'we should not want gold at will neither, could we but read the riddle of that lady!'

'They may read it that list,' said Jenkin, 'I'll never pry into what concerns me not. Master George Heriot is a worthy and brave citizen, and an honour to London, and has a right to manage his own household as he likes best.—There was once a talk of rabbling him the fifth of November before the last, because they said he kept a nunnery in his house, like old Lady Foljambe; but Master George is well loved among the 'prentices, and we got so many brisk boys of us together, as should have rabbled the rabble, had they had but the heart to rise.'

'Well, let that pass,' said Ursula; 'and now, tell me how you will manage to be absent from shop a day or two, for you must think that this matter will not be ended sooner.'

'Why, as to that, I can say nothing,' said Jenkin; 'I have always served duly and truly: I have no heart to play truant, and cheat my master of his time as well as his money.'

'Nay, but the point is to get back his money for him,' said Ursula, 'which he is not likely to see on other conditions. Could you not ask leave to go down to your uncle in Essex for two or three days? He may be ill, you know.'

'Why, if I must, I must,' said Jenkin, with a heavy sigh; 'but I will not be lightly caught treading these dark and crooked paths again.'

'Hush thee, then,' said the dame, 'and get leave for this very evening; and come back hither, and I will introduce you to another implement, who must be employed in the matter.—Stay, stay!—the lad is mazed—you would not go into your master's shop in that guise, surely? Your trunk is in the matted chamber with your 'prentice things—go and put them on as fast as you can.'

'I think I am bewitched,' said Jenkin, giving a glance towards his dress, 'or that these fool's trappings have made as great an ass of me as of many I have seen wear them; but let me once be rid of the harness, and if you catch me putting it on again, I will give you leave to sell me to a gipsy, to carry pots, pans, and beggars' bantlings, all the rest of my life.'

So saying, he retired to change his apparel.

CHAPTER XXII.

[illegible] will not do the work—Chance sends the breeze; [illegible] slumber [illegible]
But if the pilot slum[illegible]elm,
The very wind that wafts us towards the port
May dash us on the shelves.—The steersman's part is vigilance,
Blow it or rough or smooth. OLD PLAY.

WE left Nigel, whose fortunes we are bound to trace by the engagement contracted in our title-page, sad and solitary in the mansion of Trapbois the usurer, having just received a letter instead of a visit from his friend the Templar, stating reasons why he could not at that time come to see him in Alsatia. So that it appeared his intercourse with the better and more respectable class of society was for the present entirely cut off. This was a melancholy, and, to a proud mind like that of Nigel, a degrading reflection.

He went to the window of his apartment, and found the street enveloped in one of those thick, dingy, yellow-coloured fogs which often invest the lower part of London and Westminster. Amid the darkness, dense and palpable, were seen to wander like phantoms a reveller or two, whom the morning had surprised where the evening left them; and who now, with tottering steps, and by an instinct which intoxication could not wholly overcome, were groping the way to their own homes, to convert day into night, for the purpose of sleeping off the debauch which had turned night into day. Although it was broad day in the other parts of the city, it was scarce dawn yet in Alsatia; and none of the sounds of industry or occupation were there heard which had long before aroused the slumberers in every other quarter. The prospect was too tiresome and disagreeable to detain Lord Glenvarloch at his station, so, turning from the window, he examined with more interest the furniture and appearance of the apartment which he tenanted.

Much of it had been in its time rich and curious—there was a huge four-post bed, with as much carved oak about it as would have made the head of a man-of-war, and tapestry hangings ample enough to have been her sails. There was a huge mirror with a massy frame of gilt brass-work, which was of Venetian manufacture, and must have been worth a considerable sum before it received a tremendous crack, which, traversing it from one corner to the other, bore the same proportion to the surface that the Nile bears to the map of Egypt. The chairs were of different forms and shapes, some had been carved, some gilded, some covered with damasked leather, some with embroidered work, but all were damaged and worm-eaten. There was a picture of Susanna and the Elders over the chimney-piece, which might have been accounted

a choice piece, had not the rats made free with the chaste fair one's nose, and with the beard of one of her reverend admirers.

In a word, all that Lord Glenvarloch saw seemed to have been articles carried off by appraisement or distress, or bought as pennyworths at some obscure broker's, and huddled together in the apartment as in a saleroom, without regard to taste or congruity.

The place appeared to Nigel to resemble the houses near the sea-coast, which are too often furnished with the spoils of wrecked vessels, as this was probably fitted up with the spoils of ruined profligates. 'Many a stout ship has struck among the breakers,' thought Lord Glenvarloch, 'though my wreck will add little to the profits of the spoiler.'

He was chiefly interested in the state of the grate, a huge assemblage of rusted iron bars which stood in the chimney, unequally supported by three brazen feet, moulded into the form of lion's claws, while the fourth, which had been bent by an accident, seemed proudly uplifted as if to paw the ground; or as if the whole article had nourished the ambitious purpose of pacing forth into the middle of the apartment, and had one foot ready raised for the journey. A smile passed over Nigel's face as this fantastic idea presented itself to his fancy. 'I must stop its march, however,' he thought, 'for this morning is chill and raw enough to demand some fire.'

He called accordingly, from the top of a large staircase, with a heavy oaken balustrade, which gave access to his own and other apartments, for the house was old and of considerable size; but, receiving no answer to his repeated summons, he was compelled to go in search of some one who might accommodate him with what he wanted.

Nigel had, according to the fashion of the old world in Scotland, received an education which might, in most particulars, be termed simple, hardy, and unostentatious; but he had, nevertheless, been accustomed to much personal deference, and to the constant attendance and ministry of one or more domestics. This was the universal custom in Scotland, where wages were next to nothing, and where, indeed, a man of title or influence might have as many attendants as he pleased, for the mere expense of food, clothes, and countenance. Nigel was therefore mortified and displeased when he found himself without notice or attendance; and the more dissatisfied, because he was at the same time angry with himself for suffering such a trifle to trouble him at all, amongst matters of more deep concernment. 'There must surely be some servants in so large a house as this,' said he, as he wandered over the place, through which he was conducted by a passage which branched off from the gallery. As he went on, he tried the entrance to several apartments, some of which he found were locked and others unfurnished, all apparently unoccupied; so that at length he returned to the staircase, and resolved to make his way down to the lower part of the house, where he supposed he must at least find the old gentleman and his ill-favoured daughter. With this purpose he first made his entrance into a little low, dark parlour, containing a well-worn leathern easy-chair, before which stood a pair of slippers, while on the left side rested a crutch-handled staff; an oaken table stood before it, and supported a huge desk clamped with iron, and a massive pewter inkstand. Around the apartment were shelves, cabinets, and other places convenient for depositing papers. A sword, musketoon, and a pair of pistols hung over the chimney, in ostentatious display, as if to intimate that the proprietor would be prompt in the defence of his premises.

'That must be the usurer's den,' thought Nigel; and he was about to call aloud, when the old man, awakened even by the slightest noise, for avarice seldom sleeps sound, soon was heard from the inner room, speaking in a voice of irritability, rendered more tremulous by his morning cough.

'Ugh, ugh, ugh—who is there? I say—ugh, ugh—who is there? Why, Martha—ugh, ugh—Martha Trapbois—here be thieves in the house, and they will not speak to me—why, Martha!—thieves, thieves—ugh, ugh, ugh!'

Nigel endeavoured to explain, but the idea of thieves had taken possession of the old man's pineal gland, and he kept coughing and screaming, and screaming and coughing, until the gracious Martha entered the apartment, and, having first outscreamed her father, in order to convince him that there was no danger, and to assure him that the intruder was their new lodger, and having as often heard her sire ejaculate—'Hold him fast—ugh, ugh—hold him fast till I come,' she at length succeeded in silencing his fears and his clamour, and then coldly and dryly asked Lord Glenvarloch what he wanted in her father's apartment.

Her lodger had, in the meantime, leisure to contemplate her appearance, which did not by any means improve the idea he had formed of it by candlelight on the preceding evening. She was dressed in what was called a Queen Mary's ruff and farthingale; not the falling ruff with which the unfortunate Mary of Scotland is usually painted, but that which, with more than Spanish stiffness, surrounded the throat, and set off the morose head, of her fierce namesake, of Smithfield memory. This antiquated dress assorted well with the faded complexion, grey eyes, thin lips, and austere visage of the antiquated maiden, which was, moreover, enhanced by a black hood, worn as her head-gear, carefully disposed so as to prevent any of her hair from escaping to view, probably because the simplicity of the period knew no art of disguising the colour with which time had begun to grizzle her tresses. Her figure was tall, thin, and flat, with skinny arms and hands, and feet of the larger size, cased in huge high-heeled shoes, which added height to a stature already ungainly. Apparently some art had been used by the tailor to conceal a slight defect of shape, occasioned by the accidental elevation of one shoulder above the other; but the praiseworthy efforts of the ingenious mechanic had only succeeded in calling the attention of the observer to his benevolent purpose, without demonstrating that he had been able to achieve it.

Such was Mistress Martha Trapbois, whose dry

'What were you seeking here, sir?' fell again, and with reiterated sharpness, on the ear of Nigel, as he gazed upon her presence, and compared it internally to one of the faded and grim figures in the old tapestry which adorned his bedstead. It was, however, necessary to reply, and he answered, that he came in search of the servants, as he desired to have a fire kindled in his apartment on account of the rawness of the morning.

'The woman who does our charwork,' answered Mistress Martha, 'comes at [illegible] —if you want fire sooner, there are faggots and a bucket of sea-coal in the stone-closet at the head of the stair—and there is a flint and steel on the upper shelf—you can light fire for yourself if you will.'

'No—no—no, Martha,' ejaculated her father, who, having donned his rusty tunic, with his hose all ungirt, and his feet slipshod, hastily came out of the inner apartment, with his mind probably full of robbers, for he had a naked rapier in his hand, which still looked formidable, though rust had somewhat marred its shine. What he had heard at entrance about lighting a fire, had changed, however, the current of his ideas. 'No—no—no,' he cried, and each negative was more emphatic than its predecessor,—'The gentleman shall not have the trouble to put on a fire—ugh - ugh. I'll put it on myself, for a con-si-de-ra-tion.'

This last word was a favourite expression with the old gentleman, which he pronounced in a peculiar manner, gasping it out syllable by syllable, and laying a strong emphasis upon the last. It was, indeed, a sort of protecting clause, by which he guarded himself against all inconveniences attendant on the rash habit of offering service or civility of any kind, the which, when hastily snapped at by those to whom they are uttered, give the profferer sometimes room to repent his promptitude.

'For shame, father,' said Martha; 'that must not be. Master Grahame will kindle his own fire, or wait till the charwoman comes to do it for him, just as likes him best.'

'No, child - no, child. Child Martha, no,' reiterated the old miser—'no charwoman shall ever touch a grate in my house; they put—ugh, ugh—the faggot uppermost, and so the coal kindles not, and the flame goes up the chimney, and wood and heat are both thrown away. Now, I will lay it properly for the gentleman, for a consideration, so that it shall last - ugh, ugh—last the whole day.' Here his vehemence increased his cough so violently, that Nigel could only, from a scattered word here and there, comprehend that it was a recommendation to his daughter to remove the poker and tongs from the stranger's fireside, with an assurance that, when necessary, his landlord would be in attendance to adjust it himself, 'for a consideration.'

Martha paid as little attention to the old man's injunctions as a predominant dame gives to those of a henpecked husband. She only repeated, in a deeper and more emphatic tone of censure,—'For shame, father—for shame!' then, turning to her guest, said, with her usual ungraciousness of manner,—'Master Grahame—it is best to be plain with you at first. My father is an old, a very old man, and his wits, as you may see, are somewhat weakened—though I would not advise you to make a bargain with him, else you may find them too sharp for your own. For myself, I am a lone woman, and, to say truth, care little to see or converse with any one. If you can be satisfied with house-room, shelter, and safety, it will be your own fault if you have them not, and they are not always to be found in this unhappy quarter. But if you seek deferential observance and attendance, I [illegible] you at once you will not find them here.'

'I am [illegible] to thrust myself upon acquaintance, madam, or to give trouble,' said the guest; 'nevertheless I shall need the assistance of a domestic to assist me to dress—Perhaps you can recommend me to such?'

'Yes, to twenty,' answered Mistress Martha, 'who will pick your purse while they tie your points, and cut your throat while they smooth your pillow.'

'I will be his servant myself,' said the old man, whose intellect, for a moment distanced, had again, in some measure, got up with the conversation. 'I will brush his cloak—ugh, ugh—and tie his points—ugh, ugh—and clean his shoes—ugh—and run on his errands with speed and safety—ugh, ugh, ugh, ugh—for a consideration.'

'Good-morrow to you, sir,' said Martha to Nigel, in a tone of direct and positive dismissal. 'It cannot be agreeable to a daughter that a stranger should hear her father speak thus. If you be really a gentleman, you will retire to your own apartment.'

'I will not delay a moment,' said Nigel respectfully, for he was sensible that circumstances palliated the woman's rudeness. 'I would but ask you, if seriously there can be danger in procuring the assistance of a serving-man in this place?'

'Young gentleman,' said Martha, 'you must know little of Whitefriars to ask the question. We live alone in this house, and seldom has a stranger entered it; nor should you, to be plain, had my will been consulted. Look at the door—see if that of a castle can be better secured; the windows of the first floor are grated on the outside, and within, look to these shutters.'

She pulled one of them aside, and showed a ponderous apparatus of bolts and chains for securing the window-shutters, while her father, pressing to her side, seized her gown with a trembling hand, and said, in a low whisper, 'Show not the trick of locking and undoing them. Show him not the trick on't, Martha—ugh, ugh—on *no* consideration.' Martha went on, without paying him any attention.

'And yet, young gentleman, we have been more than once like to find all these defences too weak to protect our lives; such an evil effect on the wicked generation around us hath been made by the unhappy report of my poor father's wealth.'

'Say nothing of that, housewife,' said the miser, his irritability increased by the very supposition of his being wealthy—'Say nothing of that, or I will beat thee, housewife—beat thee with my staff, for fetching and carrying lies that will procure our throats to be cut at

last—ugh, ugh.—I am but a poor man,' he continued, turning to Nigel—'a very poor man, that am willing to do any honest turn upon earth, for a modest consideration.'

'I therefore warn you of the life you must lead, young gentleman,' said Martha; 'the poor woman who does the char-work will assist you so far as is in her power, but the wise man is his own best servant and assistant.'

'It is a lesson you have taught me, madam, and I thank you for it—I will assuredly study it at leisure.'

'You will do well,' said [illegible], as you seem thankful [illegible] I, though I am no professed counsellor of others, will give you more. Make no intimacy with any one in Whitefriars—borrow no money, on any score, especially from my father, for, dotard as he seems, he will make an ass of you. Last, and best of all, stay here not an instant longer than you can help it. Farewell, sir.'

'A gnarled tree may bear good fruit, and a harsh nature may give good counsel,' thought the Lord of Glenvarloch, as he retreated to his own apartment, where the same reflection occurred to him again and again, while, unable as yet to reconcile himself to the thoughts of becoming his own fire-maker, he walked up and down his bedroom, to warm himself by exercise.

At length his meditations arranged themselves in the following soliloquy—by which expression I beg leave to observe, once for all, that I do not mean that Nigel literally said aloud, with his bodily organs, the words which follow in inverted commas (while pacing the room by himself), but that I myself choose to present to my dearest reader the picture of my hero's mind, his reflections and resolutions, in the form of a speech, rather than in that of a narrative. In other words, I have put his thoughts into language; and this I conceive to be the purpose of the soliloquy upon the stage as well as in the closet, being at once the most natural, and perhaps the only way of communicating to the spectator what is supposed to be passing in the bosom of the scenic personage. There are no such soliloquies in nature, it is true; but, unless they were received as a conventional medium of communication betwixt the poet and the audience, we should reduce dramatic authors to the recipe of Master Puff, who makes Lord Burleigh intimate a long train of political reasoning to the audience, by one comprehensive shake of his noddle. In narrative, no doubt, the writer has the alternative of telling that his personages thought so and so, inferred thus and thus, and arrived at such and such a conclusion; but the soliloquy is a more concise and spirited mode of communicating the same information; and therefore thus communed, or thus might have communed, the Lord of Glenvarloch with his own mind.

'She is right, and has taught me a lesson I will profit by. I have been, through my whole life, one who leant upon others for that assistance which it is more truly noble to derive from my own exertions. I am ashamed of feeling the paltry inconvenience, which long habit has led me to annex to the want of a servant's assistance—I am ashamed of that; but far, far more am I ashamed to have suffered the same habit of throwing my own burden on others, to render me, since I came to this city, a mere victim of those events, which I have never even attempted to influence—a thing never acting but perpetually acted upon—protected by one friend, deceived by another; but in the advantage which I received from the one, and the evil I have sustained from the other, as passive and helpless as a boat that drifts without oar or rudder at the mercy of the winds and waves. I became a courtier because [illegible] willed it—a gamester because Dalgarno so contrived it—an Alsatian because Lowestoffe so willed it. Whatever of good or bad has befallen me, hath arisen out of the agency of others, not from my own. My father's son must no longer hold this facile and puerile course. Live or die, sink or swim, Nigel Olifaunt, from this moment, shall owe his safety, success, and honour to his own exertions, or shall fall with the credit of having at least exerted his own free agency. I will write it down in my tablets, in her very words:—"The wise man is his own best assistant."'

He had just put his tablets in his pocket, when the old charwoman, who, to add to her efficiency, was sadly crippled by rheumatism, hobbled into the room, to try if she could gain a small gratification by waiting on the stranger. She readily undertook to get Lord Glenvarloch's breakfast, and, as there was an eating-house at the next door, she succeeded in a shorter time than Nigel had augured.

As his solitary meal was finished, one of the Temple porters, or inferior officers, was announced, as seeking Master Grahame on the part of his friend, Master Lowestoffe; and, being admitted by the old woman to his apartment, he delivered to Nigel a small mail-trunk, with the clothes he had desired should be sent to him, and then, with more mystery, put into his hand a casket, or strong box, which he carefully concealed beneath his cloak. 'I am glad to be rid on't,' said the fellow, as he placed it on the table.

'Why, it is surely not so very heavy,' answered Nigel, 'and you are a stout young man.'

'Ay, sir,' replied the fellow; 'but Samson himself would not have carried such a matter safely through Alsatia, had the lads of the Huff known what it was. Please to look into it, sir, and see all is right—I am an honest fellow, and it comes safe out of my hands. How long it may remain so afterwards, will depend on your own care. I would not my good name were to suffer by any after clap.'

To satisfy the scruples of the messenger, Lord Glenvarloch opened the casket in his presence, and saw that his small stock of money, with two or three valuable papers which it contained, and particularly the original sign-manual which the king had granted in his favour, were in the same order in which he had left them. At the man's further instance, he availed himself of the writing materials which were in the casket, in order to send a line to Master Lowestoffe, declaring that his property had reached him in safety. He added some grateful acknowledgments for Lowestoffe's services, and just as he was sealing and delivering his billet to the messenger, his aged landlord entered the apartment. His threadbare suit of

black clothes was now somewhat better arranged than they had been in the dishabille of his first appearance, and his nerves and intellects seemed to be less fluttered; for, without much coughing or hesitation, he invited Nigel to partake of a morning draught of wholesome single ale, which he brought in a large leathern tankard, or black-jack, carried in the one hand, while the other stirred it round with a sprig of rosemary, to give it, as the old man said, a flavour.

Nigel declined the courteous proffer, and intimated by his manner, while he showed that he desired no intrusion on the privacy of his own apartment; which, indeed, he was the more entitled to maintain, considering the cold reception he had that morning met with when straying from its precincts into those of his landlord. But the open casket contained matter, or rather metal, so attractive to old Trapbois, that he remained fixed, like a setting-dog at a dead point, his nose advanced, and one hand expanded like the lifted forepaw by which that sagacious quadruped sometimes indicates that it is a hare which he has in the wind. Nigel was about to break the charm which had thus arrested old Trapbois, by shutting the lid of the casket, when his attention was withdrawn from him by the question of the messenger, who, holding out the letter, asked whether he was to leave it at Master Lowestoffe's chambers in the Temple, or carry it to the Marshalsea.

'The Marshalsea?' repeated Lord Glenvarloch; 'what of the Marshalsea?' *

'Why, sir,' said the man, 'the poor gentleman is laid up there in lavender, because, they say, his own kind heart led him to scald his fingers with another man's broth.'

Nigel hastily snatched back the letter, broke the seal, joined to the contents his earnest entreaty that he might be instantly acquainted with the cause of his confinement, and added, that, if it arose out of his own unhappy affair, it would be of brief duration, since he had, even before hearing of a reason which so peremptorily demanded that he should surrender himself, adopted the resolution to do so, as the manliest and most proper course which his ill-fortune and imprudence had left in his own power. He therefore conjured Master Lowestoffe to have no delicacy upon this score, but, since his surrender was what he had determined upon as a sacrifice due to his own character, that he would have the frankness to mention in what manner it could be best arranged, so as to extricate him, Lowestoffe, from the restraint to which the writer could not but fear his friend had been subjected, on account of the generous interest which he had taken in his concerns. The letter concluded, that the writer would suffer twenty-four hours to elapse in expectation of hearing from him, and, at the end of that period, was determined to put his purpose in execution. He delivered the billet to the messenger, and, enforcing his request with a piece of money, urged him, without a moment's delay, to convey it to the hands of Master Lowestoffe.

* [This penitentiary was under the control of the Royal Knight Marshal, whose jurisdiction extended twelve miles round Whitehall, the city of London excepted. It stood near Saint George's Church in the Borough.]

'I—I—I—will carry it to him myself,' said the old usurer, 'for half the consideration.'

The man, who heard this attempt to take his duty and perquisites over his head, lost no time in pocketing the money, and departed on his errand as fast as he could.

'Master Trapbois,' said Nigel, addressing the old man somewhat impatiently, 'had you any particular commands for me?'

'I—I—came to see if you rested well,' answered the old man; 'and—if I could do anything to serve you, on any consideration.'

'I thank you,' said Lord Glenvarloch—'I thank you;' [but ere he] could say more, a heavy footstep was heard on the stairs.

'My God!' exclaimed the old man, starting up—'Why, Dorothy—charwoman—why, daughter,—draw bolt, I say, housewives—the door hath been left a-latch!'

The door of the chamber opened wide, and in strutted the portly bulk of the military hero whom Nigel had on the preceding evening in vain endeavoured to recognise.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Swashbuckler. Billoe's the word—
Parrot. It hath been spoke too often,
The spell hath lost it charm. I tell thee, friend,
The meanest cur that trots the street will turn
And snarl against your proffer'd bastinado.
Swashbuckler. 'Tis art shall do it, then—I will dose the mongrels—
Or, in plain terms, I'd use the private knife
'Stead of the brandish'd falchion.

OLD PLAY.

The noble Captain Colepepper, or Peppercull, for he was known by both these names, and some others besides, had a martial and a swashing exterior, which, on the present occasion, was rendered yet more peculiar by a patch covering his left eye and a part of his cheek. The sleeves of his thickset velvet jerkin were polished and shone with grease; his buff gloves had huge tops, which reached almost to the elbow; his sword-belt, of the same materials, extended its breadth from his haunch bone to his small-ribs, and supported on the one side his large black-hilted back-sword, on the other a dagger of like proportions. He paid his compliments to Nigel with that air of predetermined effrontery, which announces that it will not be repelled by any coldness of reception, asked Trapbois how he did, by the familiar title of old Peter Pillory, and then, seizing upon the black-jack, emptied it off at a draught, to the health of the last and youngest freeman of Alsatia, the noble and loving Master Nigel Grahame.

When he had set down the empty pitcher and drawn his breath, he began to criticise the liquor which it had lately contained.—'Sufficient single beer, old Pillory—and, as I take it, brewed at the rate of a nutshell of malt to a butt of Thames—as dead as a corpse, too, and yet it went hissing down my throat—bubbling, by Jove, like water upon hot iron.—You left us early, noble Master Grahame, but, good faith, we had a carouse to your honour—we heard butt ring hollow ere we parted; we were as loving as

inkle-weavers—we fought, too, to finish off the gawdy. I bear some marks of the parson about me, you see—a note of the sermon or so, which should have been addressed to my ear, but missed its mark, and reached my left eye. The man of God bears my sign-manual too, but the Duke made us friends again, and it cost me more sack than I could carry, and all the Rhenish to boot, to pledge the seer in the way of love and reconciliation.—But, Caracco! 'tis a vile old canting slave for all that, whom I will one day beat out of his devil's livery into all the colours of the rainb[illegible] —Basta!—Said I well, old [illegible] where is thy daughter, man? [illegible]ys she to my suit? —'tis an honest one—wilt have a soldier for thy son-in-law, old Pillory, to mingle the soul of martial honour with thy thieving, miching, petty-larceny blood, as men put bold brandy into muddy ale!'

'My daughter receives not company so early, noble captain,' said the usurer, and concluded his speech with a dry, emphatical 'ugh, ugh.'

'What, upon no con-si-de-ra-tion?' said the captain; 'and wherefore not, old Truepenny? she has not much time to lose in driving her bargain, methinks.'

'Captain,' said Trapbois, 'I was upon some little business with our noble friend here, Master Nigel Green—ugh, ugh, ugh'——

'And you would have me gone, I warrant you?' answered the bully; 'but patience, old Pillory, thine hour is not yet come, man. You see,' he said, pointing to the casket, 'that noble Master Grahame, whom you call Green, has got the *decuses* and the *smelts*.'

'Which you would willingly rid him of, ha! ha!—ugh, ugh,' answered the usurer, 'if you knew how—but, lack-a-day! thou art one of those that come out for wool, and art sure to go home shorn. Why now, but that I am sworn against laying of wagers, I would risk some consideration that this honest guest of mine sends thee home penniless, if thou darest venture with him—ugh, ugh—at any game which gentlemen play at.'

'Marry, thou hast me on the hip there, thou old miserly cony catcher!' answered the captain, taking a bale of dice from the sleeve of his coat; 'I must always keep company with these damnable doctors, and they have made me every baby's cully, and purged my purse into an atrophy; but never mind, it passes the time as well as aught else.—How say you, Master Grahame?'

The fellow paused; but even the extremity of his impudence could hardly withstand the cold look of utter contempt with which Nigel received his proposal, returning it with a simple, 'I only play where I know my company, and never in the morning.'

'Cards may be more agreeable,' said Captain Colepepper; 'and, for knowing your company, here is honest old Pillory will tell you Jack Colepepper plays as truly on the square as e'er a man that trowled a die. Men talk of high and low dice, Fulhams and bristles, topping, knapping, slurring, stabbing, and a hundred ways of rooking besides; but I troll me like a rasher of bacon, if I could ever learn a trick on 'em!'

'You have got the vocabulary perfect, sir, at the least,' said Nigel, in the same cold tone.

'Yes, by mine honour have I,' returned the Hector; 'they are phrases that a gentleman learns about town.—But perhaps you would like a set at tennis, or a game at balloon?—we have an indifferent good court hard by here, and a set of as gentleman-like blades as ever banged leather against brick and mortar.'

'I beg to be excused at present,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'and, to be plain, among the valuable privileges your society has conferred on me, I hope I may reckon that of being private in my [illegible] when I have a mind.'

'Your humble servant, sir,' said the captain; 'and I thank you for your civility.—Jack Colepepper can have enough of company, and thrusts himself on no one.—But perhaps you will like to make a match at skittles?'

'I am by no means that way disposed,' replied the young nobleman.

'Or to leap a flea—run a snail—match a wherry, eh?'

'No—I will do none of these,' answered Nigel.

Here the old man, who had been watching with his little peery eyes, pulled the bulky Hector by the skirt, and whispered, 'Do not vapour him the huff, it will not pass—let the trout play, he will rise to the hook presently.'

But the bully, confiding in his own strength, and probably mistaking for timidity the patient scorn with which Nigel received his proposals, incited also by the open casket, began to assume a louder and more threatening tone. He drew himself up, bent his brows, assumed a look of professional ferocity, and continued, 'In Alsatia, look ye, a man must be neighbourly and companionable. Zouns! sir, we would slit any nose that was turned up at us honest fellows.—Ay, sir, we would slit it up to the gristle, though it had smelt nothing all its life but musk, ambergris, and court-scented water. Rabbit me, I am a soldier, and care no more for a lord than a lamplighter.'

'Are you seeking a quarrel, sir?' said Nigel calmly, having in truth no desire to engage himself in a discreditable broil in such a place, and with such a character.

'Quarrel, sir?' said the captain; 'I am not seeking a quarrel, though I care not how soon I find one. Only I wish you to understand you must be neighbourly, that's all. What if we should go over the water to the garden, and see a bull banked this fine morning—'sdeath, will you do nothing?'

'Something I am strangely tempted to do at this moment,' said Nigel.

'Videlicet,' said Colepepper, with a swaggering air, 'let us hear the temptation.'

'I am tempted to throw you headlong from the window, unless you presently make the best of your way down-stairs.'

'Throw me from the window?—hell and furies!' exclaimed the captain; 'I have confronted twenty crooked sabres at Buda with my single rapier, and shall a chitty-faced beggarly Scots lordling speak of me and a window in the same breath?—Stand off, old Pillory, let me make Scots collops of him—he dies the death.'

'For the love of Heaven, gentlemen,' exclaimed the old miser, throwing himself between

them, 'do not break the peace on any consideration! Noble guest, forbear the captain—he is a very Hector of Troy.—Trusty Hector, forbear my guest—he is like to prove a very Achilles—ugh—ugh'——

Here he was interrupted by his asthma, but, nevertheless, continued to interpose his person between Colepepper (who had unsheathed his whinyard, and was making vain passes at his antagonist) and Nigel, who had stepped back to take his sword, and now held it undrawn in his left hand.

'Make an end of this foolery, you scoundrel!' said Nigel.—'Do you come hither to vent your noisy oaths and your bottled-up valour on me? You seem to know me, and I am half-ashamed to say, I have at length been able to recollect you—remember the garden behind the ordinary, you dastardly ruffian, and the speed with which fifty men saw you run from a drawn sword.—Get you gone, sir, and do not put me to the vile labour of cudgelling such a cowardly rascal down-stairs.'

The bully's countenance grew dark as night at this unexpected recognition; for he had undoubtedly thought himself secure in his change of dress, and his black patch, from being discovered by a person who had seen him but once. He set his teeth, clenched his hands, and it seemed as if he was seeking for a moment's courage to fly upon his antagonist. But his heart failed, he sheathed his sword, turned his back in gloomy silence, and spoke not until he reached the door, when, turning round, he said, with a deep oath, 'If I be not avenged of you for this insolence ere many days go by, I would the gallows had my body and the devil my spirit!'

So saying, and with a look where determined spite and malice made his features savagely fierce, though they could not overcome his fear, he turned and left the house. Nigel followed him as far as the gallery at the head of the staircase, with the purpose of seeing him depart, and ere he returned was met by Mistress Martha Trapbois, whom the noise of the quarrel had summoned from her own apartment. He could not resist saying to her in his natural displeasure—'I would, madam, you could teach your father and his friends the lesson which you had the goodness to bestow on me this morning, and prevail on them to leave me the unmolested privacy of my own apartment.'

'If you come hither for quiet or retirement, young man,' answered she, 'you have been advised to an evil retreat. You might seek mercy in the Star Chamber, or holiness in hell, with better success than quiet in Alsatia. But my father shall trouble you no longer.'

So saying, she entered the apartment, and, fixing her eyes on the casket, she said, with emphasis—'If you display such a loadstone, it will draw many a steel knife to your throat.'

While Nigel hastily shut the casket, she addressed her father, upbraiding him with small reverence for keeping company with the cowardly, hectoring, murdering villain, John Colepepper.

'Ay, ay, child,' said the old man, with the cunning leer which intimated perfect satisfaction with his own superior address—'I know—I know—ugh—but I'll cross-bite him—I know them all, and I can manage them—ay, ay—I have the trick on't—ugh—ugh.'

'*You* manage, father,' said the austere damsel; 'you will manage to have your throat cut, and that ere long. You cannot hide from them your gains and your gold as formerly.'

'My gains, wench? my gold?' said the usurer; 'alack-a-day, few of these and hard got—few and hard got.'

'This will not serve you, father, any longer,' said she, 'and had not served you thus long, but Bully Colepepper had contrived a cheaper way of [illegible] our house, even by means of my miserable self.—[illegible] I speak to him of all this?' she said, checking herself, and shrugging her shoulders with an expression of pity which did not fall much short of scorn. 'He hears me not—he thinks not of me.—Is it not strange that the love of gathering gold should survive the care to preserve both property and life?'

'Your father,' said Lord Glenvarloch, who could not help respecting the strong sense and feeling shown by this poor woman, even amidst all her rudeness and severity—'your father seems to have his faculties sufficiently alert when he is in the exercise of his ordinary pursuits and functions. I wonder he is not sensible of the weight of your arguments.'

'Nature made him a man senseless of danger, and that insensibility is the best thing I have derived from him,' said she; 'age has left him shrewdness enough to tread his old beaten paths, but not to seek new courses. The old blind horse will long continue to go its rounds in the mill, when it would stumble in the open meadow.'

'Daughter!—why, wench—why, housewife!' said the old man, awakening out of some dream, in which he had been sneering and chuckling in imagination, probably over a successful piece of roguery,—'go to chamber, wench—go to chamber—draw bolts and chain—look sharp to door—let none in or out but worshipful Master Grahame—I must take my cloak, and go to Duke Hildebrod—ay, ay, time has been, my own warrant was enough; but the lower we lie, the more are we under the wind.'

And, with his wonted chorus of muttering and coughing, the old man left the apartment. His daughter stood for a moment looking after him, with her usual expression of discontent and sorrow.

'You ought to persuade your father,' said Nigel, 'to leave this evil neighbourhood, if you are in reality apprehensive for his safety.'

'He would be safe in no other quarter,' said the daughter; 'I would rather the old man were dead than publicly dishonoured. In other quarters he would be pelted and pursued, like an owl which ventures into sunshine. Here he was safe, while his comrades could avail themselves of his talents; he is now squeezed and fleeced by them on every pretence. They consider him as a vessel on the strand, from which each may snatch a prey; and the very jealousy which they entertain respecting him as a common property, may perhaps induce them to guard him from more private and daring assaults.'

'Still, methinks, you ought to leave this place,' answered Nigel, 'since you might find a safe retreat in some distant country.'

'In Scotland, doubtless,' said she, looking at him with a sharp and suspicious eye, 'and enrich strangers with our rescued wealth? — Ha! young man!'

'Madam, if you knew me,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'you would spare the suspicion implied in your words.'

'Who shall assure me of that?' said Martha sharply. 'They say you are a brawler and a gamester, and I know how far these are to be trusted by the unhappy.'

'They do me wrong, by Heaven!' said Glenvarloch.

'It may be so,' said Martha; 'I am little interested in the degree of your vice or your folly; but it is plain that the one or the other has conducted you hither, and that your best hope of peace, safety, and happiness, is to be gone, with the least possible delay, from a place which is always a stye for swine, and often a shambles.' So saying, she left the apartment.

There was something in the ungracious manner of this female, amounting almost to contempt of him she spoke to—an indignity to which Glenvarloch, notwithstanding his poverty, had not as yet been personally exposed, and which, therefore, gave him a transitory feeling of painful surprise. Neither did the dark hints which Martha threw out concerning the danger of his place of refuge, sound by any means agreeably to his ears. The bravest man, placed in a situation in which he is surrounded by suspicious persons, and removed from all counsel and assistance, except those afforded by a valiant heart and a strong arm, experiences a sinking of the heart, a consciousness of abandonment, which for a moment chills his blood, and depresses his natural gallantry of disposition.

But if sad reflections arose in Nigel's mind, he had not time to indulge them, and if he saw little prospect of finding friends in Alsatia, he found that he was not likely to be solitary for lack of visitors.

He had scarcely paced his apartment for ten minutes, endeavouring to arrange his ideas on the course which he was to pursue on quitting Alsatia, when he was interrupted by the sovereign of that quarter, the great Duke Hildebrod himself, before whose approach the bolts and chains of the miser's dwelling fell, or withdrew, as of their own accord; and both the folding leaves of the door were opened, that he might roll himself into the house like a huge butt of liquor, a vessel to which he bore a considerable outward resemblance, both in size, shape, complexion, and contents.

'Good-morrow to your lordship,' said the greasy puncheon, cocking his single eye, and rolling it upon Nigel with a singular expression of familiar impudence; whilst his grim bull-dog, which was close at his heels, made a kind of gurgling in his throat, as if saluting, in similar fashion, a starved cat, the only living thing in Trapbois's house which we have not yet enumerated, and which had flown up to the top of the tester, where she stood clutching and grinning at the mastiff, whose greeting she accepted with as much good-will as Nigel bestowed on that of the dog's master.

'Peace, Belzie! — D — n thee, peace!' said Duke Hildebrod. 'Beasts and fools will be meddling, my lord.'

'I thought, sir,' answered Nigel, with as much haughtiness as was consistent with the cool distance which he desired to preserve, 'I had told you, my name at present was Nigel Grahame.'

His eminence of Whitefriars on this burst out into a loud, chuckling, impudent laugh, repeating the word, till his voice was almost inarticulate, 'Niggle Green—Niggle Green—Niggle Green!—why, my lord, you would be queered in the drinking of a penny pot of Malmsey, if you cry before you are touched. Why, you have told me the secret even now, had I not had a shrewd guess of it before. Why, Master Nigel, since that is the word, I only call you my lord, because we made you a peer of Alsatia last night, when the sack was predominant.—How you look now! Ha! ha! ha!'

Nigel, indeed, conscious that he had unnecessarily betrayed himself, replied hastily,—'he was much obliged to him for the honours conferred, but did not propose to remain in the sanctuary long enough to enjoy them.'

'Why, that may be as you will, an you will walk by wise counsel,' answered the ducal porpoise; and although Nigel remained standing, in hopes to accelerate his guest's departure, he threw himself into one of the old tapestry-backed easy-chairs, which cracked under his weight, and began to call for old Trapbois.

The crone of all work appearing instead of her master, the duke cursed her for a careless jade, to let a strange gentleman, and a brave guest, go without his morning's draught.

'I never take one, sir,' said Glenvarloch.

'Time to begin—time to begin,' answered the duke. 'Here, you old refuse of Sathan, go to our palace, and fetch Lord Green's morning draught. Let us see—what shall it be, my lord? a humming double pot of ale, with a roasted crab dancing in it like a wherry above bridge? —or, hum—ay, young men are sweet-toothed—a quart of burnt sack, with sugar and spice?—good against the fogs. Or, what say you to sipping a gill of right distilled waters? Come, we will have them all, and you shall take your choice.—Here, you Jezebel, let Tim send the ale, and the sack, and the nipperkin of double distilled, with a bit of diet-loaf, or some such trinket, and score it to the new comer.'

Glenvarloch, bethinking himself that it might be as well to endure this fellow's insolence for a brief season, as to get into further discreditable quarrels, suffered him to take his own way, without interruption, only observing, 'You make yourself at home, sir, in my apartment; but, for the time, you may use your pleasure. Meantime, I would fain know what has procured me the honour of this unexpected visit?'

'You shall know that, when old Deb has brought the liquor—I never speak of business dry-lipped. Why, how she drumbles—I warrant she stops to take a sip on the road, and then you will think you have had unchristian measure.—In the meanwhile, look at that dog there—look Belzebub in the face, and tell me if you ever saw a sweeter beast—never flew but at head in his life.'

'And, after this congenial panegyric, he was proceeding with a tale of a dog and a bull, which threatened to be somewhat of the longest, when he was interrupted by the return of the old crone, and two of his own tapsters, bearing the various kinds of drinkables which he had demanded, and which probably was the only species of interruption he would have endured with equanimity.

When the cups and cans were duly arranged upon the table, and when Deborah, whom the ducal generosity honoured with a penny farthing in the way of gratuity, had [illegible] with her satellites, the worthy potentate, having first slightly invited Lord Glenvarloch to partake of the liquor which he was to pay for, and after having observed that, excepting three poached eggs, a pint of bastard, and a cup of clary, he was fasting from everything but sin, set himself seriously to reinforce the radical moisture. Glenvarloch had seen Scottish lairds and Dutch burgomasters at their potations; but their exploits (though each might be termed a thirsty generation) were nothing to those of Duke Hildebrod, who seemed an absolute sandbed, capable of absorbing any given quantity of liquid, without being either vivified or overflowed. He drank off the ale to quench a thirst which, as he said, kept him in a fever from morning to night, and night to morning; tippled off the sack to correct the crudity of the ale; sent the spirits after the sack to keep all quiet: and then declared that, probably, he should not taste liquor till *post meridiem*, unless it was in compliment to some especial friend. Finally, he intimated that he was ready to proceed on the business which brought him from home so early, a proposition which Nigel readily received, though he could not help suspecting that the most important purpose of Duke Hildebrod's visit was already transacted.

In this, however, Lord Glenvarloch proved to be mistaken. Hildebrod, before opening what he had to say, made an accurate survey of the apartment, laying from time to time his finger on his nose, and winking on Nigel with his single eye, while he opened and shut the doors, lifted the tapestry, which concealed, in one or two places, the dilapidation of time upon the wainscoted walls, peeped into closets, and, finally, looked under the bed, to assure himself that the coast was clear of listeners and interlopers. He then resumed his seat, and beckoned confidentially to Nigel to draw his chair close to him.

'I am well as I am, Master Hildebrod,' replied the young lord, little disposed to encourage the familiarity which the man endeavoured to fix on him; but the undismayed duke proceeded as follows:—

'You shall pardon me, my lord—and I now give you the title right seriously—if I remind you that our waters may be watched; for though old Trapbois be as deaf as Saint Paul's, yet his daughter has sharp ears, and sharp eyes enough, and it is of them that it is my business to speak.'

'Say away, then, sir,' said Nigel, edging his chair somewhat closer to the quicksand, 'although I cannot conceive what business I have either with mine host or his daughter.'

'We will see that in a twinkling of a quart-pot,' answered the gracious duke; 'and first, my lord, you must not think to dance in a net before old Jack Hildebrod, that has thrice your years o'er his head, and was born, like King Richard, with all his eye-teeth ready cut.'

'Well, sir, go on,' said Nigel.

'Why, then, my lord, I presume to say that, if you are, as I believe you are, that Lord Glenvarloch whom all the world talk of—the Scotch gallant that has spent all, to a thin cloak and a light purse—be not moved, my lord, it is so noised of you—men call you the sparrow-hawk, who will fly at all—ay, were it in the very Park—be not moved, my lord.'

'[illegible] sirrah,' replied Glenvarloch, 'that you should [illegible] to move me by your insolence—But beware—and if you indeed guess who I am, consider how long I may be able to endure your tone of insolent familiarity.'

'I crave pardon, my lord,' said Hildebrod, with a sullen yet apologetic look; 'I meant no harm in speaking my poor mind. I know not what honour there may be in being familiar with your lordship, but I judge there is little safety, for Lowestoffe is laid up in lavender only for having shown you the way into Alsatia; and so, what is to come of those who maintain you when you are here, or whether they will get most honour or most trouble by doing so, I leave with your lordship's better judgment.'

'I will bring no one into trouble on my account,' said Lord Glenvarloch. 'I will leave Whitefriars to-morrow. Nay, by Heaven, I will leave it this day.'

'You will have more wit in your anger, I trust,' said Duke Hildebrod; 'listen first to what I have to say to you, and if honest Jack Hildebrod puts you not in the way of nicking them all, may he never cast doublets, or gull a greenhorn again! And so, my lord, in plain words, you must wap and win.'

'Your words must be still plainer before I can understand them,' said Nigel.

'What the devil—a gamester, one who deals with the devil's bones and the doctors, and not understand pedlar's French! Nay, then, I must speak plain English, and that's the simpleton's tongue.'

'Speak, then, sir,' said Nigel; 'and I pray you be brief, for I have little more time to bestow on you.'

'Well, then, my lord, to be brief, as you and the lawyers call it—I understand you have an estate in the north, which changes masters for want of the redeeming ready.—Ay, you start, but you cannot dance in a net before me, as I said before; and so the King runs the frowning humour on you, and the court vapours you the go-by; and the Prince scowls at you from under his cap; and the favourite serves you out the puckered brow and the cold shoulder; and the favourite's favourite'——

'To go no further, sir,' interrupted Nigel, 'suppose all this true—and what follows?'

'What follows!' returned Duke Hildebrod. 'Marry, this follows, that you will owe good deed, as well as good will, to him who shall put you in the way to walk with your beaver cocked in the presence, as an ye were Earl of Kildare; bully the courtiers; meet the Prince's blighting look with a bold brow; confront the favourite; baffle his deputy, and'——

'This is all well,' said Nigel, 'but how is it to be accomplished?'

'By making thee a prince of Peru, my lord of the northern latitudes; propping thine old castle with ingots—fertilizing thy failing fortunes with gold-dust—it shall but cost thee to put thy baron's coronet for a day or so on the brows of an old Caduca here, the man's daughter of the house, and thou art master of a mass of treasure that shall do all I have said for thee, and'— —

'What, you would have me marry this old gentlewoman here, the daughter of mine host?' said Nigel, surprised and angry, yet suppress some desire to [illegible]

'Nay, my lord, [illegible] have you marry fifty thousand good sterling pounds: for that, and better, hath old Trapbois hoarded; and thou shalt do a deed of mercy in it to the old man, who will lose his golden smelts in some worse way—for now that he is well-nigh past his day of work, his day of payment is like to follow.'

'Truly, this is a most courteous offer,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'but may I pray of your candour, most noble duke, to tell me why you dispose of a ward of so much wealth on a stranger like me, who may leave you to-morrow?'

'In sooth, my lord,' said the duke, 'that question smacks more of the wit of Beaujeu's ordinary, than any word I have yet heard your lordship speak, and reason it is you should be answered. Touching my peers, it is but necessary to say that Mistress Martha Trapbois will none of them, whether clerical or laic. The captain hath asked her, so hath the parson, but she will none of them—she looks higher than either, and is, to say truth, a woman of sense, and so forth, too profound, and of spirit something too high, to put up with greasy buff or rusty prunella. For ourselves, we need but hint that we have a consort in the land of the living, and, what is more to purpose, Mistress Martha knows it. So, as she will not lace her kersey hood save with a quality binding, you, my lord, must be the man, and must carry off fifty thousand decuses, the spoils of five thousand bullies, cutters, and spendthrifts—always deducting from the main sum some five thousand pounds for our princely advice and countenance, without which, as matters stand in Alsatia, you would find it hard to win the plate.'

'But has your wisdom considered, sir,' replied Glenvarloch, 'how this wedlock can serve me in my present emergence?'

'As for that, my lord,' said Duke Hildebrod, 'if with forty or fifty thousand pounds in your pouch, you cannot save yourself, you will deserve to lose your head for your folly, and your hand for being close-fisted.'

'But since your goodness has taken my matters into such serious consideration,' continued Nigel, who conceived there was no prudence in breaking with a man who, in his way, meant him favour rather than offence, 'perhaps you may be able to tell me how my kindred will be likely to receive such a bride as you recommend to me?'

'Touching that matter, my lord, I have always heard your countrymen knew, as well as other folks, on which side their bread was buttered. And truly, speaking from report, I know no place where fifty thousand pounds—fifty thousand pounds, I say—will make a woman more welcome than it is likely to do in your ancient kingdom. And truly, saving the slight twist in her shoulder, Mistress Martha Trapbois is a person of very awful and majestic appearance, and may, for aught I know, be come of better blood than any one wots of; for old Trapbois looks not over like to be her father, and her mother was a generous, liberal sort of woman.'

'I am afraid,' answered Nigel, 'that chance is rather too vague to assure her a gracious reception into an honourable house.'

'Why [illegible] my lord,' replied Hildebrod, '[illegible] she will be even with them; for I will venture to say, she has as much ill-nature as will make her a match for your whole clan.'

'That may inconvenience me a little,' replied Nigel.

'Not a whit—not a whit,' said the duke, fertile in expedients; 'if she should become rather intolerable, which is not unlikely, your honourable house, which I presume to be a castle, hath doubtless both turrets and dungeons, and ye may bestow your bonnie bride in either the one or the other, and then you know you will be out of hearing of her tongue, and she will be either above or below the contempt of your friends.'

'It is sagely counselled, most equitable sir,' replied Nigel, 'and such restraint would be a fit meed for her folly that gave me any power over her.'

'You entertain the project, then, my lord?' said Duke Hildebrod.

'I must turn it in my mind for twenty-four hours,' said Nigel; 'and I will pray you so to order matters that I be not further interrupted by any visitors.'

'We will utter an edict to secure your privacy,' said the duke; 'and you do not think,' he added, lowering his voice to a commercial whisper, 'that ten thousand is too much to pay to the sovereign in name of wardship?'

'Ten thousand!' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'why, you said five thousand but now.'

'Aha! art avised of that?' said the duke, touching the side of his nose with his finger; 'nay, if you have marked me so closely, you are thinking on the case more nearly than I believed, till you trapped me. Well, well, we will not quarrel about the consideration, as old Trapbois would call it—do you win and wear the dame; it will be no hard matter with your face and figure, and I will take care that no one interrupts you. I will have an edict from the senate as soon as they meet for their meridiem.'

So saying, Duke Hildebrod took his leave.

CHAPTER XXIV.

> This is the time—Heaven's maiden sentinel
> Hath quitted her high watch—the lesser spangles
> Are paling one by one; give me the ladder
> And the short lever—bid Anthony
> Keep with his carabine the wicket-gate;
> And do thou bare thy knife and follow me,
> For we will in and do it—darkness like this
> Is dawning of our fortunes.
>
> OLD PLAY.

WHEN Duke Hildebrod had withdrawn, Nigel's first impulse was an irresistible feeling to laugh,

at the sage adviser, who would have thus connected him with age, ugliness, and ill-temper; but his next thought was pity for the unfortunate father and daughter, who, being the only persons possessed of wealth in this unhappy district, seemed like a wreck on the sea-shore of a barbarous country, only secured from plunder for the moment by the jealousy of the tribes among whom it had been cast. Neither could he help being conscious that his own residence here was upon conditions equally precarious, and that he was considered by the A[illegible] the same light of a godsend on the Cornish coast, or a sickly but wealthy caravan travelling through the wilds of Africa, and emphatically termed by the nations of despoilers through whose regions it passes, *Dummalafong*, which signifies a thing given to be devoured—a common prey to all men.

Nigel had already formed his own plan to extricate himself, at whatsoever risk, from his perilous and degrading situation, and, in order that he might carry it into instant execution, he only awaited the return of Lowestoffe's messenger. He expected him, however, in vain, and could only amuse himself by looking through such parts of his baggage as had been sent to him from his former lodgings, in order to select a small packet of the most necessary articles to take with him, in the event of his quitting his lodgings secretly and suddenly, as speed and privacy would, he foresaw, be particularly necessary, if he meant to obtain an interview with the king, which was the course his spirit and his interest alike determined him to pursue.

While he was thus engaged, he found, greatly to his satisfaction, that Master Lowestoffe had transmitted not only his rapier and poniard, but a pair of pistols, which he had used in travelling, of a smaller and more convenient size than the large petronels, or horse pistols, which were then in common use, as being made for wearing at the girdle or in the pockets. Next to having stout and friendly comrades, a man is chiefly emboldened by finding himself well armed in case of need, and Nigel, who had thought with some anxiety on the hazard of trusting his life, if attacked, to the protection of the clumsy weapon with which Lowestoffe had equipped him, in order to complete his disguise, felt an emotion of confidence approaching to triumph, as, drawing his own good and well-tried rapier, he wiped it with his handkerchief, examined its point, bent it once or twice against the ground to prove its well-known metal, and finally replaced it in the scabbard, the more hastily, that he heard a tap at the door of his chamber, and had no mind to be found vapouring in the apartment with his sword drawn.

It was his old host who entered, to tell him, with many cringes, that the price of his apartment was to be a crown per diem; and that, according to the custom of Whitefriars, the rent was always payable per advance, although he never scrupled to let the money lie till a week or fortnight, or even a month, in the hands of any honourable guest like Master Grahame, always upon some reasonable consideration for the use. Nigel got rid of the old dotard's intrusion, by throwing down two pieces of gold, and requesting the accommodation of his present apartment for eight days, adding, however, he did not think he should tarry so long.

The miser, with a sparkling eye and a trembling hand, clutched fast the proffered coin, and having balanced the pieces with exquisite pleasure on the extremity of his withered finger, began almost instantly to show that not even the possession of gold can gratify for more than an instant the very heart that is most eager in the pursuit of it. First, the pieces might be light—with hasty hand he drew a small pair of scales from his bosom and weighed them, first together, then separately, and smiled with glee as he saw them attain the due [illegible] in the balance—a circumstance which might add to his profits, if it were true, as was currently reported, that little of the gold coinage was current in Alsatia in a perfect state, and that none ever left the sanctuary in that condition.

Another fear then occurred to trouble the old miser's pleasure. He had been just able to comprehend that Nigel intended to leave the Friars sooner than the arrival of the term for which he had deposited the rent. This might imply an expectation of refunding, which, as a Scotch wag said, of all species of funding, jumped least in the old gentleman's humour. He was beginning to enter a hypothetical caveat on this subject, and to quote several reasons why no part of the money once consigned as room-rent could be repaid back on any pretence, without great hardship to the landlord, when Nigel, growing impatient, told him that the money was his absolutely, and without any intention on his part of resuming any of it all he asked in return was the liberty of enjoying in private the apartment he had paid for. Old Trapbois, who had still at his tongue's end much of the smooth language by which, in his time, he had hastened the ruin of many a young spendthrift, began to launch out upon the noble and generous disposition of his new guest, until Nigel, growing impatient, took the old gentleman by the hand, and gently, yet irresistibly, leading him to the door of his chamber, put him out, but with such a decent and moderate exertion of his superior strength, as to render the action in no shape indecorous, and, fastening the door, began to do that for his pistols which he had done for his favourite sword, examining with care the flints and locks, and reviewing the state of his small provision of ammunition.

In this operation he was a second time interrupted by a knocking at his door—he called upon the person to enter, having no doubt that it was Lowestoffe's messenger at length arrived. It was, however, the ungracious daughter of old Trapbois, who, muttering something about her father's mistake, laid down upon the table one of the pieces of gold which Nigel had just given to him, saying, that what she retained was the full rent for the term he had specified. Nigel replied, he had paid the money, and had no desire to receive it again.

'Do as you will with it, then,' replied his hostess, 'for there it lies, and shall lie for me. If you are fool enough to pay more than is reason, my father shall not be knave enough to take it.'

'But your father, mistress,' said Nigel, 'your father told me'——

'O, my father, my father,' said she, interrupting him—'my father managed these affairs while he was able—I manage them now, and that may in the long run be as well for both of us.'

She then looked on the table, and observed the weapons.

'You have arms, I see,' she said; 'do you know how to use them?'

'I should do so, mistress,' replied Nigel, 'for it has been my occupation.'

'You are a soldier, then?'

'No further, as [illegible] every gentleman of my country [illegible] a soldier.'

'Ay, that is your point of honour—to cut the throats of the poor—a proper gentleman-like occupation for those who should protect them!'

'I do not deal in cutting throats, mistress,' replied Nigel; 'but I carry arms to defend myself, and my country if it needs me.'

'Ay,' replied Martha, 'it is fairly worded; but men say you are as prompt as others in petty brawls, where neither your safety nor your country is in hazard; and that, had it not been so, you would not have been in the sanctuary to-day.'

'Mistress,' returned Nigel, 'I should labour in vain to make you understand that a man's honour, which is, or should be, dearer to him than his life, may often call on and compel us to hazard our own lives, or those of others, on what would otherwise seem trifling contingencies.'

'God's law says nought of that,' said the female; 'I have only read there, that thou shalt not kill. But I have neither time nor inclination to preach to you—you will find enough of fighting here if you like it, and well if it come not to seek you when you are least prepared. Farewell for the present—the charwoman will execute your commands for your meals.'

She left the room, just as Nigel, provoked at her assuming a superior tone of judgment and of censure, was about to be so superfluous as to enter into a dispute with an old pawnbroker's daughter on the subject of the point of honour. He smiled at himself for the folly into which the spirit of self-vindication had so nearly hurried him.

Lord Glenvarloch then applied to old Deborah the charwoman, by whose intermediation he was provided with a tolerably decent dinner; and the only embarrassment which he experienced was from the almost forcible entry of the old dotard his landlord, who insisted upon giving his assistance at laying the cloth. Nigel had some difficulty to prevent him from displacing his arms and some papers which were lying on the small table at which he had been sitting; and nothing short of a stern and positive injunction to the contrary could compel him to use another board (though there were two in the room) for the purpose of laying the cloth.

Having at length obliged him to relinquish his purpose, he could not help observing that the eyes of the old dotard seemed still anxiously fixed upon the small table on which lay his sword and pistols; and that, amidst all the little duties which he seemed officiously anxious to render to his guest, he took every opportunity of looking towards and approaching these objects of his attention. At length, when Trapbois thought he had completely avoided the notice of his guest, Nigel, through the observation of one of the cracked mirrors, on which channel of communication the old man had not calculated, beheld him actually extend his hand towards the table in question. He thought it unnecessary to use further ceremony, but, telling his landlord in a stern voice, that he permitted no one to touch his arms, he commanded him to leave the apartment[illegible]; The old usurer commenced a maun-[illegible] sort of apology, in which all that Nigel distinctly apprehended was a frequent repetition of the word *consideration*, and which did not seem to him to require any other answer than a reiteration of his command to him to leave the apartment, upon pain of worse consequences.

The ancient Hebe who acted as Lord Glenvarloch's cupbearer, took his part against the intrusion of the still more antiquated Ganymede, and insisted on old Trapbois leaving the room instantly, menacing him at the same time with her mistress's displeasure if he remained there any longer. The old man seemed more under petticoat government than any other, for the threat of the charwoman produced greater effect upon him than the more formidable displeasure of Nigel. He withdrew grumbling and muttering, and Lord Glenvarloch heard him bar a large door at the nearer end of the gallery, which served as a division betwixt the other parts of the extensive mansion and the apartment occupied by his guest, which, as the reader is aware, had its access from the landing-place at the head of the grand staircase.

Nigel accepted the careful sound of the bolts and bars, as they were severally drawn by the trembling hand of old Trapbois, as an omen that the senior did not mean again to revisit him in the course of the evening, and heartily rejoiced that he was at length to be left to uninterrupted solitude.

The old woman asked if there was aught else to be done for his accommodation; and, indeed, it had hitherto seemed as if the pleasure of serving him, or more properly the reward which she expected, had renewed her youth and activity. Nigel desired to have candles, to have a fire lighted in his apartment, and a few faggots placed beside it, that he might feed it from time to time, as he began to feel the chilly effects of the damp and low situation of the house, close as it was to the Thames. But while the old woman was absent upon his errand, he began to think in what way he should pass the long solitary evening with which he was threatened.

His own reflections promised to Nigel little amusement, and less applause. He had considered his own perilous situation in every light in which it could be viewed, and foresaw as little utility as comfort in resuming the survey. To divert the current of his ideas, books were, of course, the readiest resource; and although, like most of us, Nigel had, in his time, sauntered through large libraries, and even spent a long time there without greatly disturbing their learned contents, he was now in a situation where the possession of a volume, even of very inferior merit, becomes a real treasure. The old housewife returned shortly afterwards with

faggots, and some pieces of half-burnt wax candles, the perquisites, probably, real or usurped,* of some experienced groom of the chambers, two of which she placed in large brass candlesticks of different shapes and patterns, and laid the others on the table, that Nigel might renew them from time to time as they burnt to the socket. She heard with interest Lord Glenvarloch's request to have a book—any sort of book—to pass away the night withal, and returned for answer, that she knew of no other books in t[illegible] her young mistress's (as she always denominated Mistress Martha Trapbois) Bible, which the owner would not lend; and her master's Whetstone of Witte, being the second part of Arithmetic, by Robert Record, with the Cossike Practice and Rule of Equation; which promising volume Nigel declined to borrow. She offered, however, to bring some books from Duke Hildebrod—'who sometimes, good gentleman, gave a glance at a book when the State affairs of Alsatia left him as much leisure.'

Nigel embraced the proposal, and his unwearied Iris scuttled away on this second embassy. She returned in a short time with a tattered quarto volume under her arm, and a pottle of sack in her hand; for the duke, judging that mere reading was dry work, had sent the wine by way of sauce to help it down, not forgetting to add the price to the morning's score, which he had already run up against the stranger in the sanctuary.

Nigel seized on the book, and did not refuse the wine, thinking that a glass or two, as it really proved to be of good quality, would be no bad interlude to his studies. He dismissed, with thanks and assurance of reward, the poor old drudge who had been so zealous in his service; trimmed his fire and candles, and placed the easiest of the old arm-chairs in a convenient posture betwixt the fire and the table at which he had dined, and which now supported the measure of sack and the lights; and thus accompanying his studies with such luxurious appliances as were in his power, he began to examine the only volume with which the ducal library of Alsatia had been able to supply him.

The contents, though of a kind generally interesting, were not well calculated to dispel the gloom by which he was surrounded. The book was entitled, *God's Revenge against Murther*; not, as the bibliomaniacal reader may easily conjecture, the work which Reynolds published under that imposing name, but one of a much earlier date, printed and sold by old Wolfe; and which, could a copy now be found, would sell for much more than its weight in gold.*

Nigel had soon enough of the doleful tales which the book contains, and attempted one or two other modes of killing the evening. He looked out at window, but the night was rainy, with gusts of wind; he tried to coax the fire, but the faggots were green, and smoked without burning; and, as he was naturally temperate, he felt his blood somewhat heated by the canary sack which he had already drunk, and had no further inclination to that pastime. He next attempted to compose a memorial addressed to the king, in which he set forth his case and his grievan[illegible]dily stung with the idea that his supplica[illegible] be treated with scorn, he flung the scroll into th[illegible] fire, and, in a sort of desperation, resumed the book which he had laid aside.

Nigel became more interested in the volume at the second than at the first attempt which he made to peruse it. The narratives, strange and shocking as they were to human feeling, possessed yet the interest of sorcery or of fascination which rivets the attention by its awakening horrors. Much was told of the strange and horrible acts of blood by which men, setting nature and humanity alike at defiance, had, for the thirst of revenge, the lust of gold, or the cravings of irregular ambition, broken into the tabernacle of life. Yet more surprising and mysterious tales were recounted of the mode in which such deeds of blood had come to be discovered and revenged. Animals, irrational animals, had told the secret, and birds of the air had carried the matter. The elements had seemed to betray the deed which had polluted them—earth had ceased to support the murderer's steps, fire to warm his frozen limbs, water to refresh his parched lips, air to relieve his gasping lungs. All, in short, bore evidence to the homicide's guilt. In other circumstances, the criminal's own awakened conscience pursued and brought him to justice; and in some narratives the grave was said to have yawned, that the ghost of the sufferer might call for revenge.

It was now wearing late in the night, and the book was still in Nigel's hands, when the tapestry which hung behind him flapped against the wall, and the wind produced by its motion waved the flame of the candles by which he was reading. Nigel started and turned round, in that excited and irritated state of mind which arose from the nature of his studies, especially at a period when a certain degree of superstition was inculcated as a point of religious faith. It was not without emotion that he saw the bloodless countenance, meagre form, and ghastly aspect of old Trapbois, once more in the very act of extending his withered hand towards the table which supported his arms. Convinced by this untimely apparition that something evil was meditated towards him, Nigel sprung up, seized his sword, drew it, and, placing it at the old man's breast, demanded of him what he did in his apartment at so untimely an hour. Trapbois showed neither fear nor surprise, and only answered by some imperfect expressions, intimating he would part with his life rather than with his property; and Lord Glenvarloch, strangely embarrassed, knew not what to think of the intruder's motives; and still less how to get rid of him. As he again tried the means of intimidation, he was surprised

* Only three copies are known to exist; one in the library at Kennaquhair, and two one foxed and cropped, the other tall and in good condition—both in the possession of an eminent member of the Roxburghe Club.—*Note by* CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK.—[The work here referred to, 'The Triumphs of God's Revenge against Murder, expressed in Thirty Tragicall Histories,' by John Reynolds, passed through several editions between 1622 and 1753, besides abridgments. Its precursor, 'The Theatre of God's Judgements,' by Thomas Beard, first appeared in 1597, 4to, and is remarkable in containing 'An Account of Christopher Marlowe and his Tragical end.' It reached a fourth and enlarged edition in 1648.]

by a second apparition from behind the tapestry, in the person of the daughter of Trapbois, bearing a lamp in her hand. She also seemed to possess her father's insensibility to danger, for, coming close to Nigel, she pushed aside impetuously his naked sword, and even attempted to take it out of his hand.

'For shame,' she said; 'your sword on a man of eighty years and more!—this the honour of a Scottish gentleman!—Give it to me to make a spindle of!'

'Stand back,' said Nigel; '[illegible] no injury—but I will know what has caused him to prowl [illegible] whole day, and even at this late hour, around my arms.'

'Your arms!' repeated she; 'alas! young man, the whole arms in the Tower of London are of little value to him, in comparison of this miserable piece of gold which I left this morning on the table of a young spendthrift, too careless to put what belonged to him into his own purse.'

So saying, she showed the piece of gold, which, still remaining on the table where she had left it, had been the bait that attracted old Trapbois so frequently to the spot: and which even in the silence of the night had so dwelt on his imagination, that he had made use of a private passage long disused, to enter his guest's apartment, in order to possess himself of the treasure during his slumbers. He now exclaimed, at the highest tones of his cracked and feeble voice—

'It is mine—it is mine! he gave it to me for a consideration—I will die ere I part with my property!'

'It is indeed his own, mistress,' said Nigel; 'and I do entreat you will restore it to the person on whom I have bestowed it, and let me have my apartment in quiet.'

'I will account with you for it, then,' said the maiden, reluctantly giving to her father the morsel of mammon, on which he darted as if his bony fingers had been the talons of a hawk seizing its prey; and then, making a contented muttering and mumbling, like an old dog after he has been fed, and just when he is wheeling himself thrice round for the purpose of lying down, he followed his daughter behind the tapestry, through a little sliding door, which was perceived when the hangings were drawn apart.

'This shall be properly fastened to-morrow,' said the daughter to Nigel, speaking in such a tone that her father, deaf, and engrossed by his acquisition, could not hear her; 'to-night I will continue to watch him closely.—I wish you good repose.'

These few words, pronounced in a tone of more civility than she had yet made use of towards her lodger, contained a wish which was not to be accomplished, although her guest, presently after her departure, retired to bed.

There was a slight fever in Nigel's blood, occasioned by the various events of the evening, which put him, as the phrase is, beside his rest. Perplexing and painful thoughts rolled on his mind like a troubled stream, and the more he laboured to lull himself to slumber, the further he seemed from attaining his object. He tried all the resources common in such cases; kept counting from one to a thousand, until his head was giddy—he watched the embers of the wood-fire till his eyes were dazzled—he listened to the dull moaning of the wind, the swinging and creaking of signs which projected from the houses, and the baying of here and there a homeless dog, till his very ear was weary.

Suddenly, however, amid this monotony, came a sound which startled him at once. It was a female shriek. He sat up in his bed to listen[illegible] remembered he was in Alsatia, [illegible]s of every sort were current among the unruly inhabitants. But another scream, and another, and another, succeeded so close, that he was certain, though the noise was remote and sounded stifled, it must be in the same house with himself.

Nigel jumped up hastily, put on a part of his clothes, seized his sword and pistols, and ran to the door of his chamber. Here he plainly heard the screams redoubled, and, as he thought, the sounds came from the usurer's apartment. All access to the gallery was effectually excluded by the intermediate door, which the brave young lord shook with eager but vain impatience. But the secret passage occurred suddenly to his recollection. He hastened back to his room, and succeeded with some difficulty in lighting a candle, powerfully agitated by hearing the cries repeated, yet still more afraid lest they should sink into silence.

He rushed along the narrow and winding entrance, guided by the noise, which now burst more wildly on his ear; and, while he descended a narrow staircase which terminated the passage, he heard the stifled voices of men, encouraging, as it seemed, each other.—'D—n her, strike her down—silence her—beat her brains out!'—while the voice of his hostess, though now almost exhausted, was repeating the cry of 'murder' and 'help.' At the bottom of the staircase was a small door, which gave way before Nigel as he precipitated himself upon the scene of action,—a cocked pistol in one hand, a candle in the other, and his naked sword under his arm.

Two ruffians had, with great difficulty, overpowered, or, rather, were on the point of overpowering, the daughter of Trapbois, whose resistance appeared to have been most desperate, for the floor was covered with fragments of her clothes and handfuls of her hair. It appeared that her life was about to be the price of her defence, for one villain had drawn a long clasp-knife, when they were surprised by the entrance of Nigel, who, as they turned towards him, shot the fellow with the knife dead on the spot, and, when the other advanced to him, hurled the candlestick at his head, and then attacked him with his sword. It was dark, save some pale moonlight from the window; and the ruffian, after firing a pistol without effect, and fighting a traverse or two with his sword, lost heart, made for the window, leaped over it, and escaped. Nigel fired his remaining pistol after him at a venture, and then called for light.

'There is light in the kitchen,' answered Martha Trapbois, with more presence of mind than could have been expected. 'Stay, you know not the way; I will fetch it myself.—O!

my father—my poor father!—I knew it would come to this—and all along of the accursed gold! —They have MURDERED him!'

CHAPTER XXV.

> Death finds us 'mid our playthings—snatches us,
> As a cross nurse might do a wayward child,
> From all our toys and baubles. His rough call
> Unlooses all our favourite ties on earth;
> And well if they are such as may be answer'd
> In yonder world, where all is judged of truly.
>
> OLD PLAY.

IT was a ghastly scene which opened upon Martha Trapbois's return with a light. Her own haggard and austere features were exaggerated by all the desperation of grief, fear, and passion—but the latter was predominant. On the floor lay the body of the robber, who had expired without a groan, while his blood, flowing plentifully, had crimsoned all around. Another body lay also there, on which the unfortunate woman precipitated herself in agony, for it was that of her unhappy father. In the next moment she started up, and exclaiming—'There may be life yet!' strove to raise the body. Nigel went to her assistance, but not without a glance at the open window; which Martha, as acute as if undisturbed either by passion or terror, failed not to interpret justly.

'Fear not,' she cried, 'fear not; they are base cowards, to whom courage is as much unknown as mercy. If I had had weapons, I could have defended myself against them without assistance or protection.—O! my poor father! protection comes too late for this cold and stiff corpse.—He is dead—dead!'

While she spoke, they were attempting to raise the dead body of the old miser; but it was evident, even from the feeling of the inactive weight and rigid joints, that life had forsaken her station. Nigel looked for a wound, but saw none. The daughter of the deceased, with more presence of mind than a daughter could at the time have been supposed capable of exerting, discovered the instrument of his murder—a sort of scarf, which had been drawn so tight round his throat as to stifle his cries for assistance in the first instance, and afterwards to extinguish life.

She undid the fatal noose; and, laying the old man's body in the arms of Lord Glenvarloch, she ran for water, for spirits, for essences, in the vain hope that life might be only suspended. That hope proved indeed vain. She chafed his temples, raised his head, loosened his night-gown (for it seemed as if he had arisen from bed upon hearing the entrance of the villains), and, finally, opened with difficulty, his fixed and closely-clenched hands, from one of which dropped a key, from the other the very piece of gold about which the unhappy man had been a little before so anxious, and which probably, in the impaired state of his mental faculties, he was disposed to defend with as desperate energy as if its amount had been necessary to his actual existence.

'It is in vain—it is in vain,' said the daughter, desisting from her fruitless attempts to recall the spirit which had been effectually dislodged, for the neck had been twisted by the violence of the murderers; 'it is in vain—he is murdered—I always knew it would be thus; and now I witness it!'

She then snatched up the key and the piece of money, but it was only to dash them again on the floor, as she exclaimed, 'Accursed be ye both, for you are the causes of this deed!'

Nigel would have spoken—would have reminded her that measures should be instantly taken for the pursuit of the murderer who had escaped, as well as for her own security against his return; but she interrupted him sharply.

'Be silent,' she said, 'be silent. Think you, the thoughts of my own heart are not enough to distract me, and with such a sight as this before me? I say, be silent,' she said again, and in a yet sterner tone—'Can a daughter listen, and her father's murdered corpse lying on her knees?'

Lord Glenvarloch, however overpowered by the energy of her grief, felt not the less the embarrassment of his own situation. He had discharged both his pistols—the robber might return—he had probably other assistants besides the man who had fallen, and it seemed to him, indeed, as if he had heard a muttering beneath the windows. He explained hastily to his companion the necessity of procuring ammunition.

'You are right,' she said, somewhat contemptuously, 'and have ventured already more than ever I expected of man. Go and shift for yourself, since that is your purpose—leave me to my fate.'

Without stopping for needless expostulation, Nigel hastened to his own room through the secret passage, furnished himself with the ammunition he sought for, and returned with the same celerity; wondering at the accuracy with which he achieved, in the dark, all the meanderings of the passage, which he had traversed only once, and that in a moment of such violent agitation.

He found, on his return, the unfortunate woman standing like a statue by the body of her father, which she had laid straight on the floor, having covered the face with the skirt of his gown. She testified neither surprise nor pleasure at Nigel's return, but said to him calmly—'My moan is made—my sorrow—all the sorrow at least that man shall ever have noting of—is gone past; but I will have justice, and the base villain who murdered this poor defenceless old man, when he had not, by the course of nature, a twelvemonth's life in him, shall not cumber the earth long after him. Stranger, whom Heaven has sent to forward the revenge reserved for this action, go to Hildebrod's—there they are awake all night in their revels—bid him come hither—he is bound by his duty, and dare not, and shall not, refuse his assistance, which he knows well I can reward. Why do ye tarry?—go instantly.'

'I would,' said Nigel, 'but I am fearful of leaving you alone; the villains may return, and'——

'True, most true,' answered Martha, 'he may return; and, though I care little for his murdering me, he may possess himself of what has most tempted him. Keep this key and this

piece of gold; they are both of importance—defend your life if assailed, and if you kill the villain I will make you rich. I go myself to call for aid.'

Nigel would have remonstrated with her, but she had departed, and in a moment he heard the house-door clank behind her. For an instant he thought of following her; but upon recollection that the distance was but short betwixt the tavern of Hildebrod and the house of Trapbois, he concluded that she knew it better than he incurred little danger in passing it, and would do well, in the [illegible] remain on the watch as [illegible] commanded.

It was no pleasant situation for one unused to such scenes, to remain in the apartment with two dead bodies, recently those of living and breathing men, who had both, within the space of less than half-an-hour, suffered violent death; one of them by the hand of the assassin, the other, whose blood still continued to flow from the wound in his throat, and to flood all around him, by the spectator's own deed of violence, though of justice. He turned his face from those wretched relics of mortality with a feeling of disgust, mingled with superstition; and he found, when he had done so, that the consciousness of the presence of these ghastly objects, though unseen by him, rendered him more uncomfortable than even when he had his eyes fixed upon, and reflected by, the cold, staring, lifeless eyeballs of the deceased. Fancy also played her usual sport with him. He now thought he heard the well-worn damask night-gown of the deceased usurer rustle; anon, that he heard the slaughtered bravo draw up his leg, the boot scratching the floor as if he was about to rise; and again he deemed he heard the footsteps and the whisper of the returned ruffian under the window from which he had lately escaped. To face the last and most real danger, and to parry the terrors which the other class of feelings were like to impress upon him, Nigel went to the window, and was much cheered to observe the light of several torches illuminating the street, and followed, as the murmur of voices denoted, by a number of persons, armed, it would seem, with firelocks and halberds, and attendant on Hildebrod, who (not in his fantastic office of duke, but in that which he really possessed, of bailiff of the liberty and sanctuary of Whitefriars) was on his way to inquire into the crime and its circumstances.

It was a strange and melancholy contrast to see these debauchees, disturbed in the very depth of their midnight revel, on their arrival at such a scene as this. They stared on each other, and on the bloody work before them, with lack-lustre eyes; staggered with uncertain steps over boards slippery with blood; their noisy, brawling voices sunk into stammering whispers; and with spirits quelled by what they saw, while their brains were still stupefied by the liquor which they had drunk, they seemed like men walking in their sleep.

Old Hildebrod was an exception to the general condition. That seasoned cask, however full, was at all times capable of motion, when there occurred a motive sufficiently strong to set him a-rolling. He seemed much shocked at what he beheld, and his proceedings, in consequence, had in them more of regularity and propriety than he might have been supposed capable of exhibiting upon any occasion whatever. The daughter was first examined, and stated, with wonderful accuracy and distinctness, the manner in which she had been alarmed with a noise of struggling and violence in her father's apartment, and that the more readily, because she was watching him on account of some alarm concerning his health. On her [illegible], she had seen her father sinking [illegible] strength of two men, upon whom she rushed with all the fury she was capable of. As their faces were blackened, and their figures disguised, she could not pretend, in the hurry of a moment so dreadfully agitating, to distinguish either of them as persons whom she had seen before. She remembered little more except the firing of shots, until she found herself alone with her guest, and saw that the ruffians had escaped.

Lord Glenvarloch told his story as we have given it to the reader. The direct evidence thus received, Hildebrod examined the premises. He found that the villains had made their entrance by the window out of which the survivor had made his escape; yet it seemed singular that they should have done so, as it was secured with strong iron bars, which old Trapbois was in the habit of shutting with his own hand at nightfall. He minuted down, with great accuracy, the state of everything in the apartment, and examined carefully the features of the slain robber. He was dressed like a seaman of the lowest order, but his face was known to none present. Hildebrod next sent for an Alsatian surgeon, whose vices, undoing what his skill might have done for him, had consigned him to the wretched practice of this place. He made him examine the dead bodies, and make a proper declaration of the manner in which the sufferers seemed to have come by their end. The circumstance of the sash did not escape the learned judge, and, having listened to all that could be heard or conjectured on the subject, and collected all particulars of evidence which appeared to bear on the bloody transaction, he commanded the door of the apartment to be locked until next morning; and, carrying the unfortunate daughter of the murdered man into the kitchen, where there was no one in presence but Lord Glenvarloch, he asked her gravely, whether she suspected no one in particular of having committed the deed.

'Do *you* suspect no one?' answered Martha, looking fixedly on him.

'Perhaps I may, mistress; but it is my part to ask questions, yours to answer them. That's the rule of the game.'

'Then I suspect him who wore yonder sash. Do not you know whom I mean?'

'Why, if you call on me for honours, I must needs say I have seen Captain Peppercull have one of such a fashion, and he was not a man to change his suits often.'

'Send out, then,' said Martha, 'and have him apprehended.'

'If it is he, he will be far by this time; but I will communicate with the higher powers,' answered the judge.

'You would have him escape,' resumed she, fixing her eyes on him sternly.

'By cock and pie,' replied Hildebrod, 'did it depend on me, the murdering cut-throat should hang as high as ever Haman did—but let me take my time. He has friends among us, *that* you wot well; and all that should assist me are as drunk as fiddlers.'

'I will have revenge—I *will* have it,' repeated she; 'and take heed you trifle not with me.'

'Trifle! I would sooner trifle with a she-bear the minute after they had baited her. [illegible] you, mistress, be but patient, and we will have him. I know all his haunts, and he cannot forbear them long; and I will have trap-doors open for him. You cannot want justice, mistress, for you have the means to get it.'

'They who help me in my revenge,' said Martha; 'shall share these means.'

'Enough said,' replied Hildebrod; 'and now I would have you go to my house, and get something hot—you will be but dreary here by yourself.'

'I will send for the old charwoman,' replied Martha; 'and we have the stranger gentleman, besides.'

'Umph, umph—the stranger gentleman!' said Hildebrod to Nigel, whom he drew a little apart. 'I fancy the captain has made the stranger gentleman's fortune when he was making a bold dash for his own. I can tell your honour—I must not say lordship—that I think my having chanced to give the greasy buff-and-iron scoundrel some hint of what I recommended to you to-day, has put him on this rough game. The better for you—you will get the cash without the father-in-law.—You will keep conditions, I trust?'

'I wish you had said nothing to any one of a scheme so absurd,' said Nigel.

'Absurd!—Why, think you she will not have thee? Take her with the tear in her eye, man—take her with the tear in her eye. Let me hear from you to-morrow. Good-night, good-night—a nod is as good as a wink. I must to my business of sealing and locking up. By the way, this horrid work has put all out of my head—Here is a fellow from Master Lowestoffe has been asking to see you. As he said his business was express, the senate only made him drink a couple of flagons, and he was just coming to beat up your quarters when this breeze blew up.—Ahoy, friend! there is Master Nigel Grahame.'

A young man, dressed in a green plush jerkin, with a badge on the sleeve, and having the appearance of a waterman, approached and took Nigel aside, while Duke Hildebrod went from place to place to exercise his authority, and to see the windows fastened, and the doors of the apartment locked up. The news communicated by Lowestoffe's messenger were not the most pleasant. They were intimated in a courteous whisper to Nigel, to the following effect:—That Master Lowestoffe prayed him to consult his safety by instantly leaving Whitefriars, for that a warrant from the Lord Chief-Justice had been issued out for apprehending him, and would be put in force to-morrow, by the assistance of a party of musketeers, a force which the Alsatians neither would nor dared to resist.

'And so, squire,' said the aquatic emissary, 'my wherry is to wait you at the Temple Stairs yonder, at five this morning, and, if you would give the bloodhounds the slip, why, you may.'

'Why did not Master Lowestoffe write to me?' said Nigel.

'Alas! the good gentleman lies up in lavender for it himself, and has as little to do with pen and ink as if he were a parson.'

'Did he send any token to me?' said Nigel.

'Token? ay, marry did he—token enough, [illegible] I have not forgot it,' said the fellow; then, giving a [illegible] wristband of his breeches, he said,—'Ay, I have [illegible] were to believe me, because your name was written with an O, for Grahame. Ay, that was it, I think.—Well, shall we meet in two hours, when tide turns, and go down the river like a twelve-oared barge?'

'Where is the King just now, knowest thou?' answered Lord Glenvarloch.

'The King? why, he went down to Greenwich yesterday by water, like a noble sovereign as he is, who will always float where he can. He was to have hunted this week, but that purpose is broken, they say: and the Prince, and the Duke, and all of them at Greenwich, are as merry as minnows.'

'Well,' replied Nigel, 'I will be ready to go at five; do thou come hither to carry my baggage.'

'Ay, ay, master,' replied the fellow, and left the house, mixing himself with the disorderly attendants of Duke Hildebrod, who were now retiring. The potentate entreated Nigel to make fast the doors behind him, and, pointing to the female, who sat by the expiring fire with her limbs outstretched, like one whom the hand of Death had already arrested, he whispered, 'Mind your hits, and mind your bargain, or I will cut your bow-string for you before you can draw it.'

Feeling deeply the ineffable brutality which could recommend the prosecuting such views over a wretch in such a condition, Lord Glenvarloch yet commanded his temper so far as to receive the advice in silence, and attend to the former part of it, by barring the door carefully behind Duke Hildebrod and his suite, with the tacit hope that he should never again see or hear of them. He then returned to the kitchen, in which the unhappy woman remained, her hands still clenched, her eyes fixed, and her limbs extended like those of a person in a trance. Much moved by her situation, and with the prospect which lay before her, he endeavoured to awaken her to existence by every means in his power, and at length apparently succeeded in dispelling her stupor, and attracting her attention. He then explained to her that he was in the act of leaving Whitefriars in a few hours—that his future destination was uncertain, but that he desired anxiously to know whether he could contribute to her protection by apprising any friend of her situation, or otherwise. With some difficulty she seemed to comprehend his meaning, and thanked him with her usual short, ungracious manner. 'He might mean well,' she said, 'but he ought to know that the miserable had no friends.'

Nigel said, 'He would not willingly be im-

portunate, but, as he was about to leave the Friars'—— She interrupted him—

'You are about to leave the Friars? I will go with you.'

'You go with me!' exclaimed Lord Glenvarloch.

'Yes,' she said; 'I will persuade my father to leave this murdering den.' But as she spoke the more perfect recollection of what had passed crowded on her mind. She hid her face in her hands, and burst out into a dreadful fit of sobs, moans, and lamentations, which terminated in hysterics, violent in [illegible] to the uncommon strength of her body and mind.

Lord Glenvarloch, shocked, confused, and inexperienced, was about to leave the house in quest of medical, or at least female assistance; but the patient, when the paroxysm had somewhat spent its force, held him fast by the sleeve with one hand, covering her face with the other, while a copious flood of tears came to relieve the emotions of grief by which she had been so violently agitated.

'Do not leave me,' she said—'do not leave me, and call no one. I have never been in this way before, and would not now,' she said, sitting upright, and wiping her eyes with her apron,—'would not now—but that—but that he loved *me*, if he loved nothing else that was human.—To die so, and by such hands!'

And again the unhappy woman gave way to a paroxysm of sorrow, mingling her tears with sobbing, wailing, and all the abandonment of female grief when at its utmost height. At length, she gradually recovered the austerity of her natural composure, and maintained it as if by a forcible exertion of resolution, repelling, as she spoke, the repeated returns of the hysterical affection, by such an effort as that by which epileptic patients are known to suspend the recurrence of their fits. Yet her mind, however resolved, could not so absolutely overcome the affection of her nerves, but that she was agitated by strong fits of trembling, which, for a minute or two at a time, shook her whole frame in a manner frightful to witness. Nigel forgot his own situation, and, indeed, everything else, in the interest inspired by the unhappy woman before him—an interest which affected a proud spirit the more deeply, that she herself, with corresponding highness of mind, seemed determined to owe as little as possible either to the humanity or the pity of others.

'I am not wont to be in this way,' she said—'but—but—Nature will have power over the frail beings it has made. Over you, sir, I have some right; for, without you, I had not survived this awful night. I wish your aid had been either earlier or later—but you *have* saved my life, and you are bound to assist in making it endurable to me.'

'If you will show me how it is possible,' answered Nigel.

'You are going hence, you say, instantly—carry me with you,' said the unhappy woman. 'By my own efforts, I shall never escape from this wilderness of guilt and misery.'

'Alas! what can I do for you?' replied Nigel. 'My own way, and I must not deviate from it, leads me, in all probability, to a dungeon. I might, indeed, transport you from hence with me, if you could afterwards bestow yourself with any friend.'

'Friend!' she exclaimed—'I have no friend—they have long since discarded us. A spectre arising from the dead were more welcome than I should be at the doors of those who have disclaimed us; and, if they were willing to restore their friendship to me now, I would despise it, because they withdrew it from him—from [illegible] (here she underwent strong but suppressed agitation, and then added firmly)—'from *him* who lies yonder.—I have no friend.' Here she paused; and then suddenly, as if recollecting herself, added, 'I have no friend, but I have that will purchase many—I have that which will purchase both friends and avengers.—It is well thought of; I must not leave it for a prey to cheats and ruffians.—Stranger, you must return to yonder room. Pass through it boldly to his—that is, to the sleeping apartment; push the bedstead aside; beneath each of the posts is a brass plate, as if to support the weight, but it is that upon the left, nearest to the wall, which must serve your turn—press the corner of the plate, and it will spring up and show a keyhole, which this key will open. You will then lift a concealed trap-door, and in a cavity of the floor you will discover a small chest. Bring it hither; it shall accompany our journey, and it will be hard if the contents cannot purchase me a place of refuge.'

'But the door communicating with the kitchen has been locked by these people,' said Nigel.

'True, I had forgot; they had their reasons for that, doubtless,' answered she. 'But the secret passage from your apartment is open, and you may go that way.'

Lord Glenvarloch took the key, and, as he lighted a lamp to show him the way, she read in his countenance some unwillingness to the task imposed.

'You fear,' she said—'there is no cause; the murderer and his victim are both at rest. Take courage, I will go with you myself—you cannot know the trick of the spring, and the chest will be too heavy for you.'

'No fear, no fear,' answered Lord Glenvarloch, ashamed of the construction she put upon a momentary hesitation, arising from a dislike to look upon what is horrible, often connected with those high-wrought minds which are the last to fear what is merely dangerous—'I will do your errand as you desire; but for you, you must not—cannot go yonder.'

'I can—I will,' she said. 'I am composed. You shall see that I am so.' She took from the table a piece of unfinished sewing-work, and, with steadiness and composure, passed a silken thread into the eye of a fine needle. 'Could I have done that,' she said, with a smile yet more ghastly than her previous look of fixed despair, 'had not my heart and hand been both steady?'

She then led the way rapidly up-stairs to Nigel's chamber, and proceeded through the secret passage with the same haste, as if she had feared her resolution might have failed her ere her purpose was executed. At the bottom of the stairs she paused a moment, before enter-

ing the fatal apartment, then hurried through with a rapid step to the sleeping chamber beyond, followed closely by Lord Glenvarloch, whose reluctance to approach the scene of butchery was altogether lost in the anxiety which he felt on account of the survivor of the tragedy.

Her first action was to pull aside the curtains of her father's bed. The bed-clothes were thrown aside in confusion, doubtless in the action of his starting from sleep to oppose the entrance of the villains into the next apartment. The hard mattress scarcely showed the slight pressure where the emaciated body of the old miser had been deposited. His daughter sank beside the bed, clasped her hands, and prayed to Heaven, in a short and affecting manner, for support in her affliction, and for vengeance on the villains who had made her fatherless. A low muttered and still more brief petition recommended to Heaven the soul of the sufferer, and invoked pardon for his sins, in virtue of the great Christian atonement.

This duty of piety performed, she signed to Nigel to aid her; and, having pushed aside the heavy bedstead, they saw the brass plate which Martha had described. She pressed the spring, and at once the plate, starting up, showed the keyhole, and a large iron ring used in lifting the trap-door, which, when raised, displayed the strong box, or small chest, she had mentioned, and which proved indeed so very weighty, that it might perhaps have been scarcely possible for Nigel, though a very strong man, to have raised it without assistance.

Having replaced everything as they had found it, Nigel, with such help as his companion was able to afford, assumed his load, and made a shift to carry it into the next apartment, where lay the miserable owner, insensible to sounds and circumstances, which, if anything could have broken his long last slumber, would certainly have done so.

His unfortunate daughter went up to his body, and had even the courage to remove the sheet which had been decently disposed over it. She put her hand on the heart, but there was no throb—held a feather to the lips, but there was no motion—then kissed with deep reverence the starting veins of the pale forehead, and then the emaciated hand.

'I would you could hear me,' she said,—'Father! I would you could hear me swear, that, if I now save what you most valued on earth, it is only to assist me in obtaining vengeance for your death!'

She replaced the covering, and, without a tear, a sigh, or an additional word of any kind, renewed her efforts, until they conveyed the strong-box betwixt them into Lord Glenvarloch's sleeping apartment. 'It must pass,' she said, 'as part of your baggage. I will be in readiness so soon as the waterman calls.'

She retired; and Lord Glenvarloch, who saw the hour of their departure approach, tore down a part of the old hanging to make a covering, which he corded upon the trunk, lest the peculiarity of its shape, and the care with which it was banded and counter-banded with bars of steel, might afford suspicions respecting the treasure which it contained. Having taken this measure of precaution, he changed the rascally disguise, which he had assumed on entering Whitefriars, into a suit becoming his quality, and then, unable to sleep, though exhausted with the events of the night, he threw himself on his bed to await the summons of the waterman.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Give us good voyage, gentle stream—we stun not
Thy sober ear with sounds of revelry;
Wake not the slumbering echoes of thy banks
With voice of flute and horn—we do but seek
On the broad pathway of thy swelling bosom
To glide in silent safety.

THE DOUBLE BRIDAL.

GREY, or rather yellow light, was beginning to twinkle through the fogs of Whitefriars, when a low tap at the door of the unhappy miser announced to Lord Glenvarloch the summons of the boatman. He found at the door the man whom he had seen the night before, with a companion.

'Come, come, master, let us get afloat,' said one of them, in a rough, impressive whisper; 'time and tide wait for no man.'

'They shall not wait for me,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'but I have some things to carry with me.'

'Ay, ay—no man will take a pair of oars now, Jack, unless he means to load the wherry like a six-horse waggon. When they don't want to shift the whole kitt, they take a sculler, and be d——d to them.—Come, come, where be your rattletraps?'

One of the men was soon sufficiently loaded, in his own estimation at least, with Lord Glenvarloch's mail and its accompaniments, with which burden he began to trudge towards the Temple Stairs. His comrade, who seemed the principal, began to handle the trunk which contained the miser's treasure, but pitched it down again in an instant, declaring, with a great oath, that it was as reasonable to expect a man to carry Paul's on his back. The daughter of Trapbois, who had by this time joined them, muffled up in a long dark hood and mantle, exclaimed to Lord Glenvarloch—'Let them leave it if they will—let them leave it all; let us but escape from this horrible place.'

We have mentioned somewhere that Nigel was a very athletic young man, and, impelled by a strong feeling of compassion and indignation, he showed his bodily strength singularly on this occasion, by seizing on the ponderous strong-box, and, by means of the rope he had cast around it, throwing it on his shoulders, and marching resolutely forward under a weight which would have sunk to the earth three young gallants, at the least, of our degenerate day. The waterman followed him in amazement, calling out, 'Why, master, master, you might as well gie me t'other end on't!' and anon offered his assistance to support it in some degree behind, which, after the first minute or two, Nigel was fain to accept. His strength was almost exhausted when he reached the wherry, which was lying at the Temple Stairs according to appoint-

ment; and, when he pitched the trunk into it, the weight sank the bow of the boat so low in the water as well-nigh to overset it.

'We shall have as hard a fare of it,' said the waterman to his companion, 'as if we were ferrying over an honest bankrupt with all his secreted goods—Ho, ho! good woman, what are you stepping in for?—our gunwale lies deep enough in the water without live lumber to boot.'

'This person comes with me,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'she is for the present under my protection.'

'Come, come, master,' rejoined the fellow, 'that is out of my commission. 'You must not double my freight on me—she may go by the land—and as for protection, her face will protect her from Berwick to the Land's End.'

'You will not except at my doubling the loading, if I double the fare?' said Nigel, determined on no account to relinquish the protection of this unhappy woman, for which he had already devised some sort of plan, likely now to be baffled by the characteristic rudeness of the Thames watermen.

'Ay, by G—, but I will except though,' said the fellow with the green plush jacket; 'I will overload my wherry neither for love nor money—I love my boat as well as my wife, and a thought better.'

'Nay, nay, comrade,' said his mate, 'that is speaking no true water language. For double fare we are bound to row a witch in her eggshell if she bid us; and so pull away, Jack, and let us have no more prating.'

They got into the stream-way accordingly, and, although heavily laden, began to move down the river with reasonable speed.

The lighter vessels which passed, overtook, or crossed them in their course, failed not to assail them with the boisterous raillery which was then called water-wit; for which the extreme plainness of Mistress Martha's features, contrasted with the youth, handsome figure, and good looks of Nigel, furnished the principal topics; while the circumstance of the boat being somewhat overloaded did not escape their notice. They were hailed successively as a grocer's wife upon a party of pleasure with her eldest apprentice—as an old woman carrying her grandson to school—and as a young strapping Irishman, conveying an ancient maiden to Dr. Rigmarole's at Redriffe, who buckles beggars for a tester and a dram of Geneva. All this abuse was retorted in a similar strain of humour by Green-jacket and his companion, who maintained the war of wit with the same alacrity with which they were assailed.

Meanwhile Lord Glenvarloch asked his desolate companion if she had thought on any place where she could remain in safety with her property. She confessed in more detail than formerly that her father's character had left her no friends; and that, from the time he had betaken himself to Whitefriars, to escape certain legal consequences of his eager pursuit of gain, she had lived a life of total seclusion; not associating with the society which the place afforded, and, by her residence there, as well as her father's parsimony, effectually cut off from all other company. What she now wished was, in the first place, to obtain the shelter of a decent lodging, and the countenance of honest people, however low in life, until she should obtain legal advice as to the mode of obtaining justice on her father's murderer. She had no hesitation to charge the guilt upon Colepepper (commonly called Peppercull), whom she knew to be as capable of any act of treacherous cruelty, as he was cowardly where actual manhood was required. He had been strongly suspected of two robberies before, one of which was coupled with an atrocious murder. He had, she intimated, made pretensions to her hand as the easiest and safest way of obtaining possession of her father's wealth; and, on her refusing his addresses, if they could be termed so, in the most positive terms, he had thrown out such obscure hints of vengeance, as, joined with some imperfect assaults upon the house, had kept her in frequent alarm both on her father's account and her own.

Nigel, but that his feeling of respectful delicacy to the unfortunate woman forbade him to do so, could here have communicated a circumstance corroborative of her suspicions, which had already occurred to his own mind. He recollected the hint that old Hildebrod threw forth on the preceding night, that some communication betwixt himself and Colepepper had hastened the catastrophe. As this communication related to the plan which Hildebrod had been pleased to form, of promoting a marriage betwixt Nigel himself and the rich heiress of Trapbois, the fear of losing an opportunity not to be regained, together with the mean malignity of a low-bred ruffian, disappointed in a favourite scheme, was most likely to instigate the bravo to the deed of violence which had been committed. The reflection that his own name was in some degree implicated with the causes of this horrid tragedy, doubled Lord Glenvarloch's anxiety in behalf of the victim whom he had rescued, while at the same time he formed the tacit resolution, that, so soon as his own affairs were put upon some footing, he would contribute all in his power towards the investigation of this bloody affair.

After ascertaining from his companion that she could form no better plan of her own, he recommended to her to take up her lodging for the time at the house of his old landlord, Christie the ship-chandler, at Paul's Wharf, describing the decency and honesty of that worthy couple, and expressing his hopes that they would receive her into their own house, or recommend her at least to that of some person for whom they would be responsible, until she should have time to enter upon other arrangements for herself.

The poor woman received advice so grateful to her in her desolate condition with an expression of thanks, brief indeed, but deeper than anything had yet extracted from the austerity of her natural disposition.

Lord Glenvarloch then proceeded to inform Martha, that certain reasons, connected with his personal safety, called him immediately to Greenwich, and, therefore, it would not be in his power to accompany her to Christie's house, which he would otherwise have done with pleasure; but, tearing a leaf from his tablet, he

wrote on it a few lines, addressed to his landlord, as a man of honesty and humanity, in which he described the bearer as a person who stood in singular necessity of temporary protection and good advice, for which her circumstances enabled her to make ample acknowledgment. He therefore requested John Christie, as his old and good friend, to afford her the shelter of his roof for a short time; or, if that might not be consistent with his convenience, at least to direct her to a proper lodging and, finally, he imposed on him the additional, and somewhat more difficult commission, to recommend her to the counsel and services of an honest, at least a reputable and skilful attorney, for the transacting some law business of importance. This note he subscribed with his real name, and, delivering it to his *protégée*, who received it with another deeply uttered 'I thank you,' which spoke the sterling feelings of her gratitude better than a thousand combined phrases, he commanded the watermen to pull in for Paul's Wharf, which they were now approaching.

'We have not time,' said Green-jacket; 'we cannot be stopping every instant.'

But, upon Nigel insisting upon his commands being obeyed, and adding, that it was for the purpose of putting the lady ashore, the waterman declared he would rather have her room than her company, and put the wherry alongside of the wharf accordingly. Here two of the porters, who ply in such places, were easily induced to undertake the charge of the ponderous strong-box, and at the same time to guide the owner to the well-known mansion of John Christie, with whom all who lived in that neighbourhood were perfectly acquainted.

The boat, much lightened of its load, went down the Thames at a rate increased in proportion. But we must forbear to pursue her in her voyage for a few minutes, since we have previously to mention the issue of Lord Glenvarloch's recommendation.

Mistress Martha Trapbois reached the shop in perfect safety, and was about to enter it, when a sickening sense of the uncertainty of her situation, and of the singularly painful task of telling her story, came over her so strongly, that she paused a moment at the very threshold of her proposed place of refuge, to think in what manner she could best second the recommendation of the friend whom Providence had raised up to her. Had she possessed that knowledge of the world from which her habits of life had completely excluded her, she might have known that the large sum of money which she brought along with her, might, judiciously managed, have been a passport to her into the mansions of nobles, and the palaces of princes. But, however conscious of its general power, which assumes so many forms and complexions, she was so inexperienced as to be most unnecessarily afraid that the means by which the wealth had been acquired might exclude its inheritrix from shelter even in the house of a humble tradesman.

While she thus delayed, a more reasonable cause for hesitation arose, in a considerable noise and altercation within the house, which grew louder and louder as the disputants issued forth upon the street or lane before the door.

The first who entered upon the scene was a tall, raw-boned, hard-favoured man, who stalked out of the shop hastily, with a gait like that of a Spaniard in a passion, who, disdaining to add speed to his locomotion by running, only condescends, in the utmost extremity of his angry haste, to add length to his stride. He faced about so soon as he was out of his house, upon his pursuer, a decent-looking, elderly, plain tradesman—no less than John Christie himself, the owner of the shop and tenement, by whom he seemed to be followed, and who was in a state of agitation more than is usually expressed by such a person.

'I'll hear no more on't,' said the personage who first appeared on the scene—'Sir, I will hear no more on it. Besides being a most false and impudent figment, as I can testify, it is *scandaalum magnaatum*, sir—*scandaalum magnaatum*,' he reiterated, with a broad accentuation of the first vowel, well known in the colleges of Edinburgh and Glasgow, which we can only express in print by doubling the said first of letters and of vowels, and which would have cheered the cockles of the reigning monarch had he been within hearing—as he was a severer stickler for what he deemed the genuine pronunciation of the Roman tongue, than for any of the royal prerogatives for which he was at times disposed to insist so strenuously in his speeches to Parliament.

'I care not an ounce of rotten cheese,' said John Christie in reply, 'what you call it—but it is TRUE; and I am a free Englishman, and have right to speak the truth in my own concerns; and your master is little better than a villain, and you no more than a swaggering coxcomb, whose head I will presently break, as I have known it well broken before on lighter occasion.'

And so saying, he flourished the paring-shovel which usually made clean the steps of his little shop, and which he had caught up as the readiest weapon of working his foeman damage, and advanced therewith upon him. The cautious Scot (for such our readers must have already pronounced him, from his language and pedantry) drew back as the enraged ship-chandler approached, but in a surly manner, and bearing his hand on his sword-hilt rather in the act of one who was losing habitual forbearance and caution of deportment, than as alarmed by the attack of an antagonist inferior to himself in youth, strength, and weapons.

'Bide back,' he said, 'Maister Christie—I say bide back, and consult your safety, man. I have evited striking you in your ain house under muckle provocation, because I am ignorant how the laws here may pronounce respecting burglary and hame-sucken, and such matters; and, besides, I would not willingly hurt ye, man, e'en on the causeway, that is free to us baith, because I mind your kindness of lang syne, and partly consider ye as a poor deceived creature. But deil d—n me, sir, and I am not wont to swear, but if you touch my Scotch shouther with that shule of yours, I will make six inches of my Andrew Ferrara deeviiish intimate with your guts, neighbour.'

And therewithal, though still retreating from

the brandished shovel, he made one third of the basket-hilted broadsword which he wore visible from the sheath. The wrath of John Christie was abated, either by his natural temperance of disposition, or perhaps in part by the glimmer of cold steel, which flashed on him from his adversary's last action.

'I would do well to cry clubs on thee, and have thee ducked at the wharf,' he said, grounding his shovel, however, at the same time, 'for a paltry swaggerer, that would draw thy bit of iron there on an honest citizen before his own door; but get thee gone, and reckon on a salt eel for thy supper if thou wouldst ever come near my house again. I wish it had been at the bottom of Thames when it first gave the use of its roof to smooth-faced, oily-tongued, double-minded Scots thieves!'

'It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest,' replied his adversary, not perhaps the less bold that he saw matters were taking the turn of a pacific debate; 'and a pity it is that a kindly Scot should ever have married in foreign parts, and given life to a purse-proud, pudding-headed, fat-gutted, lean-brained Southron, e'en such as you, Maister Christie. But fare ye weel—fare ye weel, for ever and a day; and if you quarrel wi' a Scot again, man, say as mickle ill o' himsel' as you like, but say nane of his patron or of his countrymen, or it will scarce be your flat cap that will keep your lang lugs from the sharp abridgment of a Highland whinger, man.'

'And if you continue your insolence to me before my own door, were it but two minutes longer,' retorted John Christie, 'I will call the constable, and make your Scottish ankles acquainted with an English pair of stocks.'

So saying, he turned to retire into his shop with some show of victory; for his enemy, whatever might be his innate valour, manifested no desire to drive matters to extremity—conscious, perhaps, that whatever advantage he might gain in single combat with John Christie would be more than overbalanced by incurring an affair with the constituted authorities of Old England, not at that time apt to be particularly favourable to their new fellow-subjects, in the various successive broils which were then constantly taking place between the individuals of two proud nations, who still retained a stronger sense of their national animosity during centuries, than of their late union for a few years under the government of the same prince.

Mistress Martha Trapbois had dwelt too long in Alsatia to be either suprised or terrified at the altercation she had witnessed. Indeed, she only wondered that the debate did not end in some of those acts of violence by which they were usually terminated in the sanctuary. As the disputants separated from each other, she, who had no idea that the cause of the quarrel was more deeply rooted than in the daily scenes of the same nature which she had heard of or witnessed, did not hesitate to stop Master Christie in his return to his shop, and present to him the letter which Lord Glenvarloch had given to her. Had she been better acquainted with life and its business, she would certainly have waited for a more temperate moment; and she had reason to repent of her precipitation, when, without saying a single word, or taking the trouble to gather more of the information contained in the letter than was expressed in the subscription, the incensed ship-chandler threw it down on the ground, trampled it in high disdain, and without addressing a single word to the bearer, except, indeed, something much more like a hearty curse than was perfectly consistent with his own grave appearance, he retired into his shop and shut the hatch-door.

It was with the most inexpressible anguish that the desolate, friendless, and unhappy female thus beheld her sole hope of succour, countenance, and protection vanish at once, without being able to conceive a reason; for, to do her justice, the idea that her friend, whom she knew by the name of Nigel Grahame, had imposed on her—a solution which might readily have occurred to many in her situation—never once entered her mind. Although it was not her temper easily to bend her mind to entreaty, she could not help exclaiming after the ireful and retreating ship-chandler—'Good master, hear me but a moment! for mercy's sake—for honesty's sake!'

'Mercy and honesty from him, mistress!' said the Scot, who, though he essayed not to interrupt the retreat of his antagonist, still kept stout possession of the field of action, 'ye might as weel expect brandy from bean-stalks, or milk from a crag of blue whunstane. The man is mad, horn mad, to boot.'

'I must have mistaken the person to whom the letter was addressed, then;' and, as she spoke, Mistress Martha Trapbois was in the act of stooping to lift the paper which had been so uncourteously received. Her companion, with natural civility, anticipated her purpose; but, what was not quite so much in etiquette, he took a sly glance at it as he was about to hand it to her, and his eye having caught the subscription, he said with surprise, 'Glenvarloch—Nigel Olifaunt of Glenvarloch? Do you know the Lord Glenvarloch, mistress?'

'I know not of whom you speak,' said Mistress Martha peevishly. 'I had that paper from one Master Nigel Gram.'

'Nigel Grahame!—umph.—On, ay, very true—I had forgot,' said the Scotsman. 'A tall, well-set young man, about my height; bright blue eyes like a hawk's; a pleasant speech, something leaning to the kindly north-country accentuation, but not much, in respect of his having been resident abroad?'

'All this is true—and what of it all?' said the daughter of the miser.

'Hair of my complexion?'

'Yours is red,' replied she.

'I pray you, peace,' said the Scotsman. 'I was going to say—of my complexion, but with a deeper shade of the chestnut. Weel, mistress, if I have guessed the man aright, he is one with whom I am, and have been, intimate and familiar—nay, I may truly say I have done him much service in my time, and may live to do him more. I had indeed a sincere good-will for him, and I doubt he has been much at a loss since we parted; but the fault is not mine. Wherefore, as this letter will not avail you with him to whom it is directed, you may believe that Heaven hath sent

it to me, who have a special regard for the writer —I have, besides, as much mercy and honesty within me as a man can weel make his bread with, and am willing to aid any distressed creature that is my friend's friend with my counsel and otherwise, so that I am not put to much charges, being in a strange country, like a poor lamb that has wandered from its ain native hirsel, and leaves a tait of its woo' in every d—d Southern bramble that comes across it.' While he spoke thus, he read the contents of the letter without waiting for permission, and then continued—'And so this is all that you are wanting, my dove? nothing more than safe and honourable lodging and sustenance, upon your own charges?'

'Nothing more,' said she. 'If you are a man and a Christian, you will help me to what I need so much.'

'A man I am,' replied the formal Caledonian, 'e'en sic as ye see me; and a Christian I may call myself, though unworthy, and though I have heard little pure doctrine since I came hither—a' polluted with men's devices—ahem! Weel, and if ye be an honest woman' (here he peeped under her muffler), 'as an honest woman ye seem likely to be—though, let me tell you, they are a kind of cattle not so rife in the streets of this city as I would desire them—I was almost strangled with my own band by twa rampallians, wha wanted yestreen, nae further gane, to harle me into a change-house—however, if ye be a decent, honest woman' (here he took another peep at features certainly bearing no beauty which could infer suspicion), 'as decent and honest ye seem to be, why, I will advise you to a decent house, where you will get douce, quiet entertainment, on reasonable terms, and the occasional benefit of my own counsel and direction—that is, from time to time, as my other avocations may permit.'

'May I venture to accept of such an offer from a stranger?' said Martha, with natural hesitation.

'Troth, I see nothing to hinder you, mistress,' replied the bonny Scot; 'ye can but see the place, and do after as ye think best. Besides, we are nae such strangers, neither; for I know your friend, and you, it's like, know mine, whilk knowledge, on either hand, is a medium of communication between us, even as the middle of the string connecteth its twa ends or extremities. But I will enlarge on this further as we pass along, gin ye list to bid your twa lazy loons of porters there lift up your little kist between them, whilk ae true Scotsman might carry under his arm. Let me tell you, mistress, ye will soon make a toom pock-end of it in Lon'on, if you hire twa knaves to do the work of ane.'

So saying, he led the way, followed by Mistress Martha Trapbois, whose singular destiny, though it had heaped her with wealth, had left her, for the moment, no wiser counsellor, or more distinguished protector, than honest Richie Moniplies, a discarded serving man.

CHAPTER XXVII.

This way lie safety and a sure retreat;
Yonder lie danger, shame, and punishment.
Most welcome danger, then—Nay, let me say,
Though spoke with swelling heart—welcome e'en shame;
And welcome punishment—for, call me guilty,
I do but pay the tax that's due to justice;
And call me guiltless, then that punishment
Is shame to those alone who do inflict it.

THE TRIBUNAL.

We left Lord Glenvarloch, to whose fortunes our story chiefly attaches itself, gliding swiftly down the Thames. He was not, as the reader may have observed, very affable in his disposition, or apt to enter into conversation with those into whose company he was casually thrown. This was, indeed, an error in his conduct, arising less from pride, though of that feeling we do not pretend to exculpate him, than from a sort of bashful reluctance to mix in the conversation of those with whom he was not familiar. It is a fault only to be cured by experience and knowledge of the world, which soon teaches every sensible and acute person the important lesson, that amusement, and, what is of more consequence, that information and increase of knowledge, are to be derived from the conversation of every individual whatsoever with whom he is thrown into a natural train of communication. For ourselves, we can assure the reader—and perhaps, if we have ever been able to afford him amusement, it is owing in a great degree to this cause—that we never found ourselves in company with the stupidest of all possible companions in a post-chaise, or with the most arrant cumber-corner that ever occupied a place in the mail-coach, without finding that, in the course of our conversation with him, we had some ideas suggested to us, either grave or gay, or some information communicated in the course of our journey, which we should have regretted not to have learned, and which we should be sorry to have immediately forgotten. But Nigel was somewhat immured within the Bastile of his rank, as some philosopher (Tom Paine, we think) has happily enough expressed that sort of shyness which men of dignified situations are apt to be beset with, rather from not exactly knowing how far, or with whom, they ought to be familiar, than from any real touch of aristocratic pride. Besides, the immediate pressure of our adventurer's own affairs was such as exclusively to engross his attention.

He sat, therefore, wrapped in his cloak, in the stern of the boat, with his mind entirely bent upon the probable issue of the interview with his sovereign, which it was his purpose to seek; for which abstraction of mind he may be fully justified, although perhaps, by questioning the watermen who were transporting him down the river, he might have discovered matters of high concernment to him.

At any rate, Nigel remained silent till the wherry approached the town of Greenwich, when he commanded the men to put in for the nearest landing-place, as it was his purpose to go ashore there, and dismiss them from further attendance.

'That is not possible,' said the fellow with the green jacket, who, as we have already said,

seemed to take on himself the charge of pilotage. 'We must go,' he continued, 'to Gravesend, where a Scottish vessel, which dropped down the river last tide for the very purpose, lies with her anchor a-peak, waiting to carry you to your own dear northern country. Your hammock is slung, and all is ready for you, and you talk of going ashore at Greenwich, as seriously as if such a thing were possible!'

'I see no impossibility,' said Nigel, 'in your landing me where I desire to be landed; but very little possibility of your carrying me anywhere I am not desirous of going.'

'Why, whether do you manage the wherry, or we, master?' asked Green-jacket, in a tone betwixt jest and earnest; 'I take it she will go the way we row her.'

'Ay,' retorted Nigel, 'but I take it you will row her on the course I direct you, otherwise your chance of payment is but a poor one.'

'Suppose we are content to risk that,' said the undaunted waterman, 'I wish to know how you, who talk so big—I mean no offence, master, but you *do* talk big—would help yourself in such a case?'

'Simply thus,' answered Lord Glenvarloch. 'You saw me, an hour since, bring down to the boat a trunk that neither of you could lift. If we are to contest the destination of our voyage, the same strength which tossed that chest into the wherry will suffice to fling you out of it; wherefore, before we begin the scuffle, I pray you to remember that whither I would go, there I will oblige you to carry me.'

'Gramercy for your kindness,' said Green-jacket; 'and now mark me in return. My comrade and I are two men—and you, were you as stout as George-a-Green, can pass but for one; and two, you will allow, are more than a match for one. You mistake your reckoning, my friend.'

'It is you who mistake,' answered Nigel, who began to grow warm; 'it is I who am three to two, sirrah—I carry two men's lives at my girdle.'

So saying, he opened his cloak and showed the two pistols which he had disposed at his girdle. Green-jacket was unmoved at the display.

'I have got,' said he, 'a pair of barkers that will match yours,' and he showed that he also was armed with pistols; 'so you may begin as soon as ye list.'

'Then,' said Lord Glenvarloch, drawing forth and cocking a pistol, 'the sooner the better. Take notice, I hold you as a ruffian, who have declared you will put force on my person; and that I will shoot you through the head if you do not instantly put me ashore at Greenwich.'

The other waterman, alarmed at Nigel's gesture, lay upon his oar; but Green-jacket replied coolly—'Look you, master, I should not care a tester to venture a life with you on this matter; but the truth is I am employed to do you good, and not to do you harm.'

'By whom are you employed?' said the Lord Glenvarloch; 'or who dare concern themselves in me, or my affairs, without my authority?'

'As to that,' answered the waterman, in the same tone of indifference, 'I shall not show my commission. For myself, I care not, as I said, whether you land at Greenwich to get yourself hanged, or go down to get aboard the Royal Thistle, to make your escape to your own country; you will be equally out of my reach either way. But it is fair to put the choice before you.'

'My choice is made,' said Nigel. 'I have told you thrice already it is my pleasure to be landed at Greenwich.'

'Write it on a piece of paper,' said the waterman, 'that such is your positive will; I must have something to show to my employers, that the transgression of their orders lies with yourself, not with me.'

'I choose to hold this trinket in my hand for the present,' said Nigel, showing his pistol, 'and will write you the acquittance when I go ashore.'

'I would not go ashore with you for a hundred pieces,' said the waterman. Ill luck has ever attended you, except in small gaming; do me fair justice, and give me the testimony I desire. If you are afraid of foul play while you write it, you may hold my pistols if you will.' He offered the weapons to Nigel accordingly, who, while they were under his control, and all possibility of his being taken at advantage was excluded, no longer hesitated to give the waterman an acknowledgment, in the following terms:—

'Jack in the Green, with his mate, belonging to the wherry called the Jolly Raven, have done their duty faithfully by me, landing me at Greenwich by my express command; and being themselves willing and desirous to carry me on board the Royal Thistle, presently lying at Gravesend.' Having finished this acknowledgment, which he signed with the letters, N. O. G. as indicating his name and title, he again requested to know of the waterman, to whom he delivered it, the name of his employers.

'Sir,' replied Jack in the Green, 'I have respected your secret, do not you seek to pry into mine. It would do you no good to know for whom I am taking this present trouble; and, to be brief, you shall not know it and if you will fight in the quarrel, as you said even now, the sooner we begin the better. Only this you may be cock-sure of, that we designed you no harm, and that, if you fall into any, it will be of your own wilful seeking.' As he spoke, he approached the landing-place, where Nigel instantly jumped ashore. The waterman placed his small mail-trunk on the stairs, observing that there were plenty of spare hands about, to carry it where he would.

'We part friends, I hope, my lads?' said the young nobleman, offering at the same time a piece of money more than double the usual fare, to the boatman.

'We part as we met,' answered Green-jacket; 'and, for your money, I am paid sufficiently with this bit of paper. Only, if you owe me any love for the cast I have given you, I pray you not to dive so deep into the pockets of the next apprentice that you find fool enough to play the cavalier.—And you, you greedy swine,' said he to his companion, who still had a longing eye fixed on the money which Nigel continued to offer, 'push off, or, if I take a stretcher in hand, I'll break the knave's pate of thee.' The fellow pushed off, as he was commanded, but still could not help muttering, 'This was entirely out of watermen's rules.'

Glenvarloch, though without the devotion of

the 'injured Thales' of the moralist to the memory of that great princess, had now attained

The hallow'd soil which gave Eliza birth,

whose halls were now less respectably occupied by her successor. It was not, as has been well shown by a late author, that James was void either of parts or of good intentions; and his predecessor was at least as arbitrary in effect as he was in theory. But while Elizabeth possessed a sternness of masculine sense and determination which rendered even her w[redacted]; some of which were in themselves sufficiently ridiculous, in a certain degree respectable, James, on the other hand, was so utterly devoid of 'firm resolve,' so well called by the Scottish bard

The stalk of carle-hemp in man,

that even his virtues and his good meaning became laughable, from the whimsical uncertainty of his conduct; so that the wisest things he ever said, and the best actions he ever did, were often touched with a strain of the ludicrous and fidgety character of the man. Accordingly, though at different periods of his reign he contrived to acquire with his people a certain degree of temporary popularity, it never long outlived the occasion which produced it; so true it is, that the mass of mankind will respect a monarch stained with actual guilt, more than one whose foibles render him only ridiculous.

To return from this digression, Lord Glenvarloch soon received, as Green-jacket had assured him, the offer of an idle bargeman to transport his baggage where he listed; but that *where* was a question of momentary doubt. At length, recollecting the necessity that his hair and beard should be properly arranged before he attempted to enter the royal presence, and desirous, at the same time, of obtaining some information of the motions of the sovereign and of the court, he desired to be guided to the next barber's shop, which we have already mentioned as the place where news of every kind circled and centred. He was speedily shown the way to such an emporium of intelligence, and soon found he was likely to hear all he desired to know, and much more, while his head was subjected to the art of a nimble tonsor, the glibness of whose tongue kept pace with the nimbleness of his fingers, while he ran on, without stint or stop, in the following excursive manner:—

'The court here, master?—yes, master—much to the advantage of trade—good custom stirring. His Majesty loves Greenwich—hunts every morning in the park—all decent persons admitted that have the entries of the palace—no rabble—frightened the King's horse with their hallooing, the uncombed slaves.—Yes, sir, the beard more peaked? Yes, master, so it is worn. I know the last cut—dress several of the courtiers—one valet-of-the-chamber, two pages of the body, the clerk of the kitchen, three running footmen, two dog-boys, and an honourable Scottish knight, Sir Munko Malgrowler.'

'Malagrowther, I suppose?' said Nigel, thrusting in his conjectural emendation, with infinite difficulty, betwixt two clauses in the barber's text.

'Yes, sir—Malcrowder, sir, as you say, sir—hard names the Scots have, sir, for an English mouth. Sir Munko is a handsome person, sir—perhaps you know him—bating the loss of his fingers, and the lameness of his leg, and the length of his chin. Sir, it takes me one minute twelve seconds more time to trim that chin of his, than any chin that I know in the town of Greenwich, sir. But he is a very comely gentleman, for all that; and a pleasant—a very pleasant gentleman, sir—and a good-humoured, saving that he is so deaf he can never hear good of any one, and so wise that he can never believe it; but he is a very good-natured gentleman for all that, except when one speaks too low, or when a hair turns awry.—Did I graze you, sir? We shall put it to rights in a moment, with one drop of styptic—my styptic, or rather my wife's, sir—She makes the water herself. One drop of the styptic, sir, and a bit of black taffeta patch, just big enough to be the saddle to a flea, sir—Yes, sir, rather improves than otherwise. The Prince had a patch the other day, and so had the Duke; and, if you will believe me, there are seventeen yards three-quarters of black taffeta already cut into patches for the courtiers.'

'But Sir Mungo Malagrowther?' again interjected Nigel, with difficulty.

'Ay, ay, sir—Sir Munko, as you say; a pleasant, good-humoured gentleman as ever—To be spoken with, did you say? O ay, easily to be spoken withal, that is, as easily as his infirmity will permit. He will presently, unless some one hath asked him forth to breakfast, be taking his bone of broiled beef at my neighbour Ned Kilderkin's yonder, removed from over the way. Ned keeps an eating-house, sir, famous for pork-griskins; but Sir Munko cannot abide pork, no more than the King's most sacred Majesty,* nor my Lord Duke of Lennox, nor Lord Dalgarno,—nay, I am sure, sir, if I touched you this time, it was your fault, not mine.—But a single drop of the styptic, another little patch that would make a doublet for a flea, just under the left moustache; it will become you when you smile, sir, as well as a dimple; and if you would salute your fair mistress—but I beg pardon, you are a grave gentleman, very grave to be so young.—Hope I have given no offence; it is my duty to entertain customers—my duty, sir, and my pleasure.—Sir Munko Malcrowther?—yes, sir, I daresay he is at this moment in Ned's eating-house, for few folks ask him out, now Lord Huntinglen is gone to London. You will get touched again—yes, sir—there you shall find him with his can of single ale, stirred with a sprig of rosemary, for he never drinks strong potations, sir, unless to oblige Lord Huntinglen—take heed, sir—or any other person who asks him forth to breakfast—but single beer he always drinks at Ned's, with his broiled bone of beef or mutton—or, it may be, lamb at the season—but not pork, though Ned is famous for his griskins. But the Scots never eat pork—strange that!

* The Scots, till within the last generation, disliked swine's flesh as an article of food as much as the Highlanders do at present. It was remarked as extraordinary rapacity, when the Border depredators condescended to make prey of the accursed race whom the fiend made his habitation. Ben Jonson, in drawing James's character, says, he loved 'no part of a swine.'

some folks think they are a sort of Jews. There is a resemblance, sir—Do you not think so? Then they call our most gracious sovereign the second Solomon, and Solomon, you know, was king of the Jews; so the thing bears a face, you see. I believe, sir, you will find yourself trimmed now to your content. I will be judged by the fair mistress of your affections. Crave pardon—no offence, I trust. Pray, consult the glass—one touch of the crisping-tongs to reduce this straggler.—Thank your munificence, sir,—hope your custom while you stay in Greenwich. Would you have a tune on that ghittern, to put your temper in concord for the day?—Twang, twang—twang, twang, dillo. Something out of tune, sir—too many hands to touch it—we cannot keep these things like artists. Let me help you with your cloak, sir—yes, sir—You would not play yourself, sir, would you?—Way to Sir Munko's eating-house?—Yes, sir; but it is Ned's eating-house, not Sir Munko's.—The knight, to be sure, eats there, and that makes it his eating-house in some sense, sir, ha, ha! Yonder it is, removed from over the way, new whitewashed posts, and red lattice—fat man in his doublet at the door—Ned himself, sir—worth a thousand pounds, they say—better singeing pigs' faces than trimming courtiers—but ours is the less mechanical vocation.—Farewell, sir; hope your custom.' So saying, he at length permitted Nigel to depart, whose ears, so long tormented with his continual babble, tingled when it had ceased, as if a bell had been rung close to them for the same space of time.

Upon his arrival at the eating-house, where he proposed to meet with Sir Mungo Malagrowther, from whom, in despair of better advice, he trusted to receive some information as to the best mode of introducing himself into the royal presence, Lord Glenvarloch found, in the host with whom he communed, the consequential taciturnity of an Englishman well to pass in the world. Ned Kilderkin spoke as a banker writes, only touching the needful. Being asked if Sir Mungo Malagrowther was there, he replied, No. Being interrogated whether he was expected, he said, Yes. And, being required to say *when* he was expected, he answered, Presently. As Lord Glenvarloch next inquired, whether he himself could have any breakfast, the landlord wasted not even a syllable in reply, but, ushering him into a neat room where there were several tables, he placed one of them before an arm-chair, and, beckoning Lord Glenvarloch to take possession, he set before him, in a very few minutes, a substantial repast of roast beef, together with a foaming tankard, to which refreshment the keen air of the river disposed him, notwithstanding his mental embarrassments, to do much honour.

While Nigel was thus engaged in discussing his commons, but raising his head at the same time whenever he heard the door of the apartment open, eagerly desiring the arrival of Sir Mungo Malagrowther (an event which had seldom been expected by any one with so much anxious interest), a personage, as it seemed, of at least equal importance with the knight, entered into the apartment, and began to hold earnest colloquy with the publican, who thought proper to carry on the conference on his side unbonneted. This important gentleman's occupation might be guessed from his dress. A milk-white jerkin, and hose of white kersey; a white apron twisted around his body in the manner of a sash, in which, instead of a warlike dagger, was stuck a long-bladed knife, hilted with buck's horn; a white nightcap on his head, under which his hair was neatly tucked, sufficiently portrayed him as one of those priests of Comus whom the vulgar call cooks; and the air with which he rated the publican for having neglected to send some provisions to the palace, showed that he ministered to royalty itself.

'This will never answer,' he said, 'Master Kilderkin—the King twice asked for sweetbreads and fricasseed coxcombs, which are a favourite dish of his most sacred Majesty, and they were not to be had, because Master Kilderkin had not supplied them to the clerk of the kitchen, as by bargain bound.' Here Kilderkin made some apology, brief, according to his own nature, and muttered in a lowly tone, after the fashion of all who find themselves in a scrape. His superior replied in a lofty strain of voice, 'Do not tell me of the carrier and his wain, and of the hen-coops coming from Norfolk with the poultry; a loyal man would have sent an express—he would have gone upon his stumps like Widdrington. What if the King had lost his appetite, Master Kilderkin? What if his most sacred Majesty had lost his dinner? O, Master Kilderkin, if you had but the just sense of the dignity of our profession, which is told of by the witty African slave, for so the King's most excellent Majesty designates him, Publius Terentius, *Tanquam in speculum—in patinas inspicere jubeo.*'

'You are learned, Master Linklater,' replied the English publican, compelling, as it were with difficulty, his mouth to utter three or four words consecutively.

'A poor smatterer,' said Master Linklater; 'but it would be a shame to us, who are his most excellent Majesty's countrymen, not in some sort to have cherished those arts wherewith he is so deeply imbued—*Regis ad exemplar*, Master Kilderkin, *totus componitur orbis*—which is as much as to say, as the king quotes the cook learns. In brief, Master Kilderkin, having had the luck to be bred where humanities may be had at the matter of an English five groats by the quarter, I, like others, have acquired—ahem—hem!'——Here, the speaker's eye having fallen upon Lord Glenvarloch, he suddenly stopped in his learned harangue, with such symptoms of embarrassment as induced Ned Kilderkin to stretch his taciturnity so far as not only to ask him what he ailed, but whether he would take anything.

'Ail nothing,' replied the learned rival of the philosophical Syrus; 'nothing—and yet I do feel a little giddy. I could taste a glass of your dame's *aqua mirabilis*.'

'I will fetch it,' said Ned, giving a nod; and his back was no sooner turned, than the cook walked near the table where Lord Glenvarloch was seated, and, regarding him with a look of significance, where more was meant than met the ear, said,—'You are a stranger in Greenwich, sir. I advise you to take the opportunity to step into the park—the western wicket was ajar

when I came hither; I think it will be locked presently, so you had better make the best of your way—that is, if you have any curiosity. The venison are coming into season just now, sir, and there is a pleasure in looking at a hart of grease. I always think, when they are bounding so blithely past, what a pleasure it would be to broach their plump haunches on a spit, and to embattle their breasts in a noble fortification of puff-paste, with plenty of black pepper.'

He said no more, as Kilderkin re-entered with the cordial, but edged off from Nigel without waiting any reply, only repeating the same look of intelligence with which he had accosted him.

Nothing makes men's wits so alert as personal danger. Nigel took the first opportunity which his host's attention to the yeoman of the royal kitchen permitted, to discharge his reckoning, and readily obtained a direction to the wicket in question. He found it upon the latch, as he had been taught to expect; and perceived that it admitted him to a narrow footpath, which traversed a close and tangled thicket, designed for the cover of the does and the young fawns. He conjectured it would be proper to wait; nor had he been stationary above five minutes, when the cook, scalded as much with heat of motion as ever he had been at his huge fireplace, arrived almost breathless, and with his pass key hastily locked the wicket behind him.

Ere Lord Glenvarloch had time to speculate upon this action, the man approached with anxiety, and said 'Good Lord, my Lord Glenvarloch!—why will you endanger yourself thus?'

'You know me, then, my friend?' said Nigel.

'Not much of that, my lord but I know your honour's noble house well. -My name is Laurie Linklater, my lord.'

'Linklater!' repeated Nigel. 'I should recollect'——

'Under your lordship's favour,' he continued, 'I was 'prentice, my lord, to old Mungo Moniplies, the flesher at the wanton West Port of Edinburgh, which I wish I saw again before I died. And your honour's noble father having taken Richie Moniplies into his house to wait on your lordship, there was a sort of connection, your lordship sees.'

'Ah!' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'I had almost forgot your name, but not your kind purpose. You tried to put Richie in the way of presenting a supplication to his Majesty?'

'Most true, my lord,' replied the king's cook. 'I had like to have come by mischief in the job; for Richie, who was always wilful, "wadna be guided by me," as the sang says. But nobody amongst these brave English cooks can kittle up his Majesty's most sacred palate with our own gusty Scottish dishes. So I e'en betook myself to my craft, and concocted a mess of friar's chicken for the soup, and a savoury haggis, that made the whole cabal coup the crans; and, instead of disgrace, I came by preferment. I am one of the clerks of the kitchen now, make me thankful—with a finger in the purveyor's office, and may get my whole hand in by and by.'

'I am truly glad,' said Nigel, 'to hear that you have not suffered on my account,—still more so at your good fortune.'

'You bear a kind heart, my lord,' said Linklater, 'and do not forget poor people; and troth, I see not why they should be forgotten, since the King's errand may sometimes fall in the cadger's gate. I have followed your lordship in the street, just to look at such a stately shoot of the old oak-tree; and my heart jumped into my throat, when I saw you sitting openly in the eating-house yonder, and knew there was such danger to your person.'

'What! there are warrants against me, then?' said Nigel.

'It is even true, my lord; and there are those are willing to blacken you as much as they can. —God forgive them that would sacrifice an honourable house for their own base ends!'

'Amen!' said Nigel.

'For, say your lordship may have been a little wild, like other young gentlemen'——

'We have little time to talk of it, my friend,' said Nigel. 'The point in question is, how am I to get speech of the King?'

'The King, my lord!' said Linklater, in astonishment; 'why, will not that be rushing wilfully into danger?—scalding yourself, as I may say, with your own ladle?'

'My good friend,' answered Nigel, 'my experience of the court, and my knowledge of the circumstances in which I stand, tell me that the manliest and most direct road is, in my case, the surest and the safest. The King has both a head to apprehend what is just, and a heart to do what is kind.'

'It is e'en true, my lord, and so we, his old servants, know,' added Linklater; 'but, woe's me, if you knew how many folks make it their daily and nightly purpose to set his head against his heart, and his heart against his head—to make him do hard things because they are called just, and unjust things, because they are represented as kind. Woe's me! it is with his sacred Majesty, and the favourites who work upon him, even according to the homely proverb that men taunt my calling with, "God sends good meat, but the devil sends cooks."'

'It signifies not talking of it, my good friend,' said Nigel; 'I must take my risk—my honour peremptorily demands it. They may maim me, or beggar me, but they shall not say I fled from my accusers. My peers shall hear my vindication.'

'Your peers?' exclaimed the cook—'Alack-a-day, my lord, we are not in Scotland, where the nobles can bang it out bravely, were it even with the King himself, now and then. This mess must be cooked in the Star Chamber, and that is an oven seven times heated, my lord;—and yet, if you are determined to see the King, I will not say but you may find some favour, for he likes well anything that is appealed directly to his own wisdom, and sometimes, in the like cases, I have known him stick by his own opinion, which is always a fair one. Only mind, if you will forgive me, my lord—mind to spice high with Latin; a curn or two of Greek would not be amiss; and if you can bring in anything about the judgment of Solomon, in the original Hebrew, and season with a merry jest or so, the dish will be the more palatable.—Truly, I think that, besides my skill in art, I

owe much to the stripes of the rector of the High School, who imprinted on my mind that cooking scene in the Heautontimorumenos.'

'Leaving that aside, my friend,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'can you inform me which way I shall most readily get to the sight and speech of the King?'

'To the sight of him readily enough,' said Linklater; 'he is galloping about these alleys, to see them strike the hart, to get him an appetite for a nooning—and that reminds me I should be in the kitchen. To the speech of the King you will not come so easily, unless you could either meet him alone, which rarely chances, or wait for him among the crowd that go to see him alight.—And now, farewell, my lord, and God speed!—if I could do more for you I would offer it.'

'You have done enough, perhaps, to endanger yourself,' said Lord Glenvarloch. 'I pray you to be gone, and leave me to my fate.'

The honest cook lingered, but a nearer burst of the horns apprised him that there was no time to lose; and, acquainting Nigel that he would leave the postern-door on the latch to secure his retreat in that direction, he bade God bless him, and farewell.

In the kindness of this humble countryman, flowing partly from national partiality, partly from a sense of long-remembered benefits, which had been scarce thought on by those who had bestowed them, Lord Glenvarloch thought he saw the last touch of sympathy which he was to receive in this cold and courtly region, and felt that he must now be sufficient to himself, or be utterly lost.

He traversed more than one alley, guided by the sounds of the chase, and met several of the inferior attendants upon the King's sport, who regarded him only as one of the spectators who were sometimes permitted to enter the park by the concurrence of the officers about the court. Still there was no appearance of James, or any of his principal courtiers, and Nigel began to think whether, at the risk of incurring disgrace similar to that which had attended the rash exploit of Richie Moniplies, he should not repair to the palace gate, in order to address the king on his return, when Fortune presented him the opportunity of doing so, in her own way.

He was in one of those long walks by which the park was traversed, when he heard first a distant rustling, then the rapid approach of hoofs shaking the firm earth on which he stood; then a distant halloo, warned by which he stood up by the side of the avenue, leaving free room for the passage of the chase. The stag, reeling, covered with foam, and blackened with sweat, his nostrils expanded as he gasped for breath, made a shift to come up as far as where Nigel stood, and, without turning to bay, was there pulled down by two tall greyhounds of the breed still used by the hardy deer-stalkers of the Scottish Highlands, but which has been long unknown in England. One dog struck at the buck's throat, another dashed his sharp nose and fangs, I might almost say, into the animal's bowels. It would have been natural for Lord Glenvarloch, himself persecuted as if by hunters, to have thought upon the occasion like the melancholy Jacques; but habit is a strange matter, and I fear that his feelings on the occasion were rather those of the practised huntsman than of the moralist. He had no time, however, to indulge them, for mark what befell.

A single horseman followed the chase, upon a steed so thoroughly subjected to the rein, that it obeyed the touch of the bridle as if it had been a mechanical impulse operating on the nicest piece of machinery; so that, seated deep in his demi-pique saddle, and so trussed up there as to make falling almost impossible, the rider, without either fear or hesitation, might increase or diminish the speed at which he rode, which, even on the most animating occasions of the chase, seldom exceeded three-fourths of a gallop, the horse keeping his haunches under him, and never stretching forward beyond the managed pace of the academy. The security with which he chose to prosecute even this favourite, and, in ordinary case, somewhat dangerous amusement, as well as the rest of his equipage, marked King James. No attendant was within sight; indeed, it was often a nice strain of flattery to permit the sovereign to suppose he had outridden and distanced all the rest of the chase.

'Weel dune, Bash—weel dune, Battie!' he exclaimed, as he came up. 'By the honour of a king, ye are a credit to the Braes of Balwhither!—Haud my horse, man,' he called out to Nigel, without stopping to see to whom he had addressed himself—'Haud my naig, and help me doun out o' the saddle—deil ding your saul, sirrah, canna ye mak haste before these lazy smaiks come up?—haud the rein easy—dinna let him swerve—now, haud the stirrup—that will do, man, and now we are on terra firma.' So saying, without casting an eye on his assistant, gentle King Jamie, unsheathing the short, sharp hanger (*couteau de chasse*), which was the only thing approaching to a sword that he could willingly endure the sight of, drew the blade with great satisfaction across the throat of the buck, and put an end at once to its struggles and its agonies.

Lord Glenvarloch, who knew well the sylvan duty which the occasion demanded, hung the bridle of the king's palfrey on the branch of a tree, and, kneeling duteously down, turned the slaughtered deer upon its back, and kept the *quarrée* in that position, while the king, too intent upon his sport to observe anything else, drew his *couteau* down the breast of the animal, *secundum artem*; and, having made a cross cut, so as to ascertain the depth of the fat upon the chest, exclaimed, in a sort of rapture, 'Three inches of white fat on the brisket!—prime—prime, as I am a crowned sinner—and deil ane o' the lazy loons in but mysel'! Seven—aucht—aucht tines on the antlers. By G—d, a hart of aucht tines, and the first of the season! Bash and Battie, blessings on the heart's-root of ye! Buss me, my bairns, buss me.' The dogs accordingly fawned upon him, licked him with bloody jaws, and soon put him in such a state that it might have seemed treason had been doing its fell work upon his anointed body. 'Bide doun, with a mischief to ye—

bide doun, with a wanion,' cried the king, almost overturned by the obstreperous caresses of the large stag-hounds. 'But ye are just like ither folks, gie ye an inch and ye take an ell.—And wha may ye be, friend?' he said, now finding leisure to take a nearer view of Nigel, and observing what in his first emotion of sylvan delight had escaped him,—'Ye are nane of our train, man. In the name of God, what the devil are ye?'

'An unfortunate man, sire,' replied Nigel.

'I daresay that,' answered the king snappishly, 'or I wad have seen naething of you. My lieges keep a' their happiness to themselves; but let bowls row wrang wi' them, and I am sure to hear of it.'

'And to whom else can we carry our complaints but to your Majesty, who is Heaven's vicegerent over us?' answered Nigel.

'Right, man, right—very weel spoken,' said the king; 'but you should leave Heaven's vicegerent some quiet on earth, too.'

'If your Majesty will look on me' (for hitherto the king had been so busy, first with the dogs, and then with the mystic operation of *breaking*, in vulgar phrase cutting up the deer, that he had scarce given his assistant above a transient glance), 'you will see whom necessity makes bold to avail himself of an opportunity which may never again occur.'

King James looked; his blood left his cheek, though it continued stained with that of the animal which lay at his feet, he dropped the knife from his hand, cast behind him a faltering eye, as if he either meditated flight or looked out for assistance, and then exclaimed, 'Glenvarlochides! as sure as I was christened James Stuart. Here is a bonnie spot of work, and me alone, and on foot too!' he added, bustling to get upon his horse.

'Forgive me that I interrupt you, my liege,' said Nigel, placing himself between the king and the steed; 'hear me but a moment!'

'I'll hear ye best on horseback,' said the king. 'I canna hear a word on foot, man, not a word; and it is not seemly to stand cheek-for-chowl confronting us that gate. Bide out of our gate, sir, we charge you, on your allegiance.—The deil's in them a', what can they be doing?'

'By the crown which you wear, my liege,' said Nigel, 'and for which my ancestors have worthily fought, I conjure you to be composed, and to hear me but a moment.'

That which he asked was entirely out of the monarch's power to grant. The timidity which he showed was not the plain downright cowardice, which, like a natural impulse, compels a man to flight, and which can excite little but pity or contempt, but a much more ludicrous, as well as more mingled sensation. The poor king was frightened at once and angry, desirous of securing his safety, and at the same time ashamed to compromise his dignity; so that, without attending to what Lord Glenvarloch endeavoured to explain, he kept making at his horse, and repeating, 'We are a free king, man—we are a free king—we will not be controlled by a subject.—In the name of God, what keeps Steenie? And, praised be his name, they are coming—Hillo, ho—here, here—Steenie, Steenie!'

The Duke of Buckingham galloped up, followed by several courtiers and attendants of the royal chase, and commenced with his usual familiarity,—'I see Fortune has graced our dear dad, as usual—but what's this?'

'What is it? It is treason, for what I ken,' said the king; 'and a' your wyte, Steenie. Your dear dad and gossip might have been murdered, for what you care.'

'Murdered? Secure the villain!' exclaimed the duke. 'By Heaven, it is Olifaunt himself!' A dozen of the hunters dismounted at once, letting their horses run wild through the park. Some seized roughly on Lord Glenvarloch, who thought it folly to offer resistance, while others busied themselves with the king. 'Are you wounded, my liege—are you wounded?'

'Not that I ken of,' said the king, in the paroxysm of his apprehension (which, by the way, might be pardoned in one of so timorous a temper, and who, in his time, had been exposed to so many strange attempts)—'Not that I ken of—but search him—search him. I am sure I saw firearms under his cloak. I am sure I smelled powder—I am dooms sure of that.'

Lord Glenvarloch's cloak being stripped off, and his pistols discovered, a shout of wonder and of execration on the supposed criminal purpose arose from the crowd, now thickening every moment. Not that celebrated pistol, which, though resting on a bosom as gallant and as loyal as Nigel's, spread such causeless alarm among knights and dames at a late high solemnity—not that very pistol caused more temporary consternation than was so groundlessly excited by the arms which were taken from Lord Glenvarloch's person; and not Mhic-Allastar-More himself could repel with greater scorn and indignation the insinuations that they were worn for any sinister purposes.*

'Away with the wretch—the parricide—the bloody-minded villain!' was echoed on all hands; and the king, who naturally enough set the same value on his own life at which it was, or seemed to be, rated by others, cried out, louder than all the rest, 'Ay, ay—away with him. I have had enough of him, and so has the country. But do him no bodily harm—and, for God's sake, sirs, if ye are sure that ye have thoroughly disarmed him, put up your swords, dirks, and skenes, for you will certainly do each other a mischief.'

There was a speedy sheathing of weapons at the king's commands; for those who had hitherto been brandishing them in loyal bravado, began thereby to call to mind the extreme dislike which his Majesty nourished against naked steel, a foible which seemed to be as constitutional as his timidity, and was usually ascribed to the brutal murder of Rizzio having been perpetrated in his unfortunate mother's presence before he yet saw the light.

At this moment the prince, who had been hunting in a different part of the then extensive park, and had received some hasty and confused information of what was going forward, came rapidly up, with one or two noblemen in his train, and amongst others Lord Dalgarno. He

* Note U. Mhic-Allastar-More.

sprung from his horse, and asked eagerly if his father were wounded.

'Not that I am sensible of, Baby Charles—but a wee matter exhausted, with struggling single-handed with the assassin.—Steenie, fill us a cup of wine—the leathern bottle is hanging at our pommel.—Buss me, then, Baby Charles,' continued the monarch, after he had taken this cup of comfort.* 'O, man, the commonwealth and you have had a fair escape from the heavy and bloody loss of a dear father; for we are *pater patriæ* as weel as *pater familias*.—*Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus tam cari capitis!*—Woe is me, black cloth would have been dear in England, and dry een scarce!'

And, at the very idea of the general grief which must have attended his death, the good-natured monarch cried heartily himself.

'Is this possible?' said Charles sternly; for his pride was hurt at his father's demeanour on the one hand, while, on the other, he felt the resentment of a son and a subject, at the supposed attempt on the king's life. 'Let some one speak who has seen what happened—My Lord of Buckingham!'

'I cannot say, my lord,' replied the duke, 'that I saw any actual violence offered to his Majesty, else I should have avenged him on the spot.'

'You would have done wrong, then, in your zeal, George,' answered the prince; 'such offenders were better left to be dealt with by the laws. But was the villain not struggling with his Majesty?'

'I cannot term it so, my lord,' said the duke, who, with many faults, would have disdained an untruth; 'he seemed to desire to detain his Majesty, who, on the contrary, seemed to wish to mount his horse; but they have found pistols on his person, contrary to the proclamation, and as it proves to be Nigel Olifaunt, of whose ungoverned disposition your Royal Highness has seen some samples, we seemed to be justified in apprehending the worst.'

'Nigel Olifaunt!' said the prince; 'can that unhappy man so soon have engaged in a new trespass? Let me see those pistols.'

'Ye are not so unwise as to meddle with such snap-haunches, Baby Charles!' said James—'Do not give him them, Steenie—I command you on your allegiance. They may go off of their own accord, whilk often befalls.—You will do it, then?—Saw ever man sic wilful bairns as we are cumbered with!—Havena we guardsmen and soldiers enow, but ye must unload the weapons yoursel'—you, the heir of our body and dignities, and sae mony men around that are paid for venturing life in our cause?'

But without regarding his father's exclamations, Prince Charles, with the obstinacy which characterized him in trifles, as well as matters of consequence, persisted in unloading the pistols with his own hand of the double bullets with which each was charged. The hands of all around were held up in astonishment at the horror of the crime supposed to have been intended, and the escape which was presumed so narrow.

Nigel had not yet spoken a word—he now calmly desired to be heard.

'To what purpose?' answered the prince coldly. 'You knew yourself accused of a heavy offence, and instead of rendering yourself up to justice, in terms of the proclamation, you are here found intruding yourself on his Majesty's presence, and armed with unlawful weapons.'

'May it please you, sir,' answered Nigel, 'I wore these unhappy weapons for my own defence; and not very many hours since they were necessary to protect the lives of others.'

'Doubtless, my lord,' answered the prince, still calm and unmoved,—'your late mode of life, and the associates with whom you have lived, have made you familiar with scenes and weapons of violence. But it is not to me you are to plead your cause.'

'Hear me—hear me, noble prince!' said Nigel eagerly. 'Hear me! You—even you yourself—may one day ask to be heard, and in vain.'

'How, sir,' said the prince haughtily—'how am I to construe that, my lord?'

'If not on earth, sir,' replied the prisoner, 'yet to Heaven we must all pray for patient and favourable audience.'

'True, my lord,' said the prince, bending his head with haughty acquiescence; 'nor would I now refuse such audience to you, could it avail you. But you shall suffer no wrong. We will ourselves look into your case.'

'Ay, ay,' answered the king, 'he hath made *appellatio ad Cæsarem*—we will interrogate Glenvarlochides ourselves, time and place fitting; and, in the meanwhile, have him and his weapons away, for I am weary of the sight of them.'

In consequence of directions hastily given, Nigel was accordingly removed from the presence, where, however, his words had not altogether fallen to the ground.† 'This is a most strange matter, George,' said the prince to the favourite: 'this gentleman hath a good countenance, a happy presence, and much calm firmness in his look and speech. I cannot think he would attempt a crime so desperate and useless.'

'I profess neither love nor favour to the young man,' answered Buckingham, whose high-spirited ambition bore always an open character; 'but I cannot but agree with your Highness, that our dear gossip hath been something hasty in apprehending personal danger from him.'‡

'By my saul, Steenie, ye are not blate to say so,' said the king. 'Do I not ken the smell of pouther, think ye? Who else nosed out the fifth of November, save our royal selves? Cecil, and Suffolk, and all of them were at fault, like sae mony mongrel tykes, when I puzzled it out; and trow ye that I cannot smell pouther? Why, 'sblood, man, Joannes Barclaius thought my ingine was in some measure inspiration, and terms his history of the plot, *Series patefacti divinitus parricidii*; and Spondanus, in like manner, saith of us, *Divinitus evasit*.'

'The land was happy in your Majesty's escape,'

* Note V. King James's Drinking-bottle.

† Note W. Scene in Greenwich Park.
‡ Note X. King James's Timidity.

said the Duke of Buckingham, 'and not less in the quick wit which tracked that labyrinth of treason by so fine and almost invisible a clue.'

'Saul, man, Steenie, ye are right! There are few youths have sic true judgment as you, respecting the wisdom of their elders; and as for this fause, traitorous smaik, I doubt he is a hawk of the same nest. Saw ye not something papistical about him? Let them look that he bears not a crucifix, or some sic Roman trinket, about him.'

'It would ill become me to attempt the exculpation of this unhappy man,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'considering the height of his present attempt, which has made all true men's blood curdle in their veins. Yet I cannot avoid intimating, with all due submission to his Majesty's infallible judgment, in justice to one who showed himself formerly only my enemy, though he now displays himself in much blacker colours, that this Olifaunt always appeared to me more as a Puritan than as a Papist.'

'Ah, Dalgarno, art thou there, man?' said the king. 'And ye behoved to keep back, too, and leave us to our own natural strength and the care of Providence, when we were in grips with the villain!'

'Providence, may it please your most gracious Majesty, would not fail to aid, in such a strait, the care of three weeping kingdoms,' said Lord Dalgarno.

'Surely, man—surely,' replied the king; 'but a sight of your father, with his long whinyard, would have been a blithe matter a short while syne; and in future we will aid the ends of Providence in our favour, by keeping near us two stout beef-eaters of the guard. And so this Olifaunt is a Puritan?—not the less like to be a Papist, for all that—for extremities meet, as the scholiast proveth. There are, as I have proved in my book, Puritans of papistical principles—it is just a new tout on an auld horn.'

Here the king was reminded by the prince, who dreaded perhaps that he was going to recite the whole *Basilicon Doron*, that it would be best to move towards the palace, and consider what was to be done for satisfying the public mind, in whom the morning's adventure was likely to excite much speculation. As they entered the gate of the palace, a female bowed and presented a paper, which the king received, and, with a sort of groan, thrust it into his side-pocket. The prince expressed some curiosity to know its contents. 'The valet in waiting will tell you them,' said the king, 'when I strip off my cassock. D'ye think, Baby, that I can read all that is thrust into my hands? See to me, man'—(he pointed to the pockets of his great trunk breeches, which were stuffed with papers), —'We are like an ass—that we should so speak—stooping betwixt two burdens. Ay, ay, *Asinus fortis accumbens inter terminos*, as the Vulgate hath it,—Ay, ay, *Vidi terram quod esset optima, et supposui humerum ad portandum, et factus sum tributis serviens*—I saw this land of England, and became an over-burdened king thereof.'

'You are indeed well loaded, my dear dad and gossip,' said the Duke of Buckingham, receiving the papers which King James emptied out of his pockets.

'Ay, ay,' continued the monarch; 'take them to you *per aversionem*, bairns, the one pouch stuffed with petitions, t'other with pasquinadoes; a fine time we have on't. On my conscience, I believe the tale of Cadmus was hieroglyphical, and that the dragon's teeth whilk he sowed were the letters he invented. Ye are laughing, Baby Charles?—Mind what I say.—When I came here first frae our ain country, where the men are as rude as the weather, by my conscience, England was a bieldy bit; one would have thought the king had little to do but to walk by quiet waters, *per aquam refectionis*. But, I kenna how or why, the place is sair changed—read that libel upon us and on our regimen. The dragon's teeth are sown, Baby Charles; I pray God they bearna their armed harvest in your day, if I suld not live to see it. God forbid I should, for there will be an awful day's kemping at the shearing of them.'

'I shall know how to stifle the crop in the blade,—ha, George?' said the prince, turning to the favourite with a look expressive of some contempt for his father's apprehensions, and full of confidence in the superior firmness and decision of his own counsels.

While this discourse was passing, Nigel, in charge of a pursuivant at arms, was pushed and dragged through the small town, all the inhabitants of which, having been alarmed by the report of an attack on the king's life, now pressed forward to see the supposed traitor. Amid the confusion of the moment, he could descry the face of the victualler, arrested into a stare of stolid wonder, and that of the barber, grinning betwixt horror and eager curiosity. He thought that he also had a glimpse of his waterman in the green jacket.

He had no time for remarks, being placed in a boat with the pursuivant and two yeomen of the guard, and rowed up the river as fast as the arms of six stout watermen could pull against the tide. They passed the groves of masts which even then astonished the stranger with the extended commerce of London, and now approached those low and blackened walls of curtain and bastion, which exhibit here and there a piece of ordnance, and here and there a solitary sentinel under arms, but have otherwise so little of the military terrors of a citadel. A projecting, low-browed arch, which had lowered over many an innocent, and many a guilty head, in similar circumstances, now spread its dark frowns over that of Nigel.* The boat was put close up to the broad steps against which the tide was lapping its lazy wave. The warder on duty looked from the wicket, and spoke to the pursuivant in whispers. In a few minutes the Lieutenant of the Tower appeared, received, and granted an acknowledgment for the body of Nigel, Lord Glenvarloch.

* Traitor's Gate, which opens from the Tower of London to the Thames, was, as its name implies, that by which persons accused of State offences were conveyed to their prison. When the tide is making, and the ancient gate is beheld from within the buildings, it used to be a most striking part of the old fortress; but it is now much injured in appearance, being half built up with masonry to support a steam-engine, or something of that sort.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

> Ye towers of Julius! London's lasting shame;
> With many a foul and midnight murder fed!
>
> GRAY.

SUCH is the exclamation of Gray. Bandello, long before him, has said something like it; and the same sentiment must, in some shape or other, have frequently occurred to those who, remembering the fate of other captives in that memorable State prison, may have had but too much reason to anticipate their own. The dark and low arch, which seemed, like the entrance to Dante's Hell, to forbid hope of regress—the muttered sounds of the warders, and petty formalities observed in opening and shutting the grated wicket—the cold and constrained salutation of the Lieutenant of the fortress, who showed his prisoner that distant and measured respect which authority pays as a tax to decorum, all struck upon Nigel's heart, impressing on him the cruel consciousness of captivity.

'I am a prisoner,' he said, the words escaping from him almost unawares; 'I am a prisoner, and in the Tower?'

The Lieutenant bowed—'And it is my duty,' he said, 'to show your lordship to your chamber, where, I am compelled to say, my orders are to place you under some restraint. I will make it as easy as my duty permits.'

Nigel only bowed in return to this compliment, and followed the Lieutenant to the ancient buildings on the western side of the parade, and adjoining to the chapel, used in those days as a State prison, but in ours as the mess-room of the officers of the guard upon duty at the fortress. The double doors were unlocked, the prisoner ascended a few steps, followed by the Lieutenant and a warder of the higher class. They entered a large, but irregular, low-roofed, and dark apartment, exhibiting a very scanty proportion of furniture. The warder had orders to light a fire, and attend to Lord Glenvarloch's commands in all things consistent with his duty; and the Lieutenant, having made his reverence with the customary compliment, that he trusted his lordship would not long remain under his guardianship, took his leave.

Nigel would have asked some questions of the warder, who remained to put the apartment into order, but the man had caught the spirit of his office. He seemed not to hear some of the prisoner's questions, though of the most ordinary kind, did not reply to others, and when he did speak, it was in a short and sullen tone, which, though not positively disrespectful, was such as at least to encourage no further communication.

Nigel left him, therefore, to do his work in silence, and proceeded to amuse himself with the melancholy task of deciphering the names, mottoes, verses, and hieroglyphics, with which his predecessors in captivity had covered the walls of their prison-house. There he saw the names of many a forgotten sufferer, mingled with others which will continue in remembrance until English history shall perish. There were the pious effusions of the devout Catholic, poured forth on the eve of his sealing his profession at Tyburn, mingled with those of the firm Protestant, about to feed the fires of Smithfield. There the slender hand of the unfortunate Jane Grey, whose fate was to draw tears from future generations, might be contrasted with the bolder touch which impressed deep on the walls the Bear and Ragged Staff, the proud emblem of the proud Dudleys. It was like the roll of the prophet, a record of lamentation and mourning, and yet not unmixed with brief interjections of resignation, and sentences expressive of the firmest resolution.*

In the sad task of examining the miseries of his predecessors in captivity, Lord Glenvarloch was interrupted by the sudden opening of the door of his prison-room. It was the warder, who came to inform him that, by order of the Lieutenant of the Tower, his lordship was to have the society and attendance of a fellow-prisoner in his place of confinement. Nigel replied hastily, that he wished no attendance, and would rather be left alone; but the warder gave him to understand, with a kind of grumbling civility, that the Lieutenant was the best judge how his prisoners should be accommodated, and that he would have no trouble with the boy, who was such a slip of a thing as was scarce worth turning a key upon.—'There, Giles,' he said, 'bring the child in.'

Another warder put the 'lad before him' into the room, and, both withdrawing, bolt crashed and chain clanged, as they replaced these ponderous obstacles to freedom. The boy was clad in a grey suit of the finest cloth, laid down with silver lace, with a buff-coloured cloak of the same pattern. His cap, which was a Montero of black velvet, was pulled over his brows, and, with the profusion of his long ringlets, almost concealed his face. He stood on the very spot where the warder had quitted his collar, about two steps from the door of the apartment, his eyes fixed on the ground, and every joint trembling with confusion and terror. Nigel could well have dispensed with his society, but it was not in his nature to behold distress, whether of body or mind, without endeavouring to relieve it.

'Cheer up,' he said, 'my pretty lad. We are to be companions, it seems, for a little time—at least, I trust your confinement will be short, since you are too young to have done aught to deserve long restraint. Come, come—do not be discouraged. Your hand is cold, and trembles! the air is warm, too—but it may be the damp of this darksome room. Place you by the fire.—What! weeping-ripe, my little man? I pray you, do not be a child. You have no beard yet, to be dishonoured by your tears, but yet you should not cry like a girl. Think you are only shut up for playing truant, and you can pass a day without weeping, surely.'

The boy suffered himself to be led and seated by the fire, but, after retaining for a long time the very posture which he assumed in sitting

* These memorials of illustrious criminals, or of innocent persons who had the fate of such, are still preserved, though at one time, in the course of repairing the rooms, they were in some danger of being whitewashed. They are preserved at present with becoming respect, and have most of them been engraved.—See Bayley's *History and Antiquities of the Tower of London.*

down, he suddenly changed it in order to wring his hands with an air of the bitterest distress, and then, spreading them before his face, wept so plentifully, that the tears found their way in floods through his slender fingers.

Nigel was in some degree rendered insensible to his own situation, by his feelings for the intense agony by which so young and beautiful a creature seemed to be utterly overwhelmed; and, sitting down close beside the boy, he applied the most soothing terms which occurred, to endeavour to alleviate his distress, and with an action which the difference of their age rendered natural, drew his hand kindly along the long hair of the disconsolate child. The lad appeared so shy, as even to shrink from this slight approach to familiarity—yet, when Lord Glenvarloch, perceiving and allowing for his timidity, sat down on the farther side of the fire, he appeared to be more at his ease, and to hearken with some apparent interest to the arguments which from time to time Nigel used, to induce him to moderate, at least, the violence of his grief. As the boy listened, his tears, though they continued to flow freely, seemed to escape from their source more easily, his sobs were less convulsive, and became gradually changed into low sighs, which succeeded each other, indicating as much sorrow, perhaps, but less alarm than his first transports had shown.

'Tell me who and what you are, my pretty boy,' said Nigel. 'Consider me, child, as a companion, who wishes to be kind to you, would you but teach him how he can be so.'

'Sir—my lord, I mean,' answered the boy, very timidly, and in a voice which could scarce be heard even across the brief distance which divided them, 'you are very good—and I—am very unhappy'——

A second fit of tears interrupted what else he had intended to say, and it required a renewal of Lord Glenvarloch's good-natured expostulations and encouragements, to bring him once more to such composure as rendered the lad capable of expressing himself intelligibly. At length, however, he was able to say—'I am sensible of your goodness, my lord—and grateful for it—but I am a poor unhappy creature, and, what is worse, have myself only to thank for my misfortunes.'

'We are seldom absolutely miserable, my young acquaintance,' said Nigel, 'without being ourselves more or less responsible for it—I may well say so, otherwise I had not been here to-day—but you are very young, and can have but little to answer for.'

'O, sir! I wish I could say so—I have been self-willed and obstinate—and rash and ungovernable—and now—now, how dearly do I pay the price of it!'

'Pshaw, my boy!' replied Nigel; 'this must be some childish frolic—some breaking out of bounds—some truant trick—And yet how should any of these have brought you to the Tower?—There is something mysterious about you, young man, which I must inquire into.'

'Indeed, indeed, my lord, there is no harm about me,' said the boy, more moved, it would seem, to confession by the last words, by which he seemed considerably alarmed, than by all the kind expostulations and arguments which Nigel had previously used. 'I am innocent—that is, I have done wrong, but nothing to deserve being in this frightful place.'

'Tell me the truth, then,' said Nigel, in a tone in which command mingled with encouragement; 'you have nothing to fear from me, and as little to hope, perhaps—yet, placed as I am, I would know with whom I speak.'

'With an unhappy—boy, sir—and idle and truantly disposed, as your lordship said,' answered the lad, looking up, and showing a countenance in which paleness and blushes succeeded each other, as fear and shamefacedness alternately had influence. 'I left my father's house without leave, to see the King hunt in the park at Greenwich; there came a cry of treason, and all the gates were shut—I was frightened, and hid myself in a thicket, and I was found by some of the rangers and examined—and they said I gave no good account of myself—and so I was sent hither.'

'I am an unhappy, a most unhappy being,' said Lord Glenvarloch, rising and walking through the apartment; 'nothing approaches me but shares my own bad fate! Death and imprisonment dog my steps, and involve all who are found near me. Yet this boy's story sounds strangely. You say you were examined, my young friend—Let me pray you to say whether you told your name, and your means of gaining admission into the park—if so, they surely would not have detained you!'

'O, my lord,' said the boy, 'I took care not to tell them the name of the friend that let me in; and as to my father—I would not he knew where I now am for all the wealth in London!'

'But you do not expect,' said Nigel, 'that they will dismiss you, till you let them know who and what you are?'

'What good will it do them to keep so useless a creature as myself?' said the boy; 'they must let me go, were it but out of shame.'

'Do not trust to that—tell me your name and station—I will communicate them to the Lieutenant—he is a man of quality and honour, and will not only be willing to procure your liberation, but also, I have no doubt, will intercede with your father. I am partly answerable for such poor aid as I can afford, to get you out of this embarrassment, since I occasioned the alarm owing to which you were arrested; so tell me your name, and your father's name.'

'My name to *you?* O, never, never!' answered the boy, in a tone of deep emotion, the cause of which Nigel could not comprehend.

'Are you so much afraid of me, young man,' he replied, 'because I am here accused and a prisoner? Consider, a man may be both, and deserve neither suspicion nor restraint. Why should you distrust me? You seem friendless, and I am myself so much in the same circumstances, that I cannot but pity your situation when I reflect on my own. Be wise; I have spoken kindly to you—I mean as kindly as I speak.'

'O, I doubt it not, I doubt it not, my lord,' said the boy; 'and I could tell you all—that is, almost all.'

'Tell me nothing, my young friend, excepting

what may assist me in being useful to you,' said Nigel.

'You are generous, my lord,' said the boy; 'and I am sure—O, sure, I might safely trust to your honour—But yet—but yet—I am so sore beset—I have been so rash, so unguarded—I can never tell you of my folly. Besides, I have already told too much to one whose heart I thought I had moved—yet I find myself here.'

'To whom did you make this disclosure?' said Nigel.

'I dare not tell,' replied the youth.

'There is something singular about you, my young friend,' said Lord Glenvarloch, withdrawing with a gentle degree of compulsion the hand with which the boy had again covered his eyes. 'Do not pain yourself with thinking on your situation just at present—your pulse is high, and your hand feverish—lay yourself on yonder pallet, and try to compose yourself to sleep. It is the readiest and best remedy for the fancies with which you are worrying yourself.'

'I thank you for your considerate kindness, my lord,' said the boy; 'with your leave I will remain for a little space quiet in this chair—I am better thus than on the couch. I can think undisturbedly on what I have done, and have still to do; and if God sends slumber to a creature so exhausted, it shall be most welcome.'

So saying, the boy drew his hand from Lord Nigel's, and, drawing around him and partly over his face the folds of his ample cloak, he resigned himself to sleep or meditation, while his companion, notwithstanding the exhausting scenes of this and the preceding day, continued his pensive walk up and down the apartment.

Every reader has experienced, that times occur, when, far from being lord of external circumstances, man is unable to rule even the wayward realm of his own thoughts. It was Nigel's natural wish to consider his own situation coolly, and fix on the course which it became him as a man of sense and courage to adopt; and yet, in spite of himself, and notwithstanding the deep interest of the critical state in which he was placed, it did so happen that his fellow prisoner's situation occupied more of his thoughts than did his own. There was no accounting for this wandering of the imagination, but also there was no striving with it. The pleading tones of one of the sweetest voices he had ever heard still rung in his ear, though it seemed that sleep had now fettered the tongue of the speaker. He drew near on tiptoe to satisfy himself whether it were so. The folds of the cloak hid the lower part of his face entirely; but the bonnet, which had fallen a little aside, permitted him to see the forehead streaked with blue veins, the closed eyes, and the long silken eyelashes.

'Poor child!' said Nigel to himself, as he looked on him, nestled up as it were in the folds of his mantle, 'the dew is yet on thy eyelashes, and thou hast fairly wept thyself asleep. Sorrow is a rough nurse to one so young and delicate as thou art. Peace be to thy slumbers, I will not disturb them. My own misfortunes require my attention, and it is to their contemplation that I must resign myself.'

He attempted to do so, but was crossed at every turn by conjecture, which intruded themselves as before, and which all regarded the sleeper rather than himself. He was angry and vexed, and expostulated with himself concerning the overweening interest which he took in the concerns of one of whom he knew nothing, saving that the boy was forced into his company, perhaps as a spy, by those to whose custody he was committed—but the spell could not be broken, and the thoughts which he struggled to dismiss continued to haunt him.

Thus passed half-an-hour or more; at the conclusion of which, the harsh sound of the revolving bolts was again heard, and the voice of the warder announced that a man desired to speak with Lord Glenvarloch. 'A man to speak with me, under my present circumstances!—Who can it be?' and John Christie, his landlord of Paul's Wharf, resolved his doubts, by entering the apartment. 'Welcome—most welcome, mine honest landlord!' said Lord Glenvarloch. 'How could I have dreamt of seeing you in my present close lodgings?' and at the same time, with the frankness of old kindness, he walked up to Christie and offered his hand; but John started back as from the look of a basilisk.

'Keep your courtesies to yourself, my lord,' said he gruffly; 'I have had as many of them already as may serve me for my life.'

'Why, Master Christie,' said Nigel, 'what means this? I trust I have not offended you?'

'Ask me no questions, my lord,' said Christie bluntly. 'I am a man of peace,—I came not hither to wrangle with you at this place and season. Just suppose that I am well informed of all the obligements from your honour's nobleness, and then acquaint me, in as few words as may be, where is the unhappy woman What have you done with her?'

'What have I done with her?' said Lord Glenvarloch 'Done with whom? I know not what you are speaking of.'

'O yes, my lord,' said Christie; 'play surprise as well as you will, you must have some guess that I am speaking of the poor fool that was my wife, till she became your lordship's light-o'-love.'

'Your wife! Has your wife left you? and if she has, do you come to ask her of me?'

'Yes, my lord; singular as it may seem,' returned Christie, in a tone of bitter irony, and with a sort of grin widely discording from the discomposure of his features, the gleam of his eye, and the froth which stood on his lip, 'I do come to make that demand of your lordship. Doubtless you are surprised I should take the trouble; but, I cannot tell, great men and little men think differently. She has lain in my bosom, and drunk of my cup; and, such as she is, I cannot forget that—though I will never see her again—she must not starve, my lord, or do worse, to gain bread, though I reckon your lordship may think I am robbing the public in trying to change her courses.'

'By my faith as a Christian, by my honour as a gentleman,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'if aught amiss has chanced with your wife, I know nothing of it. I trust in Heaven you are as much mistaken in imputing guilt to her, as in supposing me her partner in it.'

'Fie! fie! my lord,' said Christie, 'why will you make it so tough? She is but the wife of a clod-pated old chandler, who was idiot enough to marry a wench twenty years younger than himself. Your lordship cannot have more glory by it than you have had already; and as for advantage and solace, I take it Dame Nelly is now unnecessary to your gratification. I should be sorry to interrupt the course of your pleasure; an old wittol should have more consideration of his condition. But your precious lordship being mewed up here among other choice jewels of the kingdom, Dame Nelly cannot, I take it, be admitted to share the hours of dalliance which' —— Here the incensed husband stammered, broke off his tone of irony, and proceeded, striking his staff against the ground, 'O that these false limbs of yours, which I wish had been hamstrung when they first crossed my honest threshold, were free from the fetters they have well deserved! I would give you the odds of your youth, and your weapon, and would bequeath my soul to the foul fiend if I, with this piece of oak, did not make you such an example to all ungrateful, pick-thank courtiers, that it should be a proverb to the end of time, how John Christie swaddled his wife's fine leman!'

'I understand not your insolence,' said Nigel, 'but I forgive it, because you labour under some strange delusion. In so far as I can comprehend your vehement charge, it is entirely undeserved on my part. You seem to impute to me the seduction of your wife. I trust she is innocent. For me, at least, she is as innocent as an angel in bliss. I never thought of her—never touched her hand or cheek, save in honourable courtesy.'

'O, ay—courtesy! that is the very word. She always praised your lordship's *honourable courtesy*. Ye have cozened me between ye, with your courtesy. My lord—my lord, you came to us no very wealthy man—you know it. It was for no lucre of gain I took you and your swashbuckler, your Don Diego yonder, under my poor roof. I never cared if the little room were let or no; I could live without it. If you could not have paid for it, you should never have been asked. All the wharf knows John Christie has the means and spirit to do a kindness. When you first darkened my honest doorway, I was as happy as a man need to be, who is no youngster, and has the rheumatism. Nelly was the kindest and best-humoured wench—we might have a word now and then about a gown or a ribbon, but a kinder soul on the whole, and a more careful, considering her years, till you came—and what is she now?—But I will not be a fool to cry, if I can help it. *What* she is, is not the question, but *where* she is; and that I must learn, sir, of you.'

'How can you, when I tell you,' replied Nigel, 'that I am as ignorant as yourself, or rather much more so? Till this moment I never heard of any disagreement betwixt your dame and you.'

'That is a lie,' said John Christie bluntly.

'How, you base villain!' said Lord Glenvarloch—'do you presume on my situation? If it were not that I hold you mad, and perhaps made so by some wrong sustained, you should find my being weaponless were no protection. I would beat your brains out against the wall.'

'Ay, ay,' answered Christie, 'bully as ye list. Ye have been at the ordinaries, and in Alsatia, and learned the ruffian's rant, I doubt not. But I repeat, you have spoken an untruth, when you said you knew not of my wife's falsehood; for when you were twitted with it among your gay mates, it was a common jest among you, and your lordship took all the credit they would give you for your gallantry and gratitude.'

There was a mixture of truth in this part of the charge, which disconcerted Lord Glenvarloch exceedingly; for he could not, as a man of honour, deny that Lord Dalgarno, and others, had occasionally jested with him on the subject of Dame Nelly, and that, though he had not played exactly *le fanfaron des vices qu'il n'avoit pas*, he had not at least been sufficiently anxious to clear himself of the suspicion of such a crime to men who considered it as a merit. It was therefore with some hesitation, and in a sort of qualifying tone, that he admitted that some idle jests had passed upon such a supposition, although without the least foundation in truth. John Christie would not listen to his vindication any longer. 'By your own account,' he said, 'you permitted lies to be told of you in jest. How do I know you are speaking truth, now you are serious? You thought it, I suppose, a fine thing to wear the reputation of having dishonoured an honest family,—who will not think that you had real grounds for your base bravado to rest upon? I will not believe otherwise for one, and therefore, my lord, mark what I have to say. You are now yourself in trouble—As you hope to come through it safely, and without loss of life and property, tell me where this unhappy woman is. Tell me, if you hope for heaven—tell me, if you fear hell—tell me, as you would not have the curse of an utterly ruined woman, and a broken-hearted man, attend you through life, and bear witness against you at the Great Day, which shall come after death. You are moved, my lord, I see it. I cannot forget the wrong you have done me. I cannot even promise to forgive it—but—tell me, and you shall never see me again, or hear more of my reproaches.'

'Unfortunate man,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'you have said more, far more than enough, to move me deeply. Were I at liberty, I would lend you my best aid to search out him who has wronged you, the rather that I do suspect my having been your lodger has been in some degree the remote cause of bringing the spoiler into the sheepfold.'

'I am glad your lordship grants me so much,' said John Christie, resuming the tone of embittered irony with which he had opened the singular conversation; 'I will spare you further reproach and remonstrance—your mind is made up, and so is mine.—So ho, warder!' The warder entered, and John went on,—'I want to get out, brother. Look well to your charge—it were better that half the wild beasts in their dens yonder were turned loose upon Tower Hill, than that this same smooth-faced, civil-spoken gentleman were again returned to honest men's company.'

So saying, he hastily left the apartment; and Nigel had full leisure to lament the waywardness

of his fate, which seemed never to tire of persecuting him for crimes of which he was innocent, and investing him with the appearances of guilt which his mind abhorred. He could not, however, help acknowledging to himself, that all the pain which he might sustain from the present accusation of John Christie was so far deserved, from his having suffered himself, out of vanity, or rather an unwillingness to encounter ridicule, to be supposed capable of a base, inhospitable crime, merely because fools called it an affair of gallantry; and it was no balsam to the wound, when he recollected what Richie had told him of his having been ridiculed behind his back by the gallants of the ordinary, for affecting the reputation of an intrigue which he had not in reality spirit enough to have carried on. His simulation had, in a word, placed him in the unlucky predicament of being rallied as a braggart amongst the dissipated youths, with whom the reality of the amour would have given him credit; whilst, on the other hand, he was branded as an inhospitable seducer by the injured husband, who was obstinately persuaded of his guilt.

CHAPTER XXIX.

How fares the man on whom good men would look
With eyes where scorn and censure combated,
But that kind Christian love hath taught the lesson—
That they who merit most contempt and hate,
Do most deserve our pity.

OLD PLAY.

IT might have seemed natural that the visit of John Christie should have entirely diverted Nigel's attention from his slumbering companion, and, for a time, such was the immediate effect of the chain of new ideas which the incident introduced; yet, soon after the injured man had departed, Lord Glenvarloch began to think it extraordinary that the boy should have slept so soundly, while they talked loudly in his vicinity. Yet he certainly did not appear to have stirred. Was he well—was he only feigning sleep? He went close to him to make his observations, and perceived that he had wept, and was still weeping, though his eyes were closed. He touched him gently on the shoulder—the boy shrunk from his touch, but did not awake. He pulled him harder, and asked him if he was sleeping.

'Do they waken folks in your country to know whether they are asleep or no?' said the boy, in a peevish tone.

'No, my young sir,' answered Nigel; 'but when they weep in the manner you do in your sleep, they awaken them to see what ails them.'

'It signifies little to any one what ails me,' said the boy.

'True,' replied Lord Glenvarloch; 'but you knew before you went to sleep how little I could assist you in your difficulties, and you seemed disposed, notwithstanding, to put some confidence in me.'

'If I did, I have changed my mind,' said the lad.

'And what may have occasioned this change of mind, I trow?' said Lord Glenvarloch. 'Some men speak through their sleep—perhaps you have the gift of hearing in it?'

'No; but the patriarch Joseph never dreamt truer dreams than I do.'

'Indeed?' said Lord Glenvarloch. 'And pray, what dream have you had that has deprived me of your good opinion; for that, I think, seems the moral of the matter?'

'You shall judge yourself,' answered the boy. 'I dreamed I was in a wild forest, where there was a cry of hounds, and winding of horns, exactly as I heard in Greenwich park.'

'That was because you were in the park this morning, you simple child,' said Nigel.

'Stay, my lord,' said the youth. 'I went on in my dream, till at the top of a broad green alley I saw a noble stag which had fallen into the toils; and methought I knew that he was the very stag which the whole party were hunting, and that if the chase came up, the dogs would tear him to pieces, or the hunters would cut his throat; and I had pity on the gallant stag, and though I was of a different kind from him, and though I was somewhat afraid of him, I thought I would venture something to free so stately a creature; and I pulled out my knife, and, just as I was beginning to cut the meshes of the net, the animal started up in my face in the likeness of a tiger, much larger and fiercer than any you may have seen in the ward of the wild beasts yonder, and was just about to tear me limb from limb when you awaked me.'

'Methinks,' said Nigel, 'I deserve more thanks than I have got, for rescuing you from such a danger by waking you. But, my pretty master, methinks all this tale of a tiger and a stag has little to do with your change of temper towards me.'

'I know not whether it has or no,' said the lad; 'but I will not tell you who I am.'

'You will keep your secret to yourself, then, peevish boy,' said Nigel, turning from him, and resuming his walk through the room; then, stopping suddenly, he said, 'And yet you shall not escape from me without knowing that I penetrate your mystery.'

'My mystery!' said the youth, at once alarmed and irritated, 'what mean you, my lord?'

'Only that I can read your dream without the assistance of a Chaldean interpreter, and my exposition is—that my fair companion does not wear the dress of her sex.'

'And if I do not, my lord,' said his companion, hastily starting up, and folding her cloak tight around her, 'my dress, such as it is, covers one who will not disgrace it.'

'Many would call that speech a fair challenge,' said Lord Glenvarloch, looking on her fixedly; 'women do not masquerade in men's clothes, to make use of men's weapons.'

'I have no such purpose,' said the seeming boy; 'I have other means of protection, and powerful—but I would first know what is *your* purpose.'

'An honourable and a most respectful one,' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'whatever you are—whatever motive may have brought you into this ambiguous situation, I am sensible—every look, word, and action of yours makes me

sensible—that you are no proper subject of importunity, far less of ill usage. What circumstances can have forced you into so doubtful a situation, I know not; but I feel assured there is, and can be, nothing in them of premeditated wrong, which should expose you to cold-blooded insult. From me you have nothing to dread.'

'I expected nothing less from your nobleness, my lord,' answered the female. 'My adventure, though I feel it was both desperate and foolish, is not so very foolish, nor my safety here so utterly unprotected, as at first sight, and in this strange dress, it may appear to be. I have suffered enough, and more than enough, by the degradation of having been seen in this unfeminine attire, and the comments you must necessarily have made on my conduct—but I thank God that I am so far protected, that I could not have been subjected to insult unavenged.'

When this extraordinary explanation had proceeded thus far, the warder appeared, to place before Lord Glenvarloch a meal, which, for his present situation, might be called comfortable, and which, if not equal to the cookery of the celebrated Chevalier Beaujeu, was much superior in neatness and cleanliness to that of Alsatia. A warder attended to do the honours of the table, and made a sign to the disguised female to rise and assist him in his functions. But Nigel declared that he knew the youth's parents, interfered, and caused his companion to eat along with him. She consented with a sort of embarrassment, which rendered her pretty features yet more interesting. Yet she maintained with a natural grace that sort of good breeding which belongs to the table; and it seemed to Nigel, whether already prejudiced in her favour by the extraordinary circumstances of their meeting, or whether really judging from what was actually the fact, that he had seldom seen a young person comport herself with more decorous propriety, mixed with ingenuous simplicity; while the consciousness of the peculiarity of her situation threw a singular colouring over her whole demeanour, which could be neither said to be formal, nor easy, nor embarrassed, but was compounded of, and shaded with, an interchange of all these three characteristics. Wine was placed on the table, of which she could not be prevailed on to taste a glass. Their conversation was, of course, limited by the presence of the warder to the business of the table; but Nigel had, long ere the cloth was removed, formed the resolution, if possible, of making himself master of this young person's history, the more especially as he now began to think that the tones of her voice and her features were not so strange to him as he had originally supposed. This, however, was a conviction which he adopted slowly, and only as it dawned upon him from particular circumstances during the course of the repast.

At length the prison meal was finished, and Lord Glenvarloch began to think how he might most easily enter upon the topic he meditated, when the warder announced a visitor.

'Soh!' said Nigel, something displeased, 'I find even a prison does not save one from importunate visitations.'

He prepared to receive his guest, however, while his alarmed companion flew to the large cradle-shaped chair which had first served her as a place of refuge, drew her cloak around her, and disposed herself as much as she could to avoid observation. She had scarce made her arrangements for that purpose when the door opened, and the worthy citizen, George Heriot, entered the prison-chamber.

He cast around the apartment his usual sharp, quick glance of observation, and, advancing to Nigel, said—'My lord, I wish I could say I was happy to see you.'

'The sight of those who are unhappy themselves, Master Heriot, seldom produces happiness to their friends—I, however, am glad to see you.'

He extended his hand, but Heriot bowed with much formal complaisance, instead of accepting the courtesy, which in those times, when the distinction of ranks was much guarded by etiquette and ceremony, was considered as a distinguished favour.

'You are displeased with me, Master Heriot,' said Lord Glenvarloch reddening, for he was not deceived by the worthy citizen's affectation of extreme reverence and respect.

'By no means, my lord,' replied Heriot; 'but I have been in France, and have thought it as well to import, along with other more substantial articles, a small sample of that good-breeding which the French are so renowned for.'

'It is not kind of you,' said Nigel, 'to bestow the first use of it on an old and obliged friend.'

Heriot only answered to this observation with a short dry cough, and then proceeded.

'Hem! hem! I say, ahem! My lord, as my French politeness may not carry me far, I would willingly know whether I am to speak as a friend, since your lordship is pleased to term me such; or whether I am, as befits my condition, to confine myself to the needful business which must be treated of between us?'

'Speak as a friend, by all means, Master Heriot,' said Nigel; 'I perceive you have adopted some of the numerous prejudices against me, if not all of them. Speak out, and frankly—what I cannot deny I will at least confess.'

'And I trust, my lord, redress,' said Heriot.

'So far as is in my power, certainly,' answered Nigel.

'Ah, my lord,' continued Heriot, 'that is a melancholy, though a necessary restriction; for how lightly may any one do an hundred times more than the degree of evil which it may be within his power to repair to the sufferers and to society! But we are not alone here,' he said, stopping, and darting his shrewd eye towards the muffled figure of the disguised maiden, whose utmost efforts had not enabled her so to adjust her position as altogether to escape observation. More anxious to prevent her being discovered than to keep his own affairs private, Nigel hastily answered—

''Tis a page of mine; you may speak freely before him. He is of France, and knows no English.'

'I am then to speak freely?' said Heriot, after a second glance at the chair; 'perhaps my words may be more free than welcome.'

'Go on, sir,' said Nigel; 'I have told you I can bear reproof.'

'In one word, then, my lord—why do I find you in this place, and whelmed with charges which must blacken a name rendered famous by ages of virtue?'

'Simply, then, you find me here,' said Nigel, 'because, to begin from my original error, I would be wiser than my father.'

'It was a difficult task, my lord,' replied Heriot; 'your father was voiced generally as the wisest and one of the bravest men of Scotland.'

'He commanded me,' continued Nigel, 'to avoid all gambling; and I took upon me to modify this injunction into regulating my play according to my skill, means, and the course of my luck.'

'Ay, self-opinion, acting on a desire of acquisition, my lord—you hoped to touch pitch and not to be defiled,' answered Heriot. 'Well, my lord, you need not say, for I have heard, with much regret, how far this conduct diminished your reputation. Your next error I may without scruple remind you of—My lord, my lord, in whatever degree Lord Dalgarno may have failed towards you, the son of his father should have been sacred from your violence.'

'You speak in cold blood, Master Heriot, and I was smarting under a thousand wrongs inflicted on me under the mask of friendship.'

'That is, he gave your lordship bad advice, and you,' said Heriot——

'Was fool enough to follow his counsel,' answered Nigel.—'But we will pass this, Master Heriot, if you please. Old men and young men, men of the sword and men of peaceful occupation, always have thought, always will think, differently on such subjects.'

'I grant,' answered Heriot, 'the distinction between the old goldsmith and the young nobleman—still, you should have had patience for Lord Huntinglen's sake, and prudence for your own. Supposing your quarrel just'— —

'I pray you to pass on to some other charge,' said Lord Glenvarloch.

'I am not your accuser, my lord; but I trust in Heaven that your own heart has already accused you bitterly on the inhospitable wrong which your late landlord has sustained at your hand.'

'Had I been guilty of what you allude to,' said Lord Glenvarloch,—'had a moment of temptation hurried me away, I had long ere now most bitterly repented it. But whoever may have wronged the unhappy woman, it was not I—I never heard of her folly until within this hour.'

'Come, my lord, said Heriot, with some severity, 'this sounds too much like affectation. I know there is among our modern youth a new creed respecting adultery as well as homicide—I would rather hear you speak of a revision of the Decalogue, with mitigated penalties in favour of the privileged orders—I would rather hear you do this, than deny a fact in which you have been known to glory.'

'Glory!—I never did, never would have taken honour to myself from such a cause,' said Lord Glenvarloch. I could not prevent other idle tongues and idle brains from making false inferences.'

'You would have known well enough how to stop their mouths, my lord,' replied Heriot, 'had they spoke of you what was unpleasing to your ears, and what the truth did not warrant.—Come, my lord, remember your promise to confess; and, indeed, to confess is, in this case, in some slight sort to redress. I will grant you are young—the woman handsome, and, as I myself have observed, light-headed enough. Let me know where she is. Her foolish husband has still some compassion for her—will save her from infamy, perhaps, in time, receive her back; for we are a good-natured generation we traders. Do not, my lord, emulate those who work mischief merely for the pleasure of doing so—it is the very devil's worst quality.'

'Your grave remonstrances will drive me mad,' said Nigel. 'There is a show of sense and reason in what you say; and yet it is positively insisting on my telling the retreat of a fugitive of whom I know nothing earthly.'

'It is well, my lord,' answered Heriot coldly. 'You have a right, such as it is, to keep your own secrets; but since my discourse on these points seems so totally unavailing, we had better proceed to business. Yet your father's image rises before me, and seems to plead that I should go on.'

'Be it as you will, sir,' said Glenvarloch; 'he who doubts my word shall have no additional security for it.'

'Well, my lord.—In the sanctuary at Whitefriars—a place of refuge so unsuitable to a young man of quality and character—I am told a murder was committed.'

'And you believe that I did the deed, I suppose?'

'God forbid, my lord!' said Heriot. 'The coroner's inquest hath sat, and it appeared that your lordship, under your assumed name of Grahame, behaved with the utmost bravery.'

'No compliment, I pray you,' said Nigel; 'I am only too happy to find that I did not murder, or am not believed to have murdered, the old man.'

'True, my lord,' said Heriot; 'but even in this affair there lacks explanation. Your lordship embarked this morning in a wherry with a female, and, it is said, an immense sum of money, in specie and other valuables—but the woman has not since been heard of.'

'I parted with her at Paul's Wharf,' said Nigel, 'where she went ashore with her charge. I gave her a letter to that very man, John Christie.'

'Ay, that is the waterman's story; but John Christie denies that he remembers anything of the matter.'

'I am sorry to hear this,' said the young nobleman; 'I hope in Heaven she has not been trepanned, for the treasure she had with her.'

'I hope not, my lord,' replied Heriot; 'but men's minds are much disturbed about it. Our national character suffers on all hands. Men remember the fatal case of Lord Sanquhar, hanged for the murder of a fencing-master; and exclaim, they will not have their wives whored, and their property stolen, by the nobility of Scotland.'

'And all this is laid to my door?' said Nigel. 'My exculpation is easy.'

'I trust so, my lord,' said Heriot;—'nay, in this particular, I do not doubt it.—But why did you leave Whitefriars under such circumstances?'

'Master Reginald Lowestoffe sent a boat for me, with intimation to provide for my safety.'

'I am sorry to say,' replied Heriot, 'that he denies all knowledge of your lordship's motions, after having despatched a messenger to you with some baggage.'

'The watermen told me they were employed by him.'

'Watermen!' said Heriot; 'one of these proves to be an idle apprentice, an old acquaintance of mine - the other has escaped; but the fellow who is in custody persists in saying he was employed by your lordship, and you only.'

'He lies!' said Lord Glenvarloch hastily;—'He told me Master Lowestoffe had sent him.—I hope that kind-hearted gentleman is at liberty?'

'He is,' answered Heriot; 'and has escaped with a rebuke from the benchers, for interfering in such a matter as your lordship's. The court desire to keep well with the young Templars in these times of commotion, or he had not come off so well.'

'That is the only word of comfort I have heard from you,' replied Nigel. 'But this poor woman—she and her trunk were committed to the charge of two porters.'

'So said the pretended waterman; but none of the fellows who ply at the wharf will acknowledge the employment. I see the idea makes you uneasy, my lord; but every effort is made to discover the poor woman's place of retreat - if, indeed, she yet lives.—And now, my lord, my errand is spoken, so far as it relates exclusively to your lordship; what remains, is matter of business of a more formal kind.'

'Let us proceed to it without delay,' said Lord Glenvarloch. 'I would hear of the affairs of any one rather than of my own.'

'You cannot have forgotten, my lord,' said Heriot, 'the transaction which took place some weeks since at Lord Huntinglen's—by which a large sum of money was advanced for the redemption of your lordship's estate?'

'I remember it perfectly,' said Nigel; 'and your present austerity cannot make me forget your kindness on the occasion.'

Heriot bowed gravely, and went on.- 'That money was advanced under the expectation and hope that it might be replaced by the contents of a grant to your lordship, under the royal sign-manual, in payment of certain moneys due by the crown to your father.—I trust your lordship understood the transaction at the time - I trust you now understand my resumption of its import, and hold it to be correct?'

'Undeniably correct,' answered Lord Glenvarloch. 'If the sums contained in the warrant cannot be recovered, my lands become the property of those who paid off the original holders of the mortgage, and now stand in their right.'

'Even so, my lord,' said Heriot. 'And your lordship's unhappy circumstances having, it would seem, alarmed these creditors, they are now, I am sorry to say, pressing for one or other of these alternatives—possession of the land, or payment of their debt.'

'They have a right to one or other,' answered Lord Glenvarloch; 'and as I cannot do the last in my present condition, I suppose they must enter on possession.'

'Stay, my lord,' replied Heriot; 'if you have ceased to call me a friend to your person, at least you shall see I am willing to be such to your father's house, were it but for the sake of your father's memory. If you will trust me with the warrant under the sign-manual, I believe circumstances do now so stand at court, that I may be able to recover the money for you.'

'I would do so gladly,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'but the casket which contains it is not in my possession. It was seized when I was arrested at Greenwich.'

'It will be no longer withheld from you,' said Heriot, 'for, I understand, my master's natural good sense, and some information which he has procured, I know not how, has induced him to contradict the whole charge of the attempt on his person. It is entirely hushed up; and you will only be proceeded against for your violence on Lord Dalgarno, committed within the verge of the palace—and that you will find heavy enough to answer.'

'I will not shrink under the weight,' said Lord Glenvarloch. 'But that is not the present point.- If I had that casket'——

'Your baggage stood in the little anteroom, as I passed,' said the citizen; 'the casket caught my eye. I think you had it of me.—It was my old friend Sir Faithful Frugal's. Ay; he, too, had a son'——

Here he stopped short.

'A son who, like Lord Glenvarloch's, did no credit to his father.—Was it not so you would have ended the sentence, Master Heriot?' said the young nobleman.

'My lord, it was a word spoken rashly,' answered Heriot; 'God may mend all in his own good time. This, however, I will say, that I have sometimes envied my friends their fair and flourishing families; and yet have I seen such changes when death has removed the head, so many rich men's sons penniless, the heirs of so many knights and nobles acreless, that I think mine own estate and memory, as I shall order it, has a fair chance of outliving those of greater men, though God has given me no heir of my name. But this is from the purpose.—Ho! warder, bring in Lord Glenvarloch's baggage.' The officer obeyed. Seals had been placed upon the trunk and casket, but were now removed, the warder said, in consequence of the subsequent orders from court, and the whole was placed at the prisoner's free disposal.

Desirous to bring this painful visit to a conclusion, Lord Glenvarloch opened the casket, and looked through the papers which it contained, first hastily, and then more slowly and accurately; but it was all in vain. The sovereign's signed warrant had disappeared.

'I thought and expected nothing better,' said George Heriot bitterly. 'The beginning of evil is the letting out of water. Here is a fair heritage lost, I daresay, on a foul cast at dice, or a conjuring trick at cards!—My lord, your surprise is well played. I give you full joy of your accomplishments. I have seen many as

age a consideration so serious, could not prevent Lord Glenvarloch from seeing that Margaret Ramsay was one of the prettiest young women he had ever beheld—from suspecting, he could scarce tell why, that he himself was not indifferent to her—from feeling assured that he had been the cause of much of her present distress—admiration, self-love, and generosity acting in favour of the same object; and when the yeoman returned with permission to his guests to withdraw, Nigel's obeisance to the beautiful daughter of the mechanic was marked with an expression which called up in her cheeks as much colour as any incident of the eventful day had hitherto excited. She returned the courtesy timidly and irresolutely—clung to her god-father's arm, and left the apartment, which, dark as it was, had never yet appeared so obscure to Nigel, as when the door closed behind her.

CHAPTER XXX.

> Yet though thou shouldst be dragg'd in scorn
> To yonder ignominious tree,
> Thou shalt not want one faithful friend
> To share the cruel fates' decree.
>
> BALLAD OF JEMMY DAWSON.

MASTER GEORGE HERIOT and his ward, as she might justly be termed, for his affection to Margaret imposed on him all the cares of a guardian, were ushered by the yeomen of the guard to the lodging of the Lieutenant, where they found him seated with his lady. They were received by both with that decorous civility which Master Heriot's character and supposed influence demanded, even at the hand of a punctilious old soldier and courtier like Sir Edward Mansel. Lady Mansel received Margaret with like courtesy, and informed Master George that she was now only her guest, and no longer her prisoner.

'She is at liberty,' she said, 'to return to her friends under your charge—such is his Majesty's pleasure.'

'I am glad of it, madam,' answered Heriot; 'but only I could have wished her freedom had taken place before her foolish interview with that singular young man; and I marvel your ladyship permitted it.'

'My good Master Heriot,' said Sir Edward, 'we act according to the commands of one better and wiser than ourselves—our orders from his Majesty must be strictly and literally obeyed; and I need not say that the wisdom of his Majesty doth more than insure'——

'I know his Majesty's wisdom well,' said Heriot; 'yet there is an old proverb about fire and flax—well, let it pass.'

'I see Sir Mungo Malagrowther stalking towards the door of the lodging,' said the Lady Mansel, 'with the gait of a lame crane—it is his second visit this morning.'

'He brought the warrant for discharging Lord Glenvarloch of the charge of treason,' said Sir Edward.

'And from him,' said Heriot, 'I heard much of what had befallen; for I came from France only late last evening, and somewhat unexpectedly.'

As they spoke, Sir Mungo entered the apartment—saluted the Lieutenant of the Tower and his lady with ceremonious civility—honoured George Heriot with a patronizing nod of acknowledgment, and accosted Margaret with—'Hey! my young charge, you have not doffed your masculine attire yet?'

'She does not mean to lay it aside, Sir Mungo,' said Heriot, speaking loud, 'until she has had satisfaction from you, for betraying her disguise to me, like a false knight—and in very deed, Sir Mungo, I think when you told me she was rambling about in so strange a dress, you might have said also that she was under Lady Mansel's protection.'

'That was the king's secret, Master Heriot,' said Sir Mungo, throwing himself into a chair with an air of atrabilarious importance; 'the other was a well-meaning hint to yourself as the girl's friend.'

'Yes,' replied Heriot, 'it was done like yourself—enough told to make me unhappy about her—not a word which could relieve my uneasiness.'

'Sir Mungo will not hear that remark,' said the lady; 'we must change the subject.—Is there any news from court, Sir Mungo? you have been to Greenwich?'

'You might as well ask me, madam,' answered the knight, 'whether there is any news from hell.'

'How, Sir Mungo, how!' said Sir Edward; 'measure your words something better—You speak of the court of King James.'

'Sir Edward, if I spoke of the court of the twelve Kaisers, I would say it is as confused for the present as the infernal regions. Courtiers of forty years' standing, and such I may write myself, are as far to seek in the matter as a minnow in the Maelstrom. Some folks say the King has frowned on the Prince—some that the Prince has looked grave on the Duke—some that Lord Glenvarloch will be hanged for high treason—and some that there is matter against Lord Dalgarno that may cost him as much as his head's worth.'

'And what do you, that are a courtier of forty years' standing, think of it all?' said Sir Edward Mansel.

'Nay, nay, do not ask him, Sir Edward,' said the lady, with an expressive look to her husband.

'Sir Mungo is too witty,' added Master Heriot, 'to remember that he who says aught that may be repeated to his own prejudice, does but load a piece for any of the company to shoot him dead with at their pleasure and convenience.'

'What!' said the bold knight, 'you think I am afraid of the trepan? Why, now, what if I should say that Dalgarno has more wit than honesty—the Duke more sail than ballast—the Prince more pride than prudence—and that the King'—The Lady Mansel held up her finger in a warning manner—'that the King is my very good master, who has given me, for forty years and more, dog's wages, videlicet, bones and beating.—Why, now, all this is said, and

Archie Armstrong * says worse than this of the best of them every day.'

'The more fool he,' said George Heriot; 'yet he is not so utterly wrong, for folly is his best wisdom. But do not you, Sir Mungo, set your wit against a fool's, though he be a court fool.'

'A fool, said you?' replied Sir Mungo, not having fully heard what Master Heriot said, or not choosing to have it thought so,—'I have been a fool indeed, to hang on at a close-fisted court here, when men of understanding and men of action have been making fortunes in every other place of Europe. But here a man comes indifferently off unless he gets a great key to turn' (looking at Sir Edward), 'or can beat tattoo with a hammer on a pewter plate.—Well, sirs, I must make as much haste back on mine errand as if I were a fee'd messenger.—Sir Edward and my lady, I leave my commendations with you—and my good-will with you, Master Heriot—and for this breaker of bounds, if you will act by my counsel, some maceration by fasting, and a gentle use of the rod, is the best cure for her giddy fits.'

'If you propose for Greenwich, Sir Mungo,' said the Lieutenant, 'I can spare you the labour—the King comes immediately to Whitehall.'

'And that must be the reason the council are summoned to meet in such a hurry,' said Sir Mungo. 'Well, I will, with your permission, go to the poor lad Glenvarloch, and bestow some comfort on him.'

The Lieutenant seemed to look up, and pause for a moment as if in doubt.

'The lad will want a pleasant companion, who can tell him the nature of the punishment which he is to suffer, and other matters of concernment. I will not leave him until I show him how absolutely he hath ruined himself from feather to spur, how deplorable is his present state, and how small his chance of mending it.'

'Well, Sir Mungo,' replied the Lieutenant, 'if you really think all this likely to be very consolatory to the party concerned, I will send a warder to conduct you.'

'And I,' said George Heriot, 'will humbly pray of Lady Mansel, that she will lend some of her handmaiden's apparel to this giddy-brained girl; for I shall forfeit my reputation if I walk up Tower Hill with her in that mad guise—and yet the silly lassie looks not so ill in it neither.'

'I will send my coach with you instantly,' said the obliging lady.

'Faith, madam, and if you will honour us with such courtesy, I will gladly accept it at your hands,' said the citizen, 'for business presses hard on me, and the forenoon is already lost, to little purpose.'

The coach, being ordered accordingly, transported the worthy citizen and his charge to his mansion in Lombard Street. There he found his presence was anxiously expected by the Lady Hermione, who had just received an order to be in readiness to attend upon the Royal Privy Council in the course of an hour; and upon whom, in her inexperience of business, and long retirement from society and the world, the intimation had made as deep an impression as if it had not been the necessary consequence of the petition which she had presented to the king by Monna Paula. George Heriot gently blamed her for taking any steps in an affair so important until his return from France, especially as he had requested her to remain quiet, in a letter which accompanied the evidence he had transmitted to her from Paris. She could only plead in answer the influence which her immediately stirring in the matter was likely to have on the affair of her kinsman Lord Glenvarloch, for she was ashamed to acknowledge how much she had been gained on by the eager importunity of her youthful companion. The motive of Margaret's eagerness was, of course, the safety of Nigel; but we must leave it to time to show in what particulars that came to be connected with the petition of the Lady Hermione. Meanwhile, we return to the visit with which Sir Mungo Malagrowther favoured the afflicted young nobleman in his place of captivity.

The knight, after the usual salutations, and having prefaced his discourse with a great deal of professed regret for Nigel's situation, sat down beside him, and, composing his grotesque features into the most lugubrious despondence, began his raven song as follows:—

'I bless God, my lord, that I was the person who had the pleasure to bring his Majesty's mild message to the Lieutenant, discharging the higher prosecution against ye, for anything meditated against his Majesty's sacred person; for, admit you be prosecuted on the lesser offence, or breach of privilege of the palace and its precincts, *usque ad mutilationem*, even to dismemberation, as it is most likely you will, yet the loss of a member is nothing to being hanged and drawn quick, after the fashion of a traitor.'

'I should feel the shame of having deserved such a punishment,' answered Nigel, 'more than the pain of undergoing it.'

'Doubtless, my lord, the having, as you say, deserved it, must be an excruciation to your own mind,' replied his tormentor: 'a kind of mental and metaphysical hanging, drawing, and quartering, which may be in some measure equipollent with the external application of hemp, iron, fire, and the like, to the outer man.'

'I say, Sir Mungo,' repeated Nigel, 'and beg you to understand my words, that I am unconscious of any error, saving that of having arms on my person when I chanced to approach that of my sovereign.'

'Ye are right, my lord, to acknowledge nothing,' said Sir Mungo. 'We have an old proverb,—Confess, and—so forth. And, indeed, as to the weapons, his Majesty has a special ill-will at all arms whatsoever, and more especially pistols; but, as I said, there is an end of that matter.† I

* The celebrated court jester.

† Wilson informs us that when Colonel Grey, a Scotsman who affected the buff dress even in the time of peace, appeared in that military garb at court, the king, seeing him with a case of pistols at his girdle, which he never greatly liked, told him, merrily, 'he was now so fortified, that, if he were well victualled, he would be impregnable.'—Wilson's *Life and Reign of James VI.*, *apud* Kennet's *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 389. In 1612, the tenth year of James's reign, there was a rumour abroad that a shipload of pocket-pistols had been exported from Spain, with a view to a general massacre of the Protestants. Proclamations were of consequence sent forth, prohibiting all persons from carrying pistols under a foot long in the barrel.—*Ibid.* p. 690.

wish you as well through the next, which is altogether unlikely.'

'Surely, Sir Mungo,' answered Nigel, 'you yourself might say something in my favour concerning the affair in the Park. None knows better than you that I was at that moment urged by wrongs of the most heinous nature, offered to me by Lord Dalgarno, many of which were reported to me by yourself, much to the inflammation of my passion.'

'Alack-a-day!—alack-a-day!' replied Sir Mungo, 'I remember but too well how much your choler was inflamed in spite of the various remonstrances which I made to you respecting the sacred nature of the place. Alas! alas! you cannot say you leaped into the mire for want of warning.'

'I see, Sir Mungo, you are determined to remember nothing which can do me service,' said Nigel.

'Blithely would I do ye service,' said the knight; 'and the best whilk I can think of is, to tell you the process of the punishment to the whilk you will be indubitably subjected, I having had the good fortune to behold it performed in the Queen's time, on a chield that had written a pasquinado. I was then in my Lord Gray's train, who lay leaguer here, and, being always covetous of pleasing and profitable sights, I could not dispense with being present on the occasion.'

'I should be surprised indeed,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'if you had so far put restraint upon your benevolence as to stay away from such an exhibition.'

'Hey! was your lordship praying me to be present at your own execution?' answered the knight. 'Troth, my lord, it will be a painful sight to a friend, but I will rather punish myself than baulk you. It is a pretty pageant in the main—a very pretty pageant. The fallow came on with such a bold face, it was a pleasure to look on him. He was dressed all in white, to signify harmlessness and innocence. The thing was done on a scaffold at Westminster—most likely yours will be at Charing. There were the sheriff's and the marshal's men, and what not—the executioner, with his cleaver and mallet, and his man with a pan of hot charcoal, and the irons for cautery. He was a dexterous fallow that Derrick. This man Gregory is not fit to jipper a joint with him; it might be worth your lordship's while to have the loon sent to a barber-surgeon's, to learn some needful scantling of anatomy—it may be for the benefit of yourself and other unhappy sufferers, and also a kindness to Gregory.'

'I will not take the trouble,' said Nigel. 'If the laws will demand my hand, the executioner may get it off as he best can. If the King leaves it where it is, it may chance to do him better service.'

'Vera noble—vera grand, indeed, my lord,' said Sir Mungo; 'it is pleasant to see a brave man suffer. The fallow whom I spoke of—this Tubbs, or Stubbs, or whatever the plebeian was called, came forward as bold as an emperor, and said to the people, "Good friends, I come to leave here the hand of a true Englishman," and clapped it on the dressing-block with as much ease as if he had laid it on his sweetheart's shoulder; whereupon Derrick the hangman, adjusting, d'ye mind me, the edge of his cleaver on the very joint, hit it with the mallet with such force, that the hand flew off as far from the owner as a gauntlet which the challenger casts down in the tilt yard. Well, sir, Stubbs, or Tubbs, lost no whit of countenance, until the fallow clapped the hissing hot iron on his raw stump. My lord, it fizzed like a rasher of bacon, and the fallow set up an elritch screech, which made some think his courage was abated; but not a whit, for he plucked off his hat with his left hand, and waved it, crying, "God save the Queen, and confound all evil counsellors!" The people gave him three cheers, which he deserved for his stout heart; and truly, I hope to see your lordship suffer with the same magnanimity.' *

'I thank you, Sir Mungo,' said Nigel, who had not been able to forbear some natural feelings of an unpleasant nature during this lively detail,—'I have no doubt the exhibition will be a very engaging one to you and the other spectators, whatever it may prove to the party principally concerned.'

'Vera engaging,' answered Sir Mungo, 'vera interesting—vera interesting indeed, though not altogether so much so as an execution for high treason. I saw Digby, the Winters, Fawkes, and the rest of the gunpowder gang, suffer for that treason, whilk was a vera grand spectacle, as well in regard to their sufferings, as to their constancy in enduring.'

'I am the more obliged to your goodness, Sir Mungo,' replied Nigel, 'that has induced you, although you have lost the sight, to congratulate me on my escape from the hazard of making the same edifying appearance.'

'As you say, my lord,' answered Sir Mungo, 'the loss is chiefly in appearance. Nature has been very bountiful to us, and has given duplicates of some organs, that we may endure the loss of one of them, should some such circumstance chance in our pilgrimage. See my poor dexter, abridged to one thumb, one finger, and a stump,—by the blow of my adversary's weapon, however, and not by a carnificial knife. Weel, sir, this poor maimed hand doth me, in some sort, as much service as ever; and, admit yours to be taken off by the wrist, you have still your left hand for your service, and are better off than the little Dutch dwarf here about town, who threads a needle, limns, writes, and tosses a pike, merely by means of his feet, without ever a hand to help him.'

'Well, Sir Mungo,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'this is all no doubt very consolatory; but I hope the King will spare my hand to fight for him in battle, where, notwithstanding all your kind encouragement, I could spend my blood much more cheerfully than on a scaffold.'

'It is even a sad truth,' replied Sir Mungo, 'that your lordship was but too like to have died on a scaffold—not a soul to speak for you but that deluded lassie, Maggie Ramsay.'

'Whom mean you?' said Nigel, with more interest than he had hitherto shown in the knight's communications.

'Nay, who should I mean but that travestied lassie whom we dined with when we honoured

* Note Y. Punishment of Stubbs by Mutilation.

Heriot the goldsmith? Ye ken best how ye have made interest with her, but I saw her on her knees to the King for you. She was committed to my charge, to bring her up hither in honour and safety. Had I had my own will, I would have had her to Bridewell, to flog the wild blood out of her — a cutty quean, to think of wearing the breeches, and not so much as married yet!'

'Hark ye, Sir Mungo Malagrowther,' answered Nigel, 'I would have you talk of that young person with fitting respect.'

'With all the respect that befits your lordship's paramour, and Davie Ramsay's daughter, I shall certainly speak of her, my lord,' said Sir Mungo, assuming a dry tone of irony.

Nigel was greatly disposed to have made a serious quarrel of it, but with Sir Mungo such an affair would have been ridiculous. He smothered his resentment, therefore, and conjured him to tell what he had heard and seen respecting this young person.

'Simply that I was in the ante-room when he had audience, and heard the King, ... to my great perplexity, [illegible] Maxwell, who hath but indifferent [illegible] thought that his Majesty [illegible] own name or [illegible] and thrust into the presence; and there I saw [illegible] with his own hand raising up the [illegible] youth, and he was [illegible] way, and saying [illegible] my bonnie [illegible] our spirits, we [illegible] design on our person [illegible] offences, we will [illegible] matter.' So I [illegible] to take the young fence-louper to the Tower here, and deliver her to the charge of Lady [illegible] and his Majesty charged me to say not a word to her about [illegible] offences, for, [illegible] her heart for him.'

'And on this you [illegible] the opinion to the prejudice of the young lady which you have [illegible],' said Lord Glenvarloch.

'In honest truth, my lord,' replied Sir Mungo, 'what opinion would you have me form of a wench who gets into male habiliments, and goes on her knees to the King for a wild young nobleman? I wot not what the fashionable word may be for the phrase changes, though the custom abides. But truly I must needs think this young leddy — if you call Watchie Ramsay's daughter a young leddy — demeans herself more like a leddy of pleasure than a leddy of honour.'

'You do her egregious wrong, Sir Mungo,' said Nigel; 'or rather you have been misled by appearances.'

'So will all the world be misled, my lord,' replied the satirist, 'unless you were doing that to disabuse them which your father's son will hardly judge it fit to do.'

'And what may that be, I pray you?'

'E'en marry the lass — make her Leddy Glenvarloch. — Ay, ay, ye may start — but it's the course you are driving on. Rather marry than do worse, if the worst be not done already.'

'Sir Mungo,' said Nigel, 'I pray you to forbear this subject, and rather return to that of the mutilation, upon which it pleased you to enlarge a short while since.'

'I have not time at present,' said Sir Mungo, hearing the clock strike four; 'but so soon as you shall have received sentence, my lord, you may rely on my giving you the fullest detail of the whole solemnity; and I give you my word, as a knight and gentleman, that I will myself attend you on the scaffold, whoever may cast sour looks on me for doing so. I bear a heart to stand by a friend in the worst of times.'

So saying, he wished Lord Glenvarloch farewell; who felt as heartily rejoiced at his departure, though it may be a bold word, as any person who had ever undergone his society.

But, when left to his own reflections, Nigel could not help feeling solitude nearly as irksome as the company of Sir Mungo Malagrowther. The total wreck of his fortune, which seemed now to be rendered unavoidable by the loss of the royal warrant, that had afforded him the means of redeeming his paternal estate, — was another and additional blow. When he had last seen the warrant he could not precisely remember, but was inclined to think it was in the casket when he took out money to pay the miser for his lodgings at Whitefriars. Since then the casket had been almost constantly under his own eye, except during the short time he was separated from his baggage by the arrest in Greenwich Park. It might, indeed, have been taken out at that time, for he had no reason to think either his person or his property were in the hands of those who wished him well; but, on the other hand, the locks of the strong box had sustained no violence that he could observe, and being of a particular and complicated construction he thought they could scarce be opened without an instrument made on purpose adapted to their peculiarities; and for this there had been no time. But speculate as he would on the matter, it was certain that this important document was gone, and probable that it had passed into no friendly hands. 'Let it be so,' said Nigel to himself; 'I am scarcely worse off respecting my prospects of fortune, than when I first reached this accursed city. But to be hampered with cruel accusations, and stained with foul suspicions — to be the object of pity of the most degrading kind to yonder honest citizen, and of the malignity of that envious and atrabilarious courtier, who can endure the good fortune and good qualities of another no more than the mole can brook sunshine — this is indeed a deplorable reflection; and the consequences must stick to my future life, and impede whatever my head, or my hand, if it is left me, might be able to execute in my favour.'

The feeling that he is the object of general dislike and dereliction seems to be one of the most unendurably painful to which a human being can be subjected. The most atrocious criminals, whose nerves have not shrunk from perpetrating the most horrid cruelty, suffer more from the consciousness that no man will sympa-

thize with their sufferings, than from apprehension of the personal agony of their impending punishment; and are known often to attempt to palliate their enormities, and sometimes altogether to deny what is established by the clearest proof, rather than to leave life under the general ban of humanity. It was no wonder that Nigel, labouring under the sense of general, though unjust suspicion, should, while pondering on so painful a theme, recollect that one, at least, had not only believed him innocent, but hazarded herself, with all her feeble power, to interpose in his behalf.

'Poor girl!' he repeated; 'poor, rash, but generous maiden! your fate is that of her in Scottish story, who thrust her arm into the staple of the door, to oppose it as a bar against the assassins who threatened the murder of her sovereign. The deed of devotion was useless, save to give an immortal name to her by whom it was done, and whose blood flows, it is said, in the veins of my house.' *

I cannot explain to the reader, whether the recollection of this historical deed of devotion, and the lively effect which the comparison, a little overstrained, perhaps, was likely to produce in favour of Margaret Ramsay, was not qualified by the concomitant ideas of ancestry and ancient descent with which that recollection was mingled. But the contending feelings suggested a new train of ideas.—'Ancestry,' he thought, 'and ancient descent, what are they to me?—My patrimony alienated—my title become a reproach, for what can be so absurd as titled beggary?—my character subjected to suspicion,—I will not remain in this country; and should I, at leaving it, procure the society of one so lovely, so brave, and so faithful, who should say that I derogated from the rank which I am virtually renouncing?'

There was something romantic and pleasing, as he pursued this picture of an attached and faithful pair, becoming all the world to each other, and stemming the tide of fate arm in arm; and to be linked thus with a creature so beautiful, and who had taken such devoted and disinterested concern in his fortunes, formed itself into such a vision as romantic youth loves best to dwell upon.

Suddenly his dream was painfully dispelled, by the recollection that its very basis rested upon the most selfish ingratitude on his own part. Lord of his castle and his towers, his forests and fields, his fair patrimony and noble name, his mind would have rejected, as a sort of impossibility, the idea of elevating to his rank the daughter of a mechanic; but, when degraded from his nobility, and plunged into poverty and difficulties, he was ashamed to feel himself not unwilling that this poor girl, in the blindness of her affection, should abandon all the better prospects of her own settled condition, to embrace the precarious and doubtful course which he himself was condemned to. The generosity of Nigel's mind recoiled from the selfishness of the plan of happiness which he projected; and he made a strong effort to expel from his thoughts for the rest of the evening this fascinating female, or, at least, not to permit them to dwell upon the perilous circumstance, that she was at present the only creature living who seemed to consider him as an object of kindness.

He could not, however, succeed in banishing her from his slumbers, when, after having spent a weary day, he betook himself to a perturbed couch. The form of Margaret mingled with the wild mass of dreams which his late adventures had suggested; and even when, copying the lively narrative of Sir Mungo, fancy presented to him the blood bubbling and hissing on the heated iron, Margaret stood behind him like a spirit of light, to breathe healing on the wound. At length nature was exhausted by these fantastic creations, and Nigel slept, and slept soundly, until awakened in the morning by the sound of a well-known voice, which had often broken his slumbers about the same hour.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Marry, come up, sir, with your gentle blood!
Here's a red stream beneath this coarse blue doublet,
That warms the heart as kindly as if drawn
From the far source of old Assyrian kings,
Who first made mankind subject to their sway.
OLD PLAY.

THE sounds to which we alluded in our last, were no other than the grumbling tones of Richie Moniplies's voice.

This worthy, like some other persons who rank high in their own opinion, was very apt, when he could have no other auditor, to hold conversation with one who was sure to be a willing listener—I mean with himself. He was now brushing and arranging Lord Glenvarloch's clothes, with as much composure and quiet assiduity as if he had never been out of his service, and grumbling betwixt whiles to the following purpose:—'Humph—ay, time cloak and jerkin were through my hands—I question if horse-hair has been passed over them since they and I last parted. The embroidery finely frayed, too—and the gold buttons of the cloak—by my conscience, and as I am an honest man, there is a round dozen of them gane! This comes of Alsatian frolics—God keep us with his grace, and not give us over to our own devices!—I see no sword—but that will be in respect of present circumstances.'

Nigel for some time could not help believing that he was still in a dream, so improbable did it seem that his domestic, whom he supposed to be in Scotland, should have found him out, and obtained access to him, in his present circumstances. Looking through the curtains, however, he became well assured of the fact, when he beheld the stiff and bony length of Richie, with a visage charged with nearly double its ordinary degree of importance, employed sedulously in brushing his master's cloak, and refreshing himself with whistling or humming, from interval to interval, some snatch of an old melancholy

* [James I. of Scotland was treacherously murdered at Perth, on the 20th February, 1437. Several of the ladies were hurt, and, according to most of our historians, Catherine Douglas, one of the queen's attendants, had her arm broken, by thrusting it into the staple in place of a bolt.]

Scottish ballad tune. Although sufficiently convinced of the identity of the party, Lord Glenvarloch could not help expressing his surprise in the superfluous question,—'In the name of Heaven, Richie, is this you?'

'And wha else suld it be, my lord?' answered Richie; 'I dreamna that your lordship's levee in this place is like to be attended by ony that are not bounden thereto by duty.'

'I am rather surprised,' answered Nigel, 'that it should be attended by any one at all—especially by you, Richie; for you know that we parted, and I thought you had reached Scotland long since.'

'I crave your lordship's pardon, but we have not parted yet, nor are soon likely so to do; for there gang twa folk's votes to the unmaking of a bargain, as to the making of ane. Though it was your lordship's pleasure so to conduct yourself that we were like to have parted, yet it was not, on reflection, my will to be gone. To be plain, if your lordship does not ken when you have a good servant, I ken when I have a kind master; and, to say truth, you will be easier served now than ever, for there is not much chance of your getting out of your bounds.'

'I am indeed bound over to good behaviour,' said Lord Glenvarloch, with a smile; 'but I hope you will not take advantage of my situation to be too severe on my follies, Richie?'

'God forbid, my lord—God forbid,' replied Richie, with an expression betwixt a conceited consciousness of superior wisdom and real feeling—'especially in consideration of your lordship's having a due sense of them. I did indeed remonstrate, as was my humble duty, but I scorn to cast that up to your lordship now—Na, na, I am myself an erring creature—very conscious of some small weaknesses—there is no perfection in man.'

'But, Richie,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'although I am much obliged to you for your proffered service, it can be of little use to me here, and may be of prejudice to yourself.'

'Your lordship shall pardon me again,' said Richie, whom the relative situation of the parties had invested with ten times his ordinary dogmatism; 'but as I will manage the matter, your lordship shall be greatly benefited by my service, and I myself no whit prejudiced.'

'I see not how that can be, my friend,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'since even as to your pecuniary affairs'——

'Touching my pecuniars, my lord,' replied Richie, 'I am indifferently weel provided; and, as it chances, my living here will be no burden to your lordship, or distress to myself. Only I crave permission to annex certain conditions to my servitude with your lordship.'

'Annex what you will,' said Lord Glenvarloch, 'for you are pretty sure to take your own way, whether you make any conditions or not. Since you will not leave me, which were, I think, your wisest course, you must, and I suppose will, serve me only on such terms as you like yourself.'

'All that I ask, my lord,' said Richie gravely, and with a tone of great moderation, 'is to have the uninterrupted command of my own motions, for certain important purposes which I have now in hand, always giving your lordship the solace of my company and attendance at such times as may be at once convenient for me and necessary for your service.'

'Of which, I suppose, you constitute yourself sole judge?' replied Nigel, smiling.

'Unquestionably, my lord,' answered Richie gravely; 'for your lordship can only know what yourself want; whereas I, who see both sides of the picture, ken both what is the best for your affairs, and what is the most needful for my own.'

'Richie, my good friend,' said Nigel, 'I fear this arrangement, which places the master much under the disposal of the servant, would scarce suit us if we were both at large; but, a prisoner as I am, I may be as well at your disposal as I am at that of so many other persons; and so you may come and go as you list, for I suppose you will not take my advice, to return to your own country, and leave me to my fate.'

'The deil be in my feet if I do,' said Moniplies,—'I am not the lad to leave your lordship in foul weather, when I followed you and fed upon you through the whole summer day. And besides, there may be brave days behind, for a' that has come and gane yet; for—

It's hame, and it's hame, and it's hame we fain would be,
Though the cloud is in the lift, and the wind is on the lea;
For the sun through the mirk blinks blithe on mine e'e,
Says—"I'll shine on ye yet in your ain countrie!"'

Having sung this stanza in the manner of a ballad-singer, whose voice has been cracked by matching his windpipe against the bugle of the north blast, Richie Moniplies aided Lord Glenvarloch to rise, attended his toilet with every possible mark of the most solemn and deferential respect, then waited upon him at breakfast, and finally withdrew, pleading that he had business of importance, which would detain him for some hours.

Although Lord Glenvarloch necessarily expected to be occasionally annoyed by the self-conceit and dogmatism of Richie Moniplies's character, yet he could not but feel the greatest pleasure from the firm and devoted attachment which this faithful follower had displayed in the present instance, and indeed promised himself an alleviation of the ennui of his imprisonment, in having the advantage of his services. It was, therefore, with pleasure that he learned from the warder, that his servant's attendance would be allowed at all times when the general rules of the fortress permitted the entrance of strangers.

In the meanwhile, the magnanimous Richie Moniplies had already reached Tower Wharf. Here, after looking with contempt on several scullers by whom he was plied, and whose services he rejected with a wave of his hand, he called with dignity, 'First oars!' and stirred into activity several lounging Tritons of the higher order, who had not, on his first appearance, thought it worth while to accost him with proffers of service. He now took possession of a wherry, folded his arms within his ample cloak, and, sitting down in the stern with an air of importance, commanded them to row to Whitehall Stairs. Having reached the palace in safety, he demanded to see Master Linklater, the under-

clerk of his Majesty's kitchen. The reply was, that he was not to be spoken withal, being then employed in cooking a mess of cock-a-leekie for the king's own mouth.

'Tell him,' said Moniplies, 'that it is a dear countryman of his, who seeks to converse with him on matter of high import.'

'A dear countryman!' said Linklater, when this pressing message was delivered to him. 'Well, let him come in and be d—d, that I should say sae. This now is some red-headed, long-legged, gillie-white-foot frae the West Port, that, hearing of my promotion, is come up to be a turn-broche, or deputy scullion, through my interest. It is a great hindrance to any man who would rise in the world, to have such friends to hang by his skirts, in hope of being towed up along with him.—Ha! Richie Moniplies, man, is it thou? And what has brought ye here? If they should ken thee for the loon that scared the horse the other day!'——

'No more o' that, neighbour,' said Richie.—'I am just here on the auld errand—I maun speak with the King.'

'The King? Ye are red wud,' said Linklater; then shouted to his assistants in the kitchen, 'Look to the broches, ye knaves—*pisces purga—Salsamenta fac macerentur pulchre*—I will make you understand Latin, ye knaves, as becomes the scullions of King James.' Then in a cautious tone, to Richie's private ear, he continued, 'Know ye not how ill your master came off the other day?—I can tell you that job made some folks shake for their office.'

'Weel, but, Laurie, ye maun befriend me this time, and get this wee bit sifflication slipped into his Majesty's ain most gracious hand. I promise you the contents will be most grateful to him.'

'Richie,' answered Linklater, 'you have certainly sworn to say your prayers in the porter's lodge, with your back bare; and twa grooms, with dog-whips, to cry amen to you.'

'Na, na, Laurie, lad,' said Richie; 'I ken better what belangs to sifflications than I did yon day; and ye will say that yoursel', if ye will but get that bit note to the King's hand.'

'I will have neither hand nor foot in the matter,' said the cautious clerk of the kitchen; 'but there is his Majesty's mess of cock-a-leekie just going to be served to him in his closet—I cannot prevent you from putting the letter between the gilt bowl and the platter; his sacred Majesty will see it when he lifts the bowl, for he aye drinks out the broth.'

'Enough said,' replied Richie, and deposited the paper accordingly just before a page entered to carry away the mess to his Majesty.

'Aweel, aweel, neighbour,' said Lawrence, when the mess was taken away, 'if ye have done onything to bring yoursel' to the withy, or the scourging-post, it is your ain wilful deed.'

'I will blame no other for it,' said Richie; and with that undismayed pertinacity of conceit, which made a fundamental part of his character, he abode the issue, which was not long of arriving.

In a few minutes Maxwell himself arrived in the apartment, and demanded hastily who had placed a writing on the king's trencher. Linklater denied all knowledge of it; but Richie Moniplies, stepping boldly forth, pronounced the emphatical confession, 'I am the man.'

'Follow me, then,' said Maxwell, after regarding him with a look of great curiosity.

They went up a private staircase,—even that private staircase, the privilege of which at court is accounted a nearer road to power than the *grandes entrées* themselves. Arriving in what Richie described as an 'ill redd-up' anteroom, the usher made a sign to him to stop, while he went into the king's closet. Their conference was short, and as Maxwell opened the door to retire, Richie heard the conclusion of it.

'Ye are sure he is not dangerous?—I was caught once.—Bide within call, but not nearer the door than within three geometrical cubits. If I speak loud, start to me like a falcon—If I speak loun, keep your lang lugs out of ear-shot—and now let him come in.'

Richie passed forward at Maxwell's mute signal, and in a moment found himself in the presence of the king. Most men of Richie's birth and breeding, and many others, would have been abashed at finding themselves alone with their sovereign. But Richie Moniplies had an opinion of himself too high to be controlled by any such ideas; and, having made his stiff reverence, he arose once more into his perpendicular height, and stood before James as stiff as a hedge-stake.

'Have ye gotten them, man? have ye gotten them?' said the king, in a fluttered state, betwixt hope and eagerness, and some touch of suspicious fear. 'Gie me them—gie me them—before ye speak a word, I charge you on your allegiance.'

Richie took a box from his bosom, and, stooping on one knee, presented it to his Majesty, who hastily opened it, and, having ascertained that it contained a certain carcanet of rubies, with which the reader was formerly made acquainted, he could not resist falling into a sort of rapture, kissing the gems as if they had been capable of feeling, and repeating again and again with childish delight, '*O ye cum prole, silexque—Onyx cum prole!* Ah, my bright and bonnie sparklers, my heart loups light to see you again.' He then turned to Richie, upon whose stoical countenance his Majesty's demeanour had excited something like a grim smile, which James interrupted his rejoicing to reprehend, saying, 'Take heed, sir, you are not to laugh at us—we are your anointed sovereign.'

'God forbid that I should laugh!' said Richie, composing his countenance into its natural rigidity. 'I did but smile to bring my visage into coincidence and conformity with your Majesty's physiognomy.'

'Ye speak as a dutiful subject, and an honest man,' said the king; 'but what deil's your name, man?'

'Even Richie Moniplies, the son of auld Mungo Moniplies, at the West Port of Edinburgh, who had the honour to supply your Majesty's mother's royal table, as weel as your Majesty's, with flesh and other vivers, when time was.'

'Aha!' said the king, laughing,—for he possessed, as a useful attribute of his situation, a tenacious memory, which recollected every one

with whom he was brought into casual contact,—'Ye are the selfsame traitor who had weel-nigh coupit us endlang on the causey of our ain court-yard? but we stuck by our mare. *Æquam memento rebus in arduis servare.* Weel, be not dismayed, Richie; for, as many have turned traitors, it is but fair that a traitor, now and then, suld prove to be, *contra expectanda*, a true man. How cam ye by our jewels, man?—cam ye on the part of George Heriot?'

'In no sort,' said Richie. 'May it please your Majesty, I come as Harry Wynd fought, utterly for my own hand, and on no man's errand; as, indeed, I call no one master, save Him that made me, your most gracious Majesty who governs me, and the noble Nigel Olifaunt, Lord of Glenvarloch, who maintained me as lang as he could maintain himself, poor nobleman!'

'Glenvarlochides again!' exclaimed the king; 'by my honour, he lies in ambush for us at every corner!—Maxwell knocks at the door. It is George Heriot come to tell us he cannot find these jewels.—Get thee behind the arras, Richie—stand close, man—sneeze not—cough not—breathe not!—Jingling Geordie is so damnably ready with his gold ends of wisdom, and sae cursedly backward with his gold-ends of siller, that, by our royal saul, we are glad to get a hair in his neck.'

Richie got behind the arras, in obedience to the commands of the good-natured king, while the monarch, who never allowed his dignity to stand in the way of a frolic, having adjusted, with his own hand, the tapestry, so as to complete the ambush, commanded Maxwell to tell him what was the matter without. Maxwell's reply was so low as to be lost by Richie Moniplies, the peculiarity of whose situation by no means abated his curiosity and desire to gratify it to the uttermost.

'Let Geordie Heriot come in,' said the king; and, as Richie could observe through a slit in the tapestry, the honest citizen, if not actually agitated, was at least discomposed. The king, whose talent for wit or humour was precisely of a kind to be gratified by such a scene as ensued, received his homage with coldness, and began to talk to him with an air of serious dignity, very different from the usual indecorous levity of his behaviour. 'Master Heriot,' he said, 'if we aright remember, we oppignorated in your hands certain jewels of the crown, for a certain sum of money—Did we, or did we not?'

'My most gracious sovereign,' said Heriot, 'indisputably your Majesty was pleased to do so.'

'The property of which jewels and *cimelia* remained with us,' continued the king, in the same solemn tone, 'subject only to your claim of advance thereupon; which advance being repaid, gives us right to repossession of the thing oppignorated, or pledged, or laid in wad. Voetius, Vinnius, Groenwigenus, Pagenstecherus,—all who have treated *de Contractu Oppignerationis*, *consentiunt in eundem*,—agree on the same point. The Roman law, the English common law, and the municipal law of our ancient kingdom of Scotland, though they split in mair particulars than I could desire, unite as strictly in this as the three strands of a twisted rope.'

'May it please your Majesty,' replied Heriot, 'it requires not so many learned authorities to prove to any honest man that his interest in a pledge is determined when the money lent is restored.'

'Weel, sir, I proffer restoration of the sum lent, and I demand to be repossessed of the jewels pledged with you. I gave ye a hint, brief while since, that this would be essential to my service, for, as approaching events are like to call us into public, it would seem strange if we did not appear with those ornaments, which are heirlooms of the crown, and the absence whereof is like to place us in contempt and suspicion with our liege subjects.'

Master George Heriot seemed much moved by this address of his sovereign, and replied with emotion, 'I call Heaven to witness that I am totally harmless in this matter, and that I would willingly lose the sum advanced, so that I could restore those jewels, the absence of which your Majesty so justly laments. Had the jewels remained with me, the account of them would be easily rendered; but your Majesty will do me the justice to remember, that, by your express order, I transferred them to another person, who advanced a large sum, just about the time of my departure for Paris. The money was pressingly wanted, and no other means to come by it occurred to me. I told your Majesty, when I brought the needful supply, that the man from whom the moneys were obtained was of no good repute; and your most princely answer was, smelling to the gold—*Non olet*, it smells not of the means that have gotten it.'

'Weel, man,' said the king, 'but what needs a' this din? If ye gave my jewels in pledge to such a one, suld ye not, as a liege subject, have taken care that the redemption was in our power? And are we to suffer the loss of our *cimelia* by your neglect, besides being exposed to the scorn and censure of our lieges, and of the foreign ambassadors?'

'My lord and liege king,' said Heriot, 'God knows, if my bearing blame or shame in this matter would keep it from your Majesty, it were my duty to endure both, as a servant grateful for many benefits; but when your Majesty considers the violent death of the man himself, the disappearance of his daughter, and of his wealth, I trust you will remember that I warned your Majesty, in humble duty, of the possibility of such casualties, and prayed you not to urge me to deal with him on your behalf.'

'But you brought me nae better means,' said the king—'Geordie, ye brought me nae better means. I was like a deserted man; what could I do but grip to the first siller that offered, as a drowning man grasps to the willow-wand that comes readiest?—And now, man, what for have ye not brought back the jewels? they are surely above ground, if ye wad make strict search.'

'All strict search has been made, may it please your Majesty,' replied the citizen; 'hue and cry has been sent out everywhere, and it has been found impossible to recover them.'

'Difficult, ye mean, Geordie, not impossible,' replied the king; 'for that whilk is impossible, is either naturally so, *exempli gratia*, to make two into three; or morally so, as to make what is truth falsehood; but what is only difficult

may come to pass, with assistance of wisdom and patience; as, for example, Jingling Geordie, look here!' And he displayed the recovered treasure to the eyes of the astonished jeweller, exclaiming, with great triumph, 'What say ye to that, Jingler?—By my sceptre and crown, the man stares as if he took his native prince for a warlock! us, that are the very *malleus maleficarum*, the contunding and contriturating hammer of all witches, sorcerers, magicians, and the like; he thinks we are taking a touch of the black art oursel's!—But gang thy way, honest Geordie; thou art a good plain man, but nane of the seven sages of Greece; gang thy way, and mind the soothfast word which you spoke, small time syne, that there is one in this land that comes near to Solomon, King of Israel, in all his gifts, except in his love to strange women, forbye the daughter of Pharaoh.'

If Heriot was surprised at seeing the jewels so unexpectedly produced at the moment the king was upbraiding him for the loss of them, this allusion to the reflection which had escaped him while conversing with Lord Glenvarloch altogether completed his astonishment; and the king was so delighted with the superiority which it gave him at the moment, that he rubbed his hands, chuckled, and, finally, his sense of dignity giving way to the full feeling of triumph, he threw himself into his easy-chair, and laughed with unconstrained violence till he lost his breath, and the tears ran plentifully down his cheeks as he strove to recover it. Meanwhile, the royal cachinnation was echoed out by a discordant and portentous laugh from behind the arras, like that of one who, little accustomed to give way to such emotions, feels himself at some particular impulse unable either to control or to modify his obstreperous mirth. Heriot turned his head with new surprise towards the place, from which sounds so unfitting the presence of a monarch seemed to burst with such emphatic clamour.*

The king, too, somewhat sensible of the indecorum, rose up, wiped his eyes, and calling—'Todlowrie, come out o' your den,' he produced from behind the arras the length of Richie Moniplies, still laughing with as unrestrained mirth as ever did gossip at a country christening. 'Whisht, man, whisht, man,' said the king; 'ye needna nicher that gait, like a cusser at a caup o' corn, e'en though it was a pleasing jest, and our ain framing. And yet to see Jingling Geordie, that hauds himself so much the wiser than other folks—to see him, ha! ha! ha!—in the vein of Euclio apud Plautum, distressing himself to recover what was lying at his elbow—

Perii, interii, occidi—quo curram? quo non curram?—
Tene, tene—quem? quis? nescio—nihil video.

Ah, Geordie, your een are sharp enough to look after gowd and silver, gems, rubies, and the like of that, and yet ye kenna how to come by them when they are lost.—Ay, ay—look at them, man—look at them—they are a' right and tight, sound and round, not a doublet crept in amongst them.'

George Heriot, when his first surprise was over, was too old a courtier to interrupt the king's imaginary triumph, although he darted a look of some displeasure at honest Richie, who still continued on what is usually termed the broad grin. He quietly examined the stones, and, finding them all perfect, he honestly and sincerely congratulated his Majesty on the recovery of a treasure which could not have been lost without some dishonour to the crown; and asked to whom he himself was to pay the sums for which they had been pledged, observing, that he had the money by him in readiness.

'Ye are in a deevil of a hurry, when there is paying in the case, Geordie,' said the king.—'What's a' the haste, man? The jewels were restored by an honest, kindly countryman of ours. There he stands, and wha kens if he wants the money on the nail, or if he might not be as weel pleased wi' a bit rescript on our treasury some six months hence? Ye ken that our exchequer is even at a low ebb just now, and ye cry, pay, pay, pay, as if we had all the mines of Ophir.'

'Please your Majesty,' said Heriot, 'if this man has the real right to these moneys, it is doubtless at his will to grant forbearance, if he will. But when I remember the guise in which I first saw him, with a tattered cloak and a broken head, I can hardly conceive it.—Are not you Richie Moniplies, with the king's favour?'

'Even sae, Master Heriot—of the ancient and honourable house of Castle Collop, near to the West Port of Edinburgh,' answered Richie.

'Why, please your Majesty, he is a poor serving-man,' said Heriot. 'This money can never be honestly at his disposal.'

'What for no?' said the king. 'Wad ye have naebody spraickle up the brae but yoursel', Geordie? Your ain cloak was thin enough when ye cam here, though ye have lined it gey and weel. And for serving-men, there has mony a red-shank come over the Tweed wi' his master's wallet on his shoulders, that now rustles it wi' his six followers behind him. There stands the man himsel'; speer at him, Geordie.'

'His may not be the best authority in the case,' answered the cautious citizen.

'Tut, tut, man,' said the king, 'ye are over scrupulous. The knave deer-stealers have an apt phrase, *Non est inquirendum unde venit* VENISON. He that brings the gudes hath surely a right to dispose of the gear.—Hark ye, friend, speak the truth and shame the deil. Have ye plenary powers to dispose on the redemption-money as to delay of payments or the like, ay or no?'

'Full power, an it like your gracious Majesty,' answered Richie Moniplies; 'and I am maist willing to subscrive to whatsoever may in ony wise accommodate your Majesty anent the redemption-money, trusting your Majesty's grace will be kind to me in one sma' favour.'

'Ey, man,' said the king, 'come ye to me there? I thought ye wad e'en be like the rest of them.—One would think our subjects' lives and goods were all our ain, and holden of us at our free-will; but when we stand in need of ony matter of siller from them, which chances more frequently than we would it did, deil a bodle is to be had, save on the auld terms of giff-gaff. It is just niffer for niffer. Aweel, neighbour, what is it that ye want—some monopoly, I reckon?

* Note Z. Richie Moniplies behind the Arras.

Or it may be a grant of kirklands and teinds, or a knighthood, or the like? Ye maun be reasonable, unless you propose to advance more money for our present occasions.'

'My liege,' answered Richie Moniplies, 'the owner of these moneys places them at your Majesty's command, free of all pledge or usage, as long as it is your royal pleasure, providing your Majesty will condescend to show some favour to the noble Lord Glenvarloch, presently prisoner in your royal Tower of London.'

'How, man—how, man—how, man!' exclaimed the king, reddening and stammering, but with emotions more noble than those by which he was sometimes agitated—'What is it that you dare to say to us?—Sell our justice!—Sell our mercy!—and we a crowned king, sworn to do justice to our subjects in the gate, and responsible for our stewardship to Him that is over all kings!' Here he reverently looked up, touched his bonnet, and continued with some sharpness—'We dare not traffic in such commodities, sir; and but that ye are a poor ignorant creature, that have done us this day some not unpleasant service, we wad have a red iron driven through your tongue, *in terrorem* of others. Awa with him, Geordie,—pay him plack and bawbee, out of our moneys in your hands, and let them care that come ahint.'

Richie, who had counted with the utmost certainty upon the success of this master-stroke of policy, was like an architect whose whole scaffolding at once gives way under him. He caught, however, at what he thought might break his fall. 'Not only the sum for which the jewels were pledged,' he said, 'but the double of it, if required, should be placed at his Majesty's command, and even without hope or condition of repayment, if only—'

But the king did not allow him to complete the sentence, crying out with greater vehemence than before, as if he dreaded the stability of his own good resolution—'Awa wi' him—swith awa wi' him! It is time he were gane, if he doubles his bode that gate. And, for your life, let not Steenie, or ony of them, hear a word from his mouth; for wha kens what trouble that might bring me into! *Ne inducas in tentationem—Vade retro, Sathanas!—Amen.*'

In obedience to the royal mandate, George Heriot hurried the abashed petitioner out of the presence, and out of the palace; and when they were in the palace-yard, the citizen, remembering with some resentment the airs of equality which Richie had assumed towards him in the commencement of the scene which had just taken place, could not forbear to retaliate, by congratulating him with an ironical smile on his favour at court, and his improved grace in presenting a supplication.

'Never fash your beard about that, Master George Heriot,' said Richie, totally undismayed; 'but tell me when and where I am to sufficiate you for eight hundred pounds sterling, for which these jewels stood engaged?'

'The instant that you bring with you the real owner of the money,' replied Heriot, 'whom it is important that I should see on more accounts than one.'

'Then will I back to his Majesty,' said Richie Moniplies stoutly, 'and get either the money or the pledge back again. I am fully commissionate to act in that matter.'

'It may be so, Richie,' said the citizen, 'and perchance it may *not* be so either, for your tales are not all gospel; and, therefore, be assured I will see that it *is* so, ere I pay you that large sum of money. I shall give you an acknowledgment for it, and I will keep it prestable at a moment's warning. But, my good Richard Moniplies of Castle Collop, near the West Port of Edinburgh, in the meantime I am bound to return to his Majesty on matters of weight.' So speaking, and mounting the stair to re-enter the palace, he added, by way of summing up the whole,—'George Heriot is over old a cock to be caught with chaff.'

Richie stood petrified when he beheld him re-enter the palace, and found himself, as he supposed, left in the lurch.—'Now, plague on ye,' he muttered, 'for a cunning auld skin-flint! that, because ye are an honest man yoursel, forsooth, must needs deal with all the world as if they were knaves. But deil be in me if ye beat me yet!—Gude guide us! yonder comes Laurie Linklater next, and he will be on me about the sifflication.—I winna stand him, by Saint Andrew!'

So saying, and changing the haughty stride with which he had that morning entered the precincts of the palace into a skulking shamble, he retreated for his wherry, which was in attendance, with speed which, to use the approved phrase on such occasions, greatly resembled a flight.

CHAPTER XXIII

Benedick. This looks not like a nuptial.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

MASTER GEORGE HERIOT had no sooner returned to the king's apartment, than James inquired of Maxwell if the Earl of Huntinglen was in attendance; and receiving an answer in the affirmative, desired that he should be admitted. The old Scottish lord having made his reverence in the usual manner, the king extended his hand to be kissed, and then began to address him in a tone of grave sympathy.

'We told your lordship in our secret epistle of this morning, written with our ain hand, in testimony we have neither pretermitted nor forgotten your faithful service, that we had that to communicate to you that would require both patience and fortitude to endure, and therefore exhorted you to peruse some of the most pithy passages of Seneca, and of Boethius *de Consolatione*, that the back may be, as we say, fitted for the burden. This we commend to you from our ain experience.

Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco,

sayeth Dido, and I might say in my own person, *non ignarus*, but to change the gender would affect the prosody, whereof our southern subjects are tenacious. So, my Lord of Huntinglen, I trust you have acted by our advice, and studied patience before ye need it—*venienti occurrite*

morbo—mix the medicament when the disease is coming on.'

'May it please your Majesty,' answered Lord Huntinglen, 'I am more of an old soldier than a scholar—and if my own rough nature will not bear me out in any calamity, I hope I shall have grace to try a text of Scripture to boot.'

'Ay, man, are you there with your bears?' said the king; 'the Bible, man' (touching his cap), 'is indeed *principium et fons*—but it is pity your lordship cannot peruse it in the original. For although we did ourselves promote that work of translation,—since ye may read, at the beginning of every Bible, that when some palpable clouds of darkness were thought like to have overshadowed the land, after the setting of that bright occidental star, Queen Elizabeth; yet our appearance, like that of the sun in his strength, instantly dispelled these surmised mists,—I say, that although, as therein mentioned, we countenanced the preaching of the gospel, and especially the translation of the Scriptures out of the original sacred tongues; yet, nevertheless, we ourselves confess to have found a comfort in consulting them in the original Hebrew, whilk we do not perceive even in the Latin version of the Septuagint, much less in the English traduction.'

'Please your Majesty,' said Lord Huntinglen, 'if your Majesty delays communicating the bad news with which your honoured letter threatens me, until I am capable to read Hebrew like your Majesty, I fear I shall die in ignorance of the misfortune which hath befallen, or is about to befall, my house.'

'You will learn it but too soon, my lord,' replied the king. 'I grieve to say it, but your son Dalgarno, whom I thought a very saint, as he was so much with Steenie and Baby Charles, hath turned out a very villain.'

'Villain!' repeated Lord Huntinglen; and though he instantly checked himself, and added, 'but it is your Majesty speaks the word,' the effect of his first tone made the king step back as if he had received a blow. He also recovered himself again, and said, in the pettish way which usually indicated his displeasure—'Yes, my lord, it was we that said it—*non surdo canis*—we are not deaf—we pray you not to raise your voice in speech with us—there is the bonnie memorial—read, and judge for yourself.'

The king then thrust into the old nobleman's hand a paper, containing the story of the Lady Hermione, with the evidence by which it was supported, detailed so briefly and clearly, that the infamy of Lord Dalgarno, the lover by whom she had been so shamefully deceived, seemed undeniable. But a father yields not up so easily the cause of his son.

'May it please your Majesty,' he said, 'why was this tale not sooner told? This woman hath been here for years—wherefore was the claim on my son not made the instant she touched English ground?'

'Tell him how that came about, Geordie,' said the king, addressing Heriot.

'I grieve to distress my Lord Huntinglen,' said Heriot; 'but I must speak the truth. For a long time the Lady Hermione could not brook the thought of making her situation public; and when her mind became changed in that particular, it was necessary to recover the evidence of the false marriage, and letters and papers connected with it, which, when she came to Paris, and just before I saw her, she had deposited with a correspondent of her father in that city. He became afterwards bankrupt, and in consequence of that misfortune the lady's papers passed into other hands, and it is only a few days since I traced and recovered them. Without these documents of evidence it would have been imprudent for her to have preferred her complaint, favoured as Lord Dalgarno is by powerful friends.'

'Ye are saucy to say sae,' said the king; 'I ken what ye mean weel eneuch—ye think Steenie wad hae putten the weight of his foot into the scales of justice, and garr'd them whomle the bucket—ye forget, Geordie, wha it is whose hand uphaulds them. And ye do poor Steenie the mair wrang, for he confessed at ance before us and our Privy Council, that Dalgarno would have put the quean aff on him, the puir simple bairn, making him trow that she was a light-o'-love; in whilk mind he remained assured even when he parted from her, albeit Steenie might hae weel thought ane of thae cattle wadna hae resisted the like of him.'

'The Lady Hermione,' said George Heriot, 'has always done the utmost justice to the conduct of the Duke, who, although strongly possessed with prejudice against her character, yet scorned to avail himself of her distress, and, on the contrary, supplied her with the means of extricating herself from her difficulties.'

'It was e'en like himsel'—blessings on his bonnie face!' said the king; 'and I believed this lady's tale the mair readily, my Lord Huntinglen, that she spake nae ill of Steenie—And to make a lang tale short, my lord, it is the opinion of our council and ourself, as weel as of Baby Charles and Steenie, that your son maun amend his wrong by wedding this lady, or undergo such disgrace and discountenance as we can bestow.'

The person to whom he spoke was incapable of answering him. He stood before the king motionless, and glaring with eyes of which even the lids seemed immoveable, as if suddenly converted into an ancient statue of the times of chivalry, so instantly had his hard features and strong limbs been arrested into rigidity by the blow he had received—And in a second afterwards, like the same statue when the lightning breaks upon it, he sunk at once to the ground with a heavy groan. The king was in the utmost alarm, called upon Heriot and Maxwell for help, and, presence of mind not being his *forte*, ran to and fro in his cabinet, exclaiming,—'My ancient and beloved servant—who saved our anointed self! *Væ atque dolor!* My Lord of Huntinglen, look up—look up, man, and your son may marry the Queen of Sheba if he will.'

By this time Maxwell and Heriot had raised the old nobleman, and placed him on a chair; while the king, observing that he began to recover himself, continued his consolations more methodically.

'Haud up your head—haud up your head, and listen to your ain kind native prince. If there is shame, man, it comesna empty-handed

-there is siller to gild it—a gude tocher, and no that bad a pedigree, if she has been a loon, it was your son made her sae, and he can make her an honest woman again.'

These suggestions, however reasonable in the common case, gave no comfort to Lord Huntinglen, if indeed he fully comprehended them; but the blubbering of his good natured old master, which began to accompany and interrupt his royal speech, produced more rapid effect. The large tear gushed reluctantly from his eye, as he kissed the withered hands, which the king, weeping with less dignity and restraint, abandoned to him, first alternately and then both together, until, the feelings of the man getting entirely the better of the sovereign's sense of dignity, he grasped and shook Lord Huntinglen's hands with the sympathy of an equal and a familiar friend.

'*Compone lachrymas*,' said the monarch, 'be patient, man, be patient,—the council and Baby Charles, and Steenie, may a' gang to the deevil—he shall not marry her since it moves you so deeply.'

'He shall marry her, by God!' answered the earl, drawing himself up, dashing the tear from his eyes, and endeavouring to recover his composure. 'I pray your Majesty's pardon, but he shall marry her, with her dishonour for her dowry, were she the veriest courtezan in all Spain. If he gave his word, he shall make his word good, were it to the meanest creature that haunts the streets; he shall do it, or my own dagger shall take the life that I gave him. If he could stoop to use so base a fraud, though to deceive infamy, let him wed infamy.'

'No, no!' the monarch continued to insinuate, 'things are not so bad as that. Steenie himsell never thought of her being a street walker, even when he thought the worst of her.'

'If it can at all console my Lord of Huntinglen,' said the citizen, 'I can assure him of this lady's good birth, and most fair and unspotted fame.'

'I am sorry for it,' said Lord Huntinglen; then, interrupting himself, he said, 'Heaven forgive me for being ungrateful for such comfort!—but I am well nigh sorry she should be as you represent her, so much better than the villain deserves. To be condemned to wed beauty and innocence, and honest birth—'

'Ay, and wealth, my lord—wealth,' insinuated the king, 'is a better sentence than his perfidy has deserved.'

'It is long,' said the embittered father, 'since I saw he was selfish and hard hearted; but to be a perjured liar—I never dreaded that such a blot would have fallen on my race! I will never look on him again.'

'Hoot ay, my lord, hoot ay,' said the king, 'ye maun tak him to task roundly. I grant you should speak more in the vein of Demea than Mitio, *vi nempe et via pervulgata patrum*; but as for not seeing him again, and he your only son, that is altogether out of reason. I tell ye, man (but I would not for a bodle that Baby Charles heard me), that he might gie the glaiks to half the lasses of Lunnon, ere I could find in my heart to speak such harsh words as you have said of this deil of a Dalgarno of yours.'

'May it please your Majesty to permit me to retire,' said Lord Huntinglen, 'and dispose of the case according to your own royal sense of justice, for I desire no favour for him.'

'Aweel, my lord, so be it; and if your lordship can think,' added the monarch, 'of anything in our power which might comfort you'——

'Your Majesty's gracious sympathy,' said Lord Huntinglen, 'has already comforted me as far as earth can; the rest must be from the King of kings.'

'To him I commend you, my auld and faithful servant,' said James, with emotion, as the earl withdrew from his presence. The king remained fixed in thought for some time, and then said to Heriot, 'Jingling Geordie, ye ken all the privy doings of our court, and have dune so these thirty years, though, like a wise man, ye hear, and see, and say nothing. Now, there is a thing I fain wad ken, in the way of philosophical inquiry—Did you ever hear of the umquhile Lady Huntinglen, the departed Countess of this noble Earl, ganging a wee bit gleed in her walk through the world; I mean in the way of slipping a foot, casting a leglin girth,* or the like, ye understand me?'

'On my word as an honest man,' said George Heriot, somewhat surprised at the question, 'I never heard her wronged by the slightest breath of suspicion. She was a worthy lady, very circumspect in her walk, and lived in great concord with her husband, save that the good Countess was something of a puritan, and kept more company with ministers than was altogether agreeable to Lord Huntinglen, who is, as your Majesty well knows, a man of the old rough world, that will drink and swear.'

'O Geordie!' exclaimed the king, 'these are auld warld frailties, of whilk we dare not pronounce even oursells absolutely free. But the warld grows worse from day to day, Geordie. The juveniles of this age may weel say with the poet,

> Aetas parentum pejor avis tulit
> Nos nequiores—

This Dalgarno does not drink so much, or swear so much, as his father; but he wenches, Geordie, and he breaks his word and oath baith. As to what you say of the leddy and the ministers, we are a' fallible creatures, Geordie, priests and kings as weel as others; and wha kens but what that may account for the difference between this Dalgarno and his father? The Earl is the very soul of honour, and cares nae mair for warld's gear than a noble hound for the quest of a foumart; but as for his son, he was like to brazen us a' out—oursells, Steenie, Baby Charles, and our council—till he heard of the tocher, and then, by my kingly crown, he lap like a cock at a grossart! These are discrepancies

* A leglin girth is the lowest hoop upon a *leglin*, or milk pail. Allan Ramsay applies the phrase in the same metaphorical sense:—

> Or bairns can read they first maun spell,
> I learnd this frae my mammy,
> And cast a leglin girth mysel,
> Lang ere I married Tammie.'
>
> *Christ's Kirk on the Green.*

betwixt parent and son not to be accounted for naturally, according to Baptista Porta, Michael Scott *de Secretis*, and others. — Ah, Jingling Geordie, if your clouting the cauldron, and jingling on pots, pans, and veshels of all manner of metal, hadna jingled a' your grammar out of your head, I could have touched on that matter to you at mair length.'

Heriot was too plain-spoken to express much concern for the loss of his grammar learning on this occasion; but, after modestly hinting that he had seen many men who could not fill their father's bonnet, though no one had been suspected of wearing their father's nightcap, he inquired 'whether Lord Dalgarno had consented to do the Lady Hermione justice.'

'Troth, man, I have small doubt that he will,' quoth the king; 'I gave him the schedule of her worldly substance, which you delivered to us in the council, and we allowed him half-an-hour to chew the end upon that. It is rare reading for bringing him to reason. I left Baby Charles and Steenie laying his duty before him; and if he can resist doing what *they* desire him—why, I wish he would teach *me* the gait of it. O, Geordie, Jingling Geordie, it was grand to hear Baby Charles laying down the guilt of dissimulation, and Steenie lecturing on the turpitude of incontinence.'

'I am afraid,' said George Heriot, more hastily than prudently, 'I might have thought of the old proverb of Satan reproving sin.'

'Deil hae our saul, neighbour,' said the king, reddening, 'but ye are not blate. I gie ye licence to speak freely, and, by our saul, ye do not let the privilege become lost *non utendo* - it will suffer no negative prescription in your hands. Is it fit, think ye, that Baby Charles should let his thoughts be publicly seen? No - no—princes' thoughts are *arcana imperii* - *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*. Every liege subject is bound to speak the whole truth to the king, but there is nae reciprocity of obligation — and for Steenie having been whiles a dyke-louper at a time, is it for you, who are his goldsmith, and to whom, I doubt, he awes an uncomatable sum, to cast that up to him?'

Heriot did not feel himself called on to play the part of Zeno, and sacrifice himself for upholding the cause of moral truth; he did not desert it, however, by disavowing his words, but simply expressed sorrow for having offended his Majesty, with which the placable king was sufficiently satisfied.

'And now, Geordie, man,' quoth he, 'we will to this culprit, and hear what he has to say for himself, for I will see the job cleared this blessed day. Ye maun come wi' me, for your evidence may be wanted.'

The king led the way, accordingly, into a larger apartment, where the prince, the Duke of Buckingham, and one or two privy councillors were seated at a table, before which stood Lord Dalgarno, in an attitude of as much elegant ease and indifference as could be expressed, considering the stiff dress and manners of the times.

All rose and bowed reverently, while the king, to use a north country word, expressive of his mode of locomotion, toddled to his chair or throne, making a sign to Heriot to stand behind him.

'We hope,' said his Majesty, 'that Lord Dalgarno stands prepared to do justice to this unfortunate lady, and to his own character and honour?'

'May I humbly inquire the penalty,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'in case I should unhappily find compliance with your Majesty's demands impossible?'

'Banishment frae our court, my lord,' said the king; 'frae our court and our countenance.'

'Unhappy exile that I may be!' said Lord Dalgarno, in a tone of subdued irony—'I will at least carry your Majesty's picture with me, for I shall never see such another king.'

'And banishment, my lord,' said the prince sternly, 'from these our dominions.'

'That must be by form of law, please your Royal Highness,' said Dalgarno, with an affectation of deep respect; 'and I have not heard that there is a statute, compelling us, under such penalty, to marry every woman we may play the fool with. Perhaps his Grace of Buckingham can tell me?'

'You are a villain, Dalgarno,' said the haughty and vehement favourite.

'Fie, my lord, fie!—to a prisoner, and in presence of your royal and paternal gossip!' said Lord Dalgarno. 'But I will cut this deliberation short. I have looked over this schedule of the goods and effects of Erminia Pauletti, daughter of the late noble - yes, he is called the noble, or I read wrong, Giovanni Pauletti, of the House of Sansovino, in Genoa, and of the no less noble Lady Maud Olifaunt, of the House of Glenvarloch. Well, I declare that I was pre-contracted in Spain to this noble lady, and there has passed betwixt us some certain *prælibatio matrimonii;* and now, what more does this grave assembly require of me?'

'That you should repair the gross and infamous wrong you have done the lady, by marrying her within this hour,' said the prince.

'O, may it please your Royal Highness,' answered Dalgarno, 'I have a trifling relationship with an old Earl, who calls himself my father, who may claim some vote in the matter. Alas! every son is not blessed with an obedient parent.' He hazarded a slight glance towards the throne to give meaning to his last words.

'We have spoken ourselves with Lord Huntinglen,' said the king, 'and are authorized to consent in his name.'

'I could never have expected this intervention of a *proxeneta*, which the vulgar translate black-foot, of such eminent dignity,' said Dalgarno, scarce concealing a sneer. 'And my father hath consented? He was wont to say, ere we left Scotland, that the blood of Huntinglen and of Glenvarloch would not mingle, were they poured into the same basin. Perhaps he has a mind to try the experiment?'

'My lord,' said James, 'we will not be longer trifled with—Will you instantly, and *sine mora*, take this lady to your wife, in our chapel?'

'*Statim atque instanter*,' answered Lord Dalgarno; 'for, I perceive, by doing so, I shall obtain power to render great services to the commonwealth—I shall have acquired wealth to supply the wants of your Majesty, and a fair

wife to be at the command of his Grace of Buckingham.'

The duke rose, passed to the end of the table where Lord Dalgarno was standing, and whispered in his ear, 'You have placed a fair sister at my command ere now.'

This taunt cut deep through Lord Dalgarno's assumed composure. He started as if an adder had stung him, but instantly composed himself, and, fixing on the duke's still smiling countenance an eye which spoke unutterable hatred, he pointed the forefinger of his left hand to the hilt of his sword, but in a manner which could scarce be observed by any one save Buckingham. The duke gave him another smile of bitter scorn, and returned to his seat, in obedience to the commands of the king, who continued calling out, 'Sit down, Steenie, sit down, I command ye—we will hae nae bluid-breaking here.'

'Your Majesty needs not fear my patience,' said Lord Dalgarno; 'and that I may keep it the better, I will not utter another word in this presence, save those enjoined to me in that happy portion of the Prayer Book which begins with *Dearly Beloved*, and ends with *amazement*.'

'You are a hardened villain, Dalgarno,' said the king; 'and were I the lass, by my father's saul, I would rather brook the stain of having been your concubine than run the risk of becoming your wife. But she shall be under our special protection. Come, my lords, we will ourselves see this blithesome bridal.' He gave the signal by rising and moved towards the door, followed by the train. Lord Dalgarno attended, speaking to no one, and spoken to by no one, yet seeming as easy and unembarrassed in his gait and manner as if in reality a happy bridegroom.

They reached the chapel by a private entrance which communicated from the royal apartment. The Bishop of Winchester, in his pontifical dress, stood beside the altar; on the other side, supported by Monna Paula, the colourless, faded, half-lifeless form of the Lady Hermione, or Erminia Pauletti. Lord Dalgarno bowed profoundly to her, and the prince, observing the horror with which she regarded him, walked up, and said to her with much dignity, 'Madam, ere you put yourself under the authority of this man, let me inform you, he hath in the fullest degree vindicated your honour, so far as concerns your former intercourse. It is for you to consider whether you will put your fortune and happiness into the hands of one who has shown himself unworthy of all trust.'

The lady, with much difficulty, found words to reply. 'I owe to his Majesty's goodness,' she said, 'the care of providing me some reservation out of my own fortune, for my decent sustenance. The rest cannot be better disposed than in buying back the fair fame of which I am deprived, and the liberty of ending my life in peace and seclusion.'

'The contract has been drawn up,' said the king, 'under our own eye, specially discharging the *potestas maritalis*, and agreeing they shall live separate. So buckle them, my Lord Bishop, as fast as you can, that they may sunder again the sooner.'

The bishop accordingly opened his book and commenced the marriage ceremony, under circumstances so novel and so inauspicious. The responses of the bride were only expressed by inclinations of the head and body; while those of the bridegroom were spoken boldly and distinctly, with a tone resembling levity, if not scorn. When it was concluded, Lord Dalgarno advanced as if to salute the bride; but, seeing that she drew back in fear and abhorrence, he contented himself with making her a low bow. He then drew up his form to its height, and stretched himself as if examining the power of his limbs, but elegantly, and without any forcible change of attitude. 'I could caper yet,' he said, 'though I am in fetters—but they are of gold, and lightly worn. Well, I see all eyes look cold on me, and it is time I should withdraw. The sun shines elsewhere than in England! But first I must ask how this fair Lady Dalgarno is to be bestowed. Methinks it is but decent I should know. Is she to be sent to the haram of my Lord Duke? Or is this worthy citizen, as before——'

'Hold thy base ribald tongue!' said his father, Lord Huntinglen, who had kept in the background during the ceremony, and now, stepping suddenly forward, caught the lady by the arm, and confronted her unworthy husband. — 'The Lady Dalgarno,' he continued, 'shall remain as a widow in my house. A widow I esteem her, as much as if the grave had closed over her dishonourable husband.'

Lord Dalgarno exhibited momentary symptoms of extreme confusion, and said in a submissive tone, 'If you, my lord, can wish me dead, I cannot, though your heir, return the compliment. Few of the first-born of Israel,' he added, recovering himself from the single touch of emotion he had displayed, 'can say so much with truth. But I will convince you, ere I go, that I am a true descendant of a house famed for its memory of injuries.'

'I marvel your Majesty will listen to him longer,' said Prince Charles. 'Methinks we have heard enough of his daring insolence.'

But James, who took the interest of a true gossip in such a scene as was now passing, could not bear to cut the controversy short, but imposed silence on his son, with 'Whisht, Baby Charles—there is a gude bairn, whisht!—I want to hear what the frontless loon can say.'

'Only, sir,' said Dalgarno, 'that but for one single line in this schedule, all else that it contains could not have bribed me to take that woman's hand into mine.'

'That line maun have been the *summa totalis*,' said the king.

'Not so, sire,' replied Dalgarno. 'The sum-total might indeed have been an object for consideration even to a Scottish king, at no very distant period; but it would have had little charms for me, save that I see here an entry which gives me the power of vengeance over the family of Glenvarloch; and learn from it that yonder pale bride, when she put the wedding torch into my hand, gave me the power of burning her mother's house to ashes!'

'How is that?' said the king. 'What is he speaking about, Jingling Geordie?'

'This friendly citizen, my liege,' said Lord

Dalgarno, 'hath expended a sum belonging to my lady, and now, I thank Heaven, to me, in acquiring a certain mortgage, or wadset, over the estate of Glenvarloch, which, if it be not redeemed before to-morrow at noon, will put me in possession of the fair demesnes of those who once called themselves our house's rivals.'

'Can this be true?' said the king.

'It is even but too true, please your Majesty,' answered the citizen. 'The Lady Hermione having advanced the money for the original creditor, I was obliged, in honour and honesty, to take the rights to her; and, doubtless, they pass to her husband.'

'But the warrant, man,' said the king—'the warrant on our exchequer—couldna that supply the lad wi' the means of redemption?'

'Unhappily, my liege, he has lost it, or disposed of it—it is not to be found. He is the most unlucky youth!'

'This is a proper spot of work!' said the king, beginning to amble about and play with the points of his doublet and hose, in expression of dismay.—'We cannot aid him without paying our debts twice over, and we have, in the present state of our exchequer, scarce the means of paying them once.'

'You have told me news,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'but I will take no advantage.'

'Do not,' said his father, 'be a bold villain, since thou must be one, and seek revenge with arms, and not with the usurer's weapon.'

'Pardon me, my lord,' said Lord Dalgarno. 'Pen and ink are now my surest means of vengeance; and more land is won by the lawyer with the ram-skin, than by the Andrea Ferrara with his sheepshead handle. But, as I said before, I will take no advantage. I will await in town to-morrow, near Covent Garden; if any one will pay the redemption money to my scrivener, with whom the deeds lie, the better for Lord Glenvarloch; if not, I will go forward on the next day, and travel with all despatch to the north, to take possession.'

'Take a father's malison with you, unhappy wretch!' said Lord Huntinglen.

'And a king's, who is *pater patriæ*,' said James.

'I trust to bear both lightly,' said Lord Dalgarno; and, bowing around him, he withdrew; while all present, oppressed, and, as it were, overawed by his determined effrontery, found they could draw breath more freely when he at length relieved them of his society. Lord Huntinglen, applying himself to comfort his new daughter-in-law, withdrew with her also; and the king, with his Privy Council, whom he had not dismissed, again returned to his council-chamber, though the hour was unusually late. Heriot's attendance was still commanded, but for what reason was not explained to him.

CHAPTER XXXIII

—I'll play the eavesdropper.

Richard III., Act 5, Scene 3.

James had no sooner resumed his seat at the council board, than he began to hitch in his chair, cough, use his handkerchief, and make other intimations that he meditated a long speech. The council composed themselves to the beseeming degree of attention. Charles, as strict in his notions of decorum as his father was indifferent to it, fixed himself in an attitude of rigid and respectful attention; while the haughty favourite, conscious of his power over both father and son, stretched himself more easily on his seat, and, in assuming an appearance of listening, seemed to pay a debt to ceremonial rather than to duty.

'I doubt not, my lords,' said the monarch, 'that some of you may be thinking the hour of refection is past, and that it is time to ask with the slave in the comedy—*Quid de symbolo?*—Nevertheless, to do justice and exercise judgment is our meat and drink; and now we are to pray your wisdom to consider the case of this unhappy youth, Lord Glenvarloch, and see whether, consistently with our honour, anything can be done in his favour.'

'I am surprised at your Majesty's wisdom making the inquiry,' said the duke; 'it is plain this Dalgarno hath proved one of the most insolent villains on earth, and it must therefore be clear that, if Lord Glenvarloch had run him through the body, there would but have been out of the world a knave who had lived in it too long. I think Lord Glenvarloch hath had much wrong; and I regret that, by the persuasions of this false fellow, I have myself had some hand in it.'

'Ye speak like a child, Steenie—I mean my Lord of Buckingham,' answered the king, 'and as one that does not understand the logic of the schools; for an action may be inconsequential, or even meritorious, *quoad hominem*, that is, as touching him upon *whom* it is acted; and yet most criminal, *quoad locum*, or considering the place *wherein* it is done, as a man may lawfully dance Chrighty Beardie or any other dance in a tavern, but not *inter parietes ecclesiæ*. So that, though it may have been a good deed to have stricked Lord Dalgarno, being such as he has shown himself, anywhere else, yet it fell under the plain statute, when violence was offered within the verge of the court. For, let me tell you, my lords, the statute against striking would be of small use in our court, if it could be eluded by justifying the person stricken to be a knave. It is much to be lamented that I ken nae court in Christendom where knaves are not to be found; and if men are to break the peace under pretence of beating them, why, it will rain Jeddart staves* in our very antechamber.'

'What your Majesty says,' replied Prince Charles, 'is marked with your usual wisdom—the precincts of palaces must be sacred as well as the persons of kings, which are respected even in the most barbarous nations, as being one step only beneath their divinities. But your Majesty's will can control the severity of this and every other law, and it is in your power, on considera-

* The old-fashioned weapon called the Jeddart staff was a species of battle-axe. Of a very great tempest, it is said, in the south of Scotland, that it rains Jeddart staffs, as in England the common people talk of it raining cats and dogs.

tion of his case, to grant this rash young man a free pardon.'

'*Rem acu tetigisti, Carole, mi puerule*,' answered the king; 'and know, my lords, that we have, by a shrewd device and gift of our own, already sounded the very depth of this Lord Glenvarloch's disposition. I trow there be among you some that remember my handling in the curious case of my Lady Lake, and how I trimmed them about the story of hearkening behind the arras.* Now, this put me to cogitation, and I remembered me of having read that Dionysius, king of Syracuse, whom historians call τύραννος, which signifieth not in the Greek tongue, as in ours, a truculent usurper, but a royal king who governs, it may be, something more strictly than we and other lawful monarchs, whom the ancients termed βασιλεῖς.—Now this Dionysius of Syracuse caused cunning workmen to build for himsell a *lugg*—D'ye ken what that is, my Lord Bishop?'

'A cathedral, I presume to guess,' answered the bishop.

'What the deil, man—I crave your lordship's pardon for swearing—but it was no cathedral—only a lurking place called the king's *lugg*, or ear, where he could sit undescried, and hear the converse of his prisoners. Now, sirs, in imitation of this Dionysius, whom I took for my pattern, the rather that he was a great linguist and grammarian, and taught a school with good applause after his abdication (either he or his successor of the same name, it matters not whilk), I have caused them to make a *lugg* up at the state-prison of the Tower yonder, more like a pulpit than a cathedral, my Lord Bishop—and communicating with the arras behind the Lieutenant's chamber, where we may sit and privily hear the discourse of such prisoners as are put up there for State offences, and so creep into the very secrets of our enemies.'

The prince cast a glance towards the duke expressive of great vexation and disgust. Buckingham shrugged his shoulders, but the motion was so slight as to be almost imperceptible.

'Weel, my lords, ye ken the fray at the hunting this morning. I shall not get out of the trembling exies until I have a sound night's sleep—just after that, they bring ye in a pretty page that had been found in the park. We were warned against examining him oursells by the anxious care of those around us; nevertheless, holding our life ever at the service of these kingdoms, we commanded all to avoid the room, the rather that we suspected this boy to be a girl. What think ye, my lords? few of you would have thought I had a hawk's eye for sic gear; but we thank God that, though we are old, we know so much of such toys as may beseem a man of decent gravity. Aweel, my lords, we questioned this maiden in male attire ourselves, and I profess it was a very pretty interrogatory, and well followed. For, though she at first professed that she assumed this disguise in order to countenance the woman who should present us with the Lady Hermione's petition, for whom she professed entire affection, yet when we, suspecting *anguis in herba*, did put her to the very question, she was compelled to own a virtuous attachment for Glenvarlochides, in such a pretty passion of shame and fear, that we had much ado to keep our own eyes from keeping company with hers in weeping. Also, she laid before us the false practices of this Dalgarno towards Glenvarlochides, inveigling him into houses of ill resort, and giving him evil counsel under pretext of sincere friendship, whereby the inexperienced lad was led to do what was prejudicial to himself, and offensive to us. But, however prettily she told her tale, we determined not altogether to trust to her narration, but rather to try the experiment whilk we had devised for such occasions. And having ourselves speedily passed from Greenwich to the Tower, we constituted oursell eavesdropper, as it is called, to observe what should pass between Glenvarlochides and this page, whom we caused to be admitted to his apartment, well judging that if they were of counsel together to deceive us, it could not be but something of it would spunk out. And what think ye we saw, my lords? Naething for you to sniggle and laugh at, Steenie, for I question if you could have played the temperate and Christian-like part of this poor lad Glenvarloch. He might be a father of the Church in comparison of you, man.—And then, to try his patience yet farther, we loosed on him a courtier and a citizen, that is, Sir Mungo Malagrowther and our servant George Heriot here, wha dang the puir lad about, and didna greatly spare our royal selves.—You mind, Geordie, what ye said about the wives and concubines? but I forgie ye, man—nae need of kneeling, I forgie ye the rather that it regards a certain particular, whilk, as it added not much to Solomon's credit, the lack of it cannot be said to impinge on ours. Aweel, my lords, for all temptations of his distress and evil ensample, this poor lad never loosed his tongue on us to say one unbecoming word—which inclines us the rather, taking always by your wise advice, to treat this affair of the Park as a thing done in the heat of blood, and under strong provocation, and therefore to confer our free pardon on Lord Glenvarloch.'

'I am happy your gracious Majesty,' said the Duke of Buckingham, 'has arrived at that conclusion, though I could never have guessed at the road by which you attained it.'

'I trust,' said Prince Charles, 'that it is not a path which your Majesty will think it consistent with your high dignity to tread frequently.'

'Never while I live again, baby Charles, that I give you my royal word on. They say that hearkeners hear ill tales of themselves—by my saul, my very ears are tingling wi' that auld sorrow Sir Mungo's sarcasms. He called us close-fisted, Steenie—I am sure you can contradict that. But it is mere envy in the auld mutilated sinner, because he himself has neither a noble to hold in his loof nor fingers to close on it if he had.' Here the king lost recollection of Sir Mungo's irreverence in chuckling over his own wit, and only further alluded to it by saying—'We must give the auld maunderer *bos in linguam*—something to stop his mouth, or he will rail at us from Dan to Beersheba.—And now, my lords, let our warrant of mercy to Lord Glenvarloch be presently expedited, and he put to his freedom;

* Note AA. Lady Lake.

and as his estate is likely to go so sleeveless a gate, we will consider what means of favour we can show him.—My lords, I wish you an appetite to an early supper—for our labours have approached that term.—Baby Charles and Steenie, you will remain till our couchee.—My Lord Bishop, you will be pleased to stay to bless our meat.—Geordie Heriot, a word with you apart.'

His Majesty then drew the citizen into a corner, while the councillors, those excepted who had been commanded to remain, made their obeisance and withdrew. 'Geordie,' said the king, 'my good and trusty servant'—Here he busied his fingers much with the points and ribbons of his dress,—'Ye see that we have granted, from our own natural sense of right and justice, that which yon long-backed fallow, Moniplies I think they ca' him, proffered to purchase from us with a mighty bribe; whilk we refused as being a crowned king, who wad neither sell our justice nor our mercy for pecuniar consideration. Now, what think ye should be the upshot of this?'

'My Lord Glenvarloch's freedom, and his restoration to your Majesty's favour,' said Heriot.

'I ken that,' said the king peevishly. 'Ye are very dull to-day. I mean, what do you think this fallow Moniplies should think about the matter?'

'Surely that your Majesty is a most good and gracious sovereign,' answered Heriot.

'We had need to be gude and gracious baith,' said the king, still more pettishly, 'that have idiots about us that cannot understand what we mint at, unless we speak it out in braid Lowlands. See this chield Moniplies, sir, and tell him what we have done for Lord Glenvarloch, in whom he takes such part, out of our own gracious motion, though we refused to do it on ony proffer of private advantage. Now, you may put it till him as if of your own mind, whether it will be a gracious or a dutiful part in him to press us for present payment of the two or three hundred miserable pounds for whilk we were obliged to oppignorate our jewels? Indeed, mony men may think ye wad do the part of a good citizen, if you took it on yourself to refuse him payment, seeing he hath had what he professed to esteem full satisfaction, and considering, moreover, that it is evident he hath no pressing need of money, whereof we have much necessity.'

George Heriot sighed internally. 'O, my master,' thought he—'my dear master, is it then fated you are never to indulge any kingly or noble sentiment, without its being sullied by some after-thought of interested selfishness?'

The king troubled himself not about what he thought, but, taking him by the collar, said—'Ye ken my meaning now, Jingler—awa wi' ye. You are a wise man—manage it your ain gait—but forget not our present straits.' The citizen made his obeisance, and withdrew.

'And now, bairns,' said the king, 'what do you look upon each other for?—and what have you got to ask of your dear dad and gossip?'

'Only,' said the prince, 'that it would please your Majesty to command the lurking-place at the prison to be presently built up—the groans of a captive should not be brought in evidence against him.'

'What! build up my lugg, Baby Charles?—And yet, better deaf than hear ill tales of one's self. So let them build it up, hard and fast, without delay, the rather that my back is sair with sitting in it for a whole hour.—And now let us see what the cooks have been doing for us, bonnie bairns.'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

> To this brave man the knight repairs
> For counsel in his law affairs;
> And found him mounted in his pew,
> With books and money placed for show,
> Like nest-eggs to make clients lay,
> And for his false opinion pay.
>
> HUDIBRAS.

OUR readers may recollect a certain smooth-tongued, lank-haired, buckram-suited Scottish scrivener, who, in an early part of this history, appeared in the character of a *protégé* of George Heriot. It is to his house we are about to remove, but times have changed with him. The petty booth hath become a chamber of importance—the buckram suit is changed into black velvet; and although the wearer retains his puritanical humility and politeness to clients of consequence, he can now look others broad in the face, and treat them with a full allowance of superior opulence, and the insolence arising from it. It was but a short period that had achieved these alterations, nor was the party himself as yet entirely accustomed to them, but the change was becoming less embarrassing to him with every day's practice. Among other acquisitions of wealth, you may see one of Davie Ramsay's best timepieces on the table, and his eye is frequently observing its revolutions, while a boy, whom he employs as a scribe, is occasionally sent out to compare its progress with the clock of Saint Dunstan.

The scrivener himself seemed considerably agitated. He took from a strong box a bundle of parchments, and read passages of them with great attention; then began to soliloquize—'There is no outlet which law can suggest—no back-door of evasion—none—if the lands of Glenvarloch are not redeemed before it rings noon, Lord Dalgarno has them a cheap pennyworth. Strange, that he should have been at last able to set his patron at defiance, and achieve for himself the fair estate with the prospect of which he so long flattered the powerful Buckingham.—Might not Andrew Skurliewhitter nick him as neatly? He hath been my patron—true—not more than Buckingham was his; and he can be so no more, for he departs presently for Scotland. I am glad of it—I hate him, and I fear him. He knows too many of my secrets—I know too many of his. But, no—no—no—I need never attempt it, there are no means of overreaching him.—Well, Willie, what o'clock?'

'Ele'en hours just chappit, sir.'

'Go to your desk without, child,' said the scrivener. 'What to do next—I shall lose the old Earl's fair business, and, what is worse, his son's foul practice. Old Heriot looks too close into business to permit me more than the paltry and ordinary dues. The Whitefriars business was profitable, but it has become unsafe ever since—

pah!—what brought that in my head just now? I can hardly hold my pen.—If men should see me in this way!—Willie' (calling aloud to the boy), 'a cup of distilled waters—Soh!—now I could face the devil.'

He spoke the last words aloud, and close by the door of the apartment, which was suddenly opened by Richie Moniplies, followed by two gentlemen, and attended by two porters bearing money-bags. 'If ye can face the devil, Maister Skurliewhitter,' said Richie, 'ye will be the less likely to turn your back on a sack or twa o' siller, which I have ta'en the freedom to bring you. Sathanas and Mammon are near akin.' The porters, at the same time, ranged their load on the floor.

'I—I'—stammered the surprised scrivener—'I cannot guess what you mean, sir.'

'Only that I have brought you the redemption-money on the part of Lord Glenvarloch, in discharge of a certain mortgage over his family inheritance. And here, in good time, comes Master Reginald Lowestoffe, and another honourable gentleman of the Temple, to be witnesses to the transaction.'

'I—I incline to think,' said the scrivener, 'that the term is expired.'

'You will pardon us, Master Scrivener,' said Lowestoffe. 'You will not baffle us—it wants three-quarters of noon by every clock in the city.'

'I must have time, gentlemen,' said Andrew, 'to examine the gold by tale and weight.'

'Do so at your leisure, Master Scrivener,' replied Lowestoffe again. 'We have already seen the contents of each sack told and weighed, and we have put our seals on them. There they stand in a row, twenty in number, each containing three hundred yellow-hammers—we are witnesses to the lawful tender.'

'Gentlemen,' said the scrivener, 'this security now belongs to a mighty lord. I pray you, abate your haste, and let me send for Lord Dalgarno—or rather I will run for him myself.'

So saying, he took up his hat; but Lowestoffe called out—'Friend Moniplies, keep the door fast, an thou be'st a man! he seeks but to put off the time.—In plain terms, Andrew, you may send for the devil, if you will, who is the mightiest lord of my acquaintance, but from hence you stir not till you have answered our proposition, by rejecting or accepting the redemption-money fairly tendered—There it lies—take it, or leave it, as you will. I have skill enough to know that the law is mightier than any lord in Britain—I have learned so much at the Temple, if I have learned nothing else. And see that you trifle not with it, lest it make your long ears an inch shorter, Master Skurliewhitter.'

'Nay, gentlemen, if you threaten me,' said the scrivener, 'I cannot resist compulsion.'

'No threats—no threats at all, my little Andrew,' said Lowestoffe; 'a little friendly advice only—forget not, honest Andrew, I have seen you in Alsatia.'

Without answering a single word, the scrivener sat down, and drew in proper form a full receipt for the money proffered.

'I take it on your report, Master Lowestoffe,' he said; 'I hope you will remember I have insisted neither upon weight nor tale—I have been civil—if there is deficiency, I shall come to loss.'

'Fillip his nose with a gold piece, Richie,' quoth the Templar. 'Take up the papers, and now wend we merrily to dine thou wot'st where.'

'If I might choose,' said Richie, 'it should not be at yonder roguish ordinary; but as it is your pleasure, gentlemen, the treat shall be given wheresoever you will have it.'

'At the ordinary,' said the one Templar.

'At Beaujeu's,' said the other; 'it is the only house in London for neat wines, nimble drawers, choice dishes, and'——

'And high charges,' quoth Richie Moniplies. 'But, as I said before, gentlemen, ye have a right to command me in this thing, having so frankly rendered me your service in this small matter of business, without other stipulation than that of a slight banquet.'

The latter part of this discourse passed in the street, where, immediately afterwards, they met Lord Dalgarno. He appeared in haste; touched his hat slightly to Master Lowestoffe, who returned his reverence with the same negligence, and walked slowly on with his companion, while Lord Dalgarno stopped Richie Moniplies with a commanding sign, which the instinct of education compelled Moniplies, though indignant, to obey.

'Whom do you now follow, sirrah?' demanded the noble.

'Whomsoever goeth before me, my lord,' answered Moniplies.

'No sauciness, you knave.—I desire to know if you still serve Nigel Olifaunt?' said Dalgarno.

'I am friend to the noble Lord Glenvarloch,' answered Moniplies, with dignity.

'True,' replied Lord Dalgarno, 'that noble lord has sunk to seek friends among lackeys.—Nevertheless,—hark thee hither,—nevertheless, if he be of the same mind as when we last met, thou may'st show him that, on to-morrow at four afternoon, I shall pass northward by Enfield Chase—I will be slenderly attended, as I design to send my train through Barnet. It is my purpose to ride an easy pace through the forest, and to linger a while by Camlet Moat—he knows the place; and if he be aught but an Alsatian bully, will think it fitter for some purposes than the Park. He is, I understand, at liberty, or shortly to be so. If he fail me at the place nominated, he must seek me in Scotland, where he will find me possessed of his father's estate and lands.'

'Humph!' muttered Richie; 'there go twa words to that bargain.'

He even meditated a joke on the means which he was conscious he possessed of baffling Lord Dalgarno's expectations; but there was something of keen and dangerous excitement in the eyes of the young nobleman, which prompted his discretion for once to rule his wit, and he only answered,—

'God grant your lordship may well brook your new conquest—when you get it. I shall do your errand to my lord—whilk is to say,' he added internally, 'he shall never hear a word of it from Richie. I am not the lad to put him in such hazard.'

Lord Dalgarno looked at him sharply for a

moment, as if to penetrate the meaning of the dry, ironical tone, which, in spite of Richie's awe, mingled with his answer, and then waved his hand, in signal he should pass on. He himself walked slowly till the trio were out of sight, then turned back with hasty steps to the door of the scrivener, which he had passed in his progress, knocked, and was admitted.

Lord Dalgarno found the man of law with the money-bags still standing before him: and it escaped not his penetrating glance that Skurliewhitter was disconcerted and alarmed at his approach.

'How now, man,' he said; 'what! hast thou not a word of oily compliment to me on my happy marriage?—not a word of most philosophical consolation on my disgrace at court?—Or has my mien, as a wittol and discarded favourite, the properties of the Gorgon's head, the *turbatæ Palladis arma*, as Majesty might say?'

'My lord, I am glad—my lord, I am sorry'—answered the trembling scrivener, who, aware of the vivacity of Lord Dalgarno's temper, dreaded the consequence of the communication he had to make to him.

'Glad and sorry!' answered Lord Dalgarno. 'That is blowing hot and cold with a witness. Hark ye, you picture of petty-larceny personified—if you are sorry I am a cuckold, remember I am only mine own, you knave—there is too little blood in her cheeks to have sent her astray elsewhere. Well, I will bear mine antlered honours as I may—gold shall gild them; and for my disgrace, revenge shall sweeten it. Ay, revenge—and there strikes the happy hour!'

The hour of noon was accordingly heard to peal from Saint Dunstan's. 'Well banged, brave hammers!' said Lord Dalgarno, in triumph.—'The estate and lands of Glenvarloch are crushed beneath these clanging blows. If my steel to-morrow prove but as true as your iron maces to-day, the poor landless lord will little miss what your peal hath cut him out from. The papers—the papers, thou varlet! I am to-morrow northward ho! At four, afternoon, I am bound to be at Camlet Moat, in the Enfield Chase. To-night most of my retinue set forward. The papers!—Come, despatch.'

'My lord, the—the papers of the Glenvarloch mortgage—I—I have them not.'

'Have them not!' echoed Lord Dalgarno,—'hast thou sent them to my lodging, thou varlet? Did I not say I was coming hither?—What mean you by pointing to that money? What villany have you done for it? It is too large to be come honestly by.'

'Your lordship knows best,' answered the scrivener, in great perturbation. 'The gold is your own. It is—it is'——

'Not the redemption-money of the Glenvarloch estate!' said Dalgarno. 'Dare not say it is, or I will, upon the spot, divorce your pettifogging soul from your carrion carcass!' So saying, he seized the scrivener by the collar, and shook him so vehemently, that he tore it from the cassock.

'My lord, I must call for help,' said the trembling caitiff, who felt at that moment all the bitterness of the mortal agony—'It was the law's act, not mine. What could I do?'

'Dost ask?—why, thou snivelling dribblet of damnation, were all thy oaths, tricks, and lies spent? or do you hold yourself too good to utter them in my service? Thou shouldst have lied, cozened, out-sworn truth itself, rather than stood betwixt me and my revenge! But mark me,' he continued: 'I know more of your pranks than would hang thee. A line from me to the Attorney-General, and thou art sped.'

'What would you have me to do, my lord?' said the scrivener. 'All that art and law can accomplish, I will try.'

'Ah, are you converted? do so, or pity of your life!' said the lord; 'and remember I never fail my word. Then keep that accursed gold,' he continued. 'Or, stay, I will not trust you—send me this gold home presently to my lodging. I will still forward to Scotland, and it shall go hard but that I hold out Glenvarloch Castle against the owner, by means of the ammunition he has himself furnished. Thou art ready to serve me?' The scrivener professed the most implicit obedience.

'Then remember, the hour was past ere payment was tendered—and see thou hast witnesses of trusty memory to prove that point.'

'Tush, my lord, I will do more,' said Andrew, reviving—'I will prove that Lord Glenvarloch's friends threatened, swaggered, and drew swords on me.—Did your lordship think I was ungrateful enough to have suffered them to prejudice your lordship, save that they had bare swords at my throat?'

'Enough said,' replied Dalgarno; 'you are perfect—mind that you continue so, as you would avoid my fury. I leave my page below—get porters, and let them follow me instantly with the gold.'

So saying, Lord Dalgarno left the scrivener's habitation.

Skurliewhitter having despatched his boy to get porters of trust for transporting the money, remained alone and in dismay, meditating by what means he could shake himself free of the vindictive and ferocious nobleman, who possessed at once a dangerous knowledge of his character, and the power of exposing him, where exposure would be ruin. He had indeed acquiesced in the plan, rapidly sketched, for obtaining possession of the ransomed estate, but his experience foresaw that this would be impossible; while, on the other hand, he could not anticipate the various consequences of Lord Dalgarno's resentment, without fears from which his sordid soul recoiled. To be in the power, and subject both to the humours and the extortions of a spendthrift young lord, just when his industry had shaped out the means of fortune,—it was the most cruel trick which fate could have played the incipient usurer.

While the scrivener was in this fit of anxious anticipation, one knocked at the door of the apartment; and, being desired to enter, appeared in the coarse riding-cloak of uncut Wiltshire cloth, fastened by a broad leather belt and brass buckle, which was then generally worn by graziers and countrymen. Skurliewhitter, believing he saw in his visitor a country client who might prove profitable, had opened his mouth to request him to be seated, when the stranger, throwing

back his frieze hood, which he had drawn over his face, showed the scrivener features well imprinted in his recollection, but which he never saw without a disposition to swoon.

'Is it you?' he said faintly, as the stranger replaced the hood which concealed his features.

'Who else should it be?' said his visitor.

'Thou son of parchment, got betwixt the inkhorn
And the stuff'd process-bag—that mayest call
The pen thy father, and the ink thy mother,
The wax thy brother, and the sand thy sister,
And the good pillory thy cousin allied—
Rise, and do reverence unto me thy better!'

'Not yet down to the country,' said the scrivener, 'after every warning? Do not think your grazier's cloak will bear you out, captain—no, nor your scraps of stage-plays.'

'Why, what would you have me to do?' said the captain—'Would you have me starve? If I am to fly, you must eke my wings with a few feathers. You can spare them, I think.'

'You had means already—you have had ten pieces—What is become of them?'

'Gone,' answered Captain Colepepper—'Gone, no matter where—I had a mind to bite, and I was bitten, that's all—I think my hand shook at the thought of last night's work, for I trowled the doctors like a very baby.'

'And you have lost all, then?—Well, take this and be gone,' said the scrivener.

'What, two poor smelts? Marry, plague of your bounty!—But, remember, you are as deep in as I.'

'Not so, by Heaven!' answered the scrivener; 'I only thought of easing the old man of some papers and a trifle of his gold, and you took his life.'

'Were he living,' answered Colepepper, 'he would rather have lost it than his money.—But that is not the question, Master Skurliewhitter—you undid the private bolts of the window when you visited him about some affairs on the day ere he died—so satisfy yourself, that, if I am taken, I will not swing alone.—Pity Jack Hempsfield is dead; it spoils the old catch—

And three merry men, and three merry men,
And three merry men are we,
As ever did sing three parts in a string,
All under the triple tree.'

'For God's sake, speak lower,' said the scrivener; 'is this a place or time to make your midnight catches heard?—But how much will serve your turn? I tell you I am but ill provided.'

'You tell me a lie, then,' said the bully—'a most palpable and gross lie.—How much, d'ye say, will serve my turn? Why, one of these bags will do for the present.'

'I swear to you that these bags of money are not at my disposal.'

'Not honestly, perhaps,' said the captain, 'but that makes little difference betwixt us.'

'I swear to you,' continued the scrivener, 'they are in no way at my disposal—they have been delivered to me by tale—I am to pay them over to Lord Dalgarno, whose boy waits for them, and I could not skelder one piece out of them, without risk of hue and cry.'

'Can you not put off the delivery?' said the bravo, his huge hand still fumbling with one of the bags, as if his fingers longed to close on it.

'Impossible,' said the scrivener, 'he sets forward to Scotland to-morrow.'

'Ay!' said the bully, after a moment's thought—'Travels he the north road with such a charge?'

'He is well accompanied,' added the scrivener; 'but yet'——

'But yet—but what?' said the bravo.

'Nay, I meant nothing,' said the scrivener.

'Thou didst—thou hadst the wind of some good thing,' replied Colepepper; 'I saw thee pause like a setting-dog. Thou wilt say as little, and make as sure a sign, as a well-bred spaniel.'

'All I meant to say, captain, was, that his servants go by Barnet, and he himself, with his page, passes through Enfield Chase; and he spoke to me yesterday of riding a soft pace.'

'Aha!—Comest thou to me there, my boy?'

'And of resting,'—continued the scrivener,—'resting a space at Camlet Moat.'

'Why, this is better than cock-fighting,' said the captain.

'I see not how it can advantage you, captain,' said the scrivener. 'But, however, they cannot ride fast, for his page rides the sumpter-horse, which carries all that weight,' pointing to the money on the table. 'Lord Dalgarno looks sharp to the world's gear.'

'That horse will be obliged to those who may ease him of his burden,' said the bravo; 'and, egad, he may be met with.—He hath still that page—that same Lutin—that goblin? Well, the boy hath set game for me ere now. I will be revenged, too, for I owe him a grudge for an old score at the ordinary. Let me see—Black Feltham and Dick Shakebag—we shall want a fourth—I love to make sure, and the booty will stand parting, besides what I can bucket them out of. Well, scrivener, lend me two pieces.—Bravely done—nobly imparted! Give ye godd'en.' And, wrapping his disguise closer around him, away he went.

When he had left the room, the scrivener wrung his hands, and exclaimed, 'More blood—more blood! I thought to have had done with it, but this time there was no fault with me—none—and then I shall have all the advantage. If this ruffian falls, there is truce with his tugs at my purse-strings; and if Lord Dalgarno dies,—as is most likely, for though as much afraid of cold steel as a debtor of a dun, this fellow is a deadly shot from behind a bush,—then am I in a thousand ways safe—safe—safe.'

We willingly drop the curtain over him and his reflections.

CHAPTER XXXV.

We are not worst at once—the course of evil
Begins so slowly, and from such slight source,
An infant's hand might stem its breach with clay;
But let the stream get deeper, and philosophy—
Ay, and religion too,—shall strive in vain
To turn the headlong torrent.
OLD PLAY.

THE Templars had been regaled by our friend Richie Moniplies in a private chamber at Beaujeu's, where he might be considered as good

company; for he had exchanged his serving-man's cloak and jerkin for a grave yet handsome suit of clothes, in the fashion of the times, but such as might have befitted an older man than himself. He had positively declined presenting himself at the ordinary, a point to which his companions were very desirous to have brought him, for it will be easily believed that such wags as Lowestoffe and his companion were not indisposed to a little merriment at the expense of the raw and pedantic Scotsman; besides the chance of easing him of a few pieces, of which he appeared to have acquired considerable command. But not even a succession of measures of sparkling sack, in which the little brilliant atoms circulated like motes in the sun's rays, had the least effect on Richie's sense of decorum. He retained the gravity of a judge, even while he drank like a fish, partly from his own natural inclination to good liquor, partly in the way of good-fellowship towards his guests. When the wine began to make some innovation on their heads, Master Lowestoffe, tired, perhaps, of the humours of Richie, who began to become yet more stoically contradictory and dogmatical than even in the earlier part of the entertainment, proposed to his friend to break up their debauch and join the gamesters.

The drawer was called accordingly, and Richie discharged the reckoning of the party, with a generous remuneration to the attendants, which was received with cap and knee, and many assurances of 'Kindly welcome, gentlemen.'

'I grieve we should part so soon, gentlemen,' said Richie to his companions,—'and I would you had cracked another quart ere you went, or stayed to take some slight matter of supper, and a glass of Rhenish. I thank you, however, for having graced my poor collation thus far; and I commend you to fortune, in your own courses, for the ordinary neither was, is, nor shall be, an element of mine.'

'Fare-thee well, then,' said Lowestoffe, 'most sapient and sententious Master Moniplies. May you soon have another mortgage to redeem, and may I be there to witness it; and may you play the good fellow as heartily as you have done this day.'

'Nay, gentlemen, it is merely of your grace to say so—but if you would but hear me speak a few words of admonition respecting this wicked ordinary'——

'Reserve the lesson, most honourable Richie,' said Lowestoffe, 'until I have lost all my money,' showing, at the same time, a purse indifferently well provided, 'and then the lecture is likely to have some weight.'

'And keep my share of it, Richie,' said the other Templar, showing an almost empty purse, in his turn, 'till this be full again, and then I will promise to hear you with some patience.'

'Ay, ay, gallants,' said Richie, 'the full and the empty gang a' ae gate and that is a grey one—but the time will come.'

'Nay, it is come already' said Lowestoffe; 'they have set out the hazard-table. Since you will peremptorily not go with us, why, farewell, Richie.'

'And farewell, gentlemen,' said Richie, and left the house, into which they returned.

Moniplies was not many steps from the door, when a person, whom, lost in his reflections on gaming, ordinaries, and the manners of the age, he had not observed, and who had been as negligent on his part, ran full against him; and when Richie desired to know whether he meant 'ony incivility,' replied by a curse on Scotland, and all that belonged to it. A less round reflection on his country would, at any time, have provoked Richie, but more especially when he had a double quart of canary and better in his pate. He was about to give a very rough answer, and to second his word by action, when a closer view of his antagonist changed his purpose.

'You are the vera lad in the warld,' said Richie, 'whom I most wished to meet.'

'And you,' answered the stranger, 'or any of your beggarly countrymen, are the last sight I should ever wish to see. You Scots are ever fair and false, and an honest man cannot thrive within eye shot of you.'

'As to our poverty, friend,' replied Richie, 'that is as Heaven pleases; but touching our falset, I'll prove to you that a Scotsman bears as leal and true a heart to his friend as ever beat in English doublet.'

'I care not whether he does or not,' said the gallant. 'Let me go—why keep you hold of my cloak? Let me go, or I will thrust you into the kennel.'

'I believe I could forgie ye, for you did me a good turn once, in plucking me out of it,' said the Scot.

'Beshrew my fingers, then, if they did so,' replied the stranger. 'I would your whole country lay there, along with you; and Heaven's curse blight the hand that helped to raise them! Why do you stop my way?' he added fiercely.

'Because it is a bad one, Master Jenkin,' said Richie. 'Nay, never start about it, man—you see you are known. Alack-a-day! that an honest man's son should live to start at hearing himself called by his own name.' Jenkin struck his brow violently with his clenched fist.

'Come, come,' said Richie, 'this passion availeth nothing. Tell me what gate go you?'

'To the devil!' answered Jin Vin.

'That is a black gate, if you speak according to the letter,' answered Richie; 'but if metaphorically, there are worse places in this great city than the Devil Tavern; and I care not if I go thither with you, and bestow a pottle of burnt sack on you—it will correct the crudities of my stomach, and form a gentle preparative for the leg of a cold pullet.'

'I pray you in good fashion, to let me go,' said Jenkin. 'You may mean me kindly, and I wish you to have no wrong at my hand; but I am in the humour to be dangerous to myself, or any one.'

'I will abide the risk,' said the Scot, 'if you will but come with me; and here is a place convenient, a howff nearer than the Devil, whilk is but an ill-omened drouthy name for a tavern. This other of the Saint Andrew is a quiet place, where I have ta'en my whetter now and then when I lodged in the neighbourhood of the Temple with Lord Glenvarloch.—What the deil's the matter wi' the man, garr'd him gie sic a

spang as that, and almaist brought himself and me on the causeway?'

'Do not name that false Scot's name to me,' said Jin Vin, 'if you would not have me go mad!—I was happy before I saw him—he has been the cause of all the ill that has befallen me—he has made a knave and a madman of me!

'If you are a knave,' said Richie, 'you have met an officer—if you are daft, you have met a keeper; but a gentle officer and a kind keeper. Look you, my gude friend, there has been twenty things said about this same lord, in which there is no more truth than in the leasings of Mahound. The warst they can say of him is, that he is not always so amenable to good advice as I would pray him, you, and every young man to be. Come wi' me—just come ye wi' me; and if a little spell of siller and a great deal of excellent counsel can relieve your occasions, all I can say is, you have had the luck to meet one capable of giving you both, and maist willing to bestow them.'

The pertinacity of the Scot prevailed over the sullenness of Vincent, who was indeed in a state of agitation and incapacity to think for himself, which led him to yield the more readily to the suggestions of another. He suffered himself to be dragged into the small tavern which Richie recommended, and where they soon found themselves seated in a snug niche, with a reeking pottle of burnt sack and a paper of sugar betwixt them. Pipes and tobacco were also provided, but were only used by Richie, who had adopted the custom of late, as adding considerably to the gravity and importance of his manner, and affording, as it were, a bland and pleasant accompaniment to the words of wisdom which flowed from his tongue. After they had filled their glasses and drunk them in silence, Richie repeated the question, whither his guest was going when they met so fortunately.

'I told you,' said Jenkin, 'I was going to destruction—I mean to the gaming-house. I am resolved to hazard these two or three pieces, to get as much as will pay for a passage with Captain Sharker, whose ship lies at Gravesend, bound for America—and so westward ho!—I met one devil in the way already, who would have tempted me from my purpose, but I spurned him from me—you may be another for what I know.—What degree of damnation do you propose for me,' he added wildly, 'and what is the price of it?'

'I would have you to know,' answered Richie, 'that I deal in no such commodities, whether as buyer or seller. But if you will tell me honestly the cause of your distress, I will do what is in my power to help you out of it—not being, however, prodigal of promises, until I know the case; as a learned physician only gives advice when he has observed the diagnostics.'

'No one has anything to do with my affairs,' said the poor lad; and, folding his arms on the table, he laid his head down on them, with the sullen dejection of the overburdened llama, when it throws itself down to die in desperation.

Richie Moniplies, like most folks who have a good opinion of themselves, was fond of the task of consolation, which at once displayed his superiority (for the consoler is necessarily, for the time at least, superior to the afflicted person), and indulged his love of talking. He inflicted on the poor penitent a harangue of pitiless length, stuffed full of the usual topics of the mutability of human affairs—the eminent advantages of patience under affliction—the folly of grieving for what hath no remedy—the necessity of taking more care for the future, and some gentle rebukes on account of the past, which acid he threw in to assist in subduing the patient's obstinacy, as Hannibal used vinegar in cutting his way through rocks. It was not in human nature to endure this flood of commonplace eloquence in silence; and Jin Vin, whether desirous of stopping the flow of words crammed thus into his ear, 'against the stomach of his sense,' or whether confiding in Richie's protestations of friendship, which the wretched, says Fielding, are ever so ready to believe, or whether merely to give his sorrows vent in words, raised his head, and, turning his red and swollen eyes to Richie—

'Cocksbones, man, only hold thy tongue, and thou shalt know all about it,—and then all I ask of thee is to shake hands and part.—This Margaret Ramsay,—you have seen her, man?'

'Once,' said Richie, 'once, at Master George Heriot's, in Lombard Street—I was in the room when they dined.'

'Ay, you helped to shift their trenchers. I remember,' said Jin Vin. 'Well, that same pretty girl—and I will uphold her the prettiest betwixt Paul's and the Bar—she is to be wedded to your Lord Glenvarloch, with a pestilence on him.'

'That is impossible,' said Richie; 'it is raving nonsense, man—they make April gouks of you cockneys every month in the year.—The Lord Glenvarloch marry the daughter of a Lunnon mechanic! I would as soon believe the great Prester John would marry the daughter of a Jew packman.'

'Hark ye, brother,' said Jin Vin, 'I will allow no one to speak disregardfully of the city, for all I am in trouble.'

'I crave your pardon, man—I meant no offence,' said Richie; 'but as to the marriage, it is a thing simply impossible.'

'It is a thing that will take place, though, for the Duke and the Prince, and all of them, have a finger in it; and especially the old fool of a King, that makes her out to be some great woman in her own country, as all the Scots pretend to be, you know.'

'Master Vincent, but that you are under affliction,' said the consoler, offended in his turn, 'I would hear no national reflections.'

The afflicted youth apologised in his turn, but asserted, 'it was true that the King said Peg-a-Ramsay was some far-off sort of noblewoman; and that he had taken a great interest in the match, and had run about like an old gander, cackling about Peggie ever since he had seen her in hose and doublet—and no wonder,' added poor Vin, with a deep sigh.

'This may be all true,' said Richie, 'though it sounds strange in my ears; but, man, you should not speak evil of dignities—Curse not the King, Jenkin; not even in thy bedchamber—stone walls have ears—no one has a right to know that better than I.'

'I do not curse the foolish old man,' said Jenkin; 'but I would have them carry things a peg lower.—If they were to see on a plain field thirty thousand such pikes as I have seen in the artillery gardens, it would not be their long-haired courtiers would help them, I trow.' *

'Hout, tout, man,' said Richie, 'mind where the Stuarts come frae, and never think they would want spears or claymores either; but leaving sic matters, whilk are perilous to speak on, I say once more, what is your concern in all this matter?'

'What is it?' said Jenkin; 'why, have I not fixed on Peg-a-Ramsay to be my true love from the day I came to her old father's shop? and have I not carried her pattens and her chopines for three years, and borne her prayer-book to church, and brushed the cushion for her to kneel down upon, and did she ever say me nay?'

'I see no cause she had,' said Richie, 'if the like of such small services were all that ye proffered. Ah, man! there are few—very few, either of fools or of wise men, ken how to guide a woman.'

'Why, did I not serve her at the risk of my freedom, and very nigh at the risk of my neck? Did she not—no, it was not her neither, but that accursed beldam whom she caused to work upon me—persuade me like a fool to turn myself into a waterman to help my lord, and a plague to him, down to Scotland; and instead of going peaceably down to the ship at Gravesend, did not he turn rusty and bully and show his pistols, and make me land him at Greenwich, where he played some swaggering pranks, that helped both him and me into the Tower?'

'Aha!' said Richie, throwing more than his usual wisdom into his looks; 'so you were the green-jacketed waterman that rowed Lord Glenvarloch down the river?'

'The more fool I, that did not souse him in the Thames,' said Jenkin; 'and I was the lad that would not confess one word of who or what I was, though they threatened to make me hug the Duke of Exeter's daughter.' †

'Wha is she, man?' said Richie; 'she must be an ill-fashioned piece, if you're so much afraid of her, and she come of such high kin.'

'I mean the rack—the rack, man,' said Jenkin. 'Where were you bred that never heard of the Duke of Exeter's daughter? But all the dukes and duchesses in England could have got nothing out of me—so the truth came out some other way, and I was set free.—Home I ran, thinking myself one of the cleverest and happiest fellows in the ward. And she—she—she wanted to pay me with *money* for all my true service! and she spoke so sweetly and so coldly at the same time, I wished myself in the deepest dungeon of the Tower—I wish they had racked me to death before I heard this Scottishman was to chouse me out of my sweetheart!'

'But are ye sure ye have lost her?' said Richie; 'it sounds strange in my ears that my Lord Glenvarloch should marry the daughter of a dealer, though there are uncouth marriages made in London, I'll allow that.'

'Why, I tell you this lord was no sooner clear of the Tower, than he and Master George Heriot came to make proposals for her, with the King's assent, and what not; and fine fair-day prospects of court favour for this lord, for he hath not an acre of land.'

'Well, and what said the auld watchmaker?' said Richie; 'was he not, as might weel beseem him, ready to loup out of his skin-case for very joy?'

'He multiplied six figures progressively, and reported the product—then gave his consent.'

'And what did you do?'

'I rushed into the streets,' said the poor lad, 'with a burning heart, and a bloodshot eye—and where did I first find myself, but with that beldam, Mother Suddlechop—and what did she propose to me, but to take the road!'

'Take the road, man, in what sense?' said Richie.

'Even as a clerk to Saint Nicholas—as a highwayman, like Poins and Peto, and the good fellows in the play—and who think you was to be my captain?—for she had the whole out ere I could speak to her—I fancy she took silence for consent, and thought me damned too unutterably to have one thought left that savoured of redemption—who was to be my captain, but the knave that you saw me cudgel at the ordinary, when you waited on Lord Glenvarloch, a cowardly, sharking, thievish bully about town here, whom they call Colepepper.'

'Colepepper—umph—I know something of that smaik,' said Richie; 'ken ye by ony chance where he may be heard of, Master Jenkin?—ye wad do me a sincere service to tell me.'

'Why, he lives something obscurely,' answered the apprentice, 'on account of suspicion of some villany—I believe that horrid murder in Whitefriars, or some such matter. But I might have heard all about him from Dame Suddlechop, for she spoke of my meeting him at Enfield Chase, with some other good fellows, to do a robbery on one that goes northward with a store of treasure.'

'And you did not agree to this fine project?' said Moniplies.

'I cursed her for a hag, and came away about my business,' answered Jenkin.

'Ay, and what said she to that, man? That would startle her,' said Richie.

'Not a whit. She laughed, and said she was in jest,' answered Jenkin; 'but I know the she-devil's jest from her earnest too well to be taken in that way. But she knows I would never betray her.'

'Betray her! No,' replied Richie; 'but are ye in any shape bound to this birkie Peppercull, or Colepepper, or whatever they call him, that ye suld let him do a robbery on the honest gentleman that is travelling to the north, and may be a kindly Scot, for what we know?'

'Ay—going home with a load of English

* Clarendon remarks, that the importance of the military exercise of the citizens was severely felt by the Cavaliers during the civil war, notwithstanding the ridicule that had been showered upon it by the dramatic poets of the day. Nothing but the habitual practice could, at the battle of Newbury, and elsewhere, have enabled the Londoners to keep their ranks as pikemen, in spite of the repeated charge of the fiery Prince Rupert and his gallant Cavaliers.

† A particular species of rack, used at the Tower of London, was so called.

money,' said Jenkin. 'But be he who he will, they may rob the whole world an they list, for I am robbed and ruined.'

Richie filled up his friend's cup to the brim, and insisted that he should drink what he called 'clean caup out.' 'This love,' he said, 'is but a bairnly matter for a brisk young fellow like yourself, Master Jenkin. And if ye must needs have a whimsy, though I think it would be safer to venture on a staid womanly body, why, here be as bonnie lasses in London as this Peg-a-Ramsay. Ye need not sigh sae deeply, for it is very true—there is as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. Now wherefore should you, who are as brisk and trig a young fellow of your inches as the sun needs to shine on - wherefore need you sit moping this way, and not try some bold way to better your fortune?'

'I tell you, Master Moniplies,' said Jenkin, 'I am as poor as any Scot among you—I have broke my indenture, and I think of running my country.'

'A well-a day!' said Richie; 'but that mauna be, man.—I ken weel, by sad experience, that poortith takes away pith, and the man sits full still that has a rent in his breeks.* But courage, man; you have served me heretofore, and I will serve you now. If you will but bring me to speech of this same captain, it shall be the best day's work you ever did.'

'I guess where you are, Master Richard—you would save your countryman's long purse,' said Jenkin. 'I cannot see how that should advantage me, but I reck not if I should bear a hand, I hate that braggart, that bloody minded, cowardly bully. If you can get me mounted, I care not if I show you where the dame told me I should meet him - but you must stand to the risk, for though he is a coward himself, I know he will have more than one stout fellow with him.'

'We'll have a warrant, man,' said Richie, 'and the hue and cry to boot.'

'We will have no such thing,' said Jenkin, 'if I am to go with you. I am not the lad to betray any one to the harman-beck. You must do it by manhood if I am to go with you. I am sworn to cutter's law, and will sell no man's blood.'

'Aweel,' said Richie, 'a wilful man must have his way; ye must think that I was born and bred where cracked crowns were plentier than whole ones. Besides, I have two noble friends here, Master Lowestoffe of the Temple, and his cousin Master Ringwood, that will blithely be of so gallant a party.'

'Lowestoffe and Ringwood!' said Jenkin; 'they are both brave gallants—they will be sure company. Know you where they are to be found?'

'Ay, marry do I,' replied Richie. 'They are fast at the cards and dice till the sma' hours, I warrant them.'

'They are gentlemen of trust and honour,' said Jenkin, 'and if they advise it, I will try the adventure. Go, try if you can bring them hither, since you have so much to say with them. We must not be seen abroad together.—I know not how it is, Master Moniplies,' continued he, as his countenance brightened up, and while, in his turn, he filled the cups, 'but I feel my heart something lighter since I have thought of this matter.'

'Thus it is to have counsellors, Master Jenkin,' said Richie; 'and truly I hope to hear you say that your heart is as light as a laverock's, and that before you are many days aulder. Never smile and shake your head, but mind what I tell you—and bide here in the meanwhile, till I go to seek these gallants. I warrant you, cart-ropes would not hold them back from such a ploy as I shall propose to them.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The thieves have bound the true men—Now could thou and I rob the thieves, and go merrily to London.
HENRY IV. *Part I.*

THE sun was high upon the glades of Enfield Chase, and the deer, with which it then abounded, were seen sporting in picturesque groups among the ancient oaks of the forest, when a cavalier and a lady on foot, although in riding apparel, sauntered slowly up one of the long alleys which were cut through the park for the convenience of the hunters. Their only attendant was a page, who, riding a Spanish jennet, which seemed to bear a heavy cloak-bag, followed them at a respectful distance. The female, attired in all the fantastic finery of the period, with more than the usual quantity of bugles, flounces, and trimmings, and holding her fan of ostrich feathers in one hand, and her riding-mask of black velvet in the other, seemed anxious, by all the little coquetry practised on such occasions, to secure the notice of her companion, who sometimes heard her prattle without seeming to attend to it, and at other times interrupted his train of graver reflections to reply to her.

'Nay, but, my lord—my lord, you walk so fast, you will leave me behind you.—Nay, I will have hold of your arm, but how to manage with my mask and my fan! Why would you not let me bring my waiting-gentlewoman to follow us, and hold my things? But see, I will put my fan in my girdle, soh!—and now that I have a hand to hold you with, you shall not run away from me.'

'Come on, then,' answered the gallant, 'and let us walk apace, since you would not be persuaded to stay with your gentlewoman, as you call her, and with the rest of the baggage.—You may perhaps see *that*, though, you will not like to see.'

She took hold of his arm accordingly; but as he continued to walk at the same pace, she shortly let go her hold, exclaiming that he had hurt her hand. The cavalier stopped, and looked at the pretty hand and arm which she showed him, with exclamations against his cruelty. 'I daresay,' she said, baring her

* This elegant speech was made by the Earl of Douglas, called Tineman, after being wounded and made prisoner at the battle of Shrewsbury, where

'His well-labouring sword
Had three times slain the semblance of the king.'

wrist and a part of her arm, 'it is all black and blue to the very elbow.'

'I daresay you are a silly little fool,' said the cavalier, carelessly kissing the aggrieved arm; 'it is only a pretty incarnate which sets off the blue veins.'

'Nay, my lord, now it is you are silly,' answered the dame; 'but I am glad I can make you speak and laugh on any terms this morning. I am sure, if I did insist on following you into the forest, it was all for the sake of diverting you. I am better company than your page, I trow. And now, tell me, these pretty things with horns, be they not deer?'

'Even such they be, Nelly,' answered her neglectful attendant.

'And what can the great folks do with so many of them, forsooth?'

'They send them to the city, Nell, where wise men make venison pasties of their flesh, and wear their horns for trophies,' answered Lord Dalgarno, whom our reader has already recognised.

'Nay, now you laugh at me, my lord,' answered his companion; 'but I know all about venison, whatsoever you may think. I always tasted it once a-year when we dined with Mr. Deputy,' she continued sadly, as a sense of her degradation stole across a mind bewildered with vanity and folly, 'though he would not speak to me now, if we met together in the narrowest lane in the ward!'

'I warrant he would not,' said Lord Dalgarno, 'because thou, Nell, wouldst dash him with a single look; for I trust thou hast more spirit than to throw away words on such a fellow as he?'

'Who, I!' said Dame Nelly. 'Nay, I scorn the proud princox too much for that. Do you know, he made all the folks in the ward stand cap in hand to him, my poor old John Christie and all?' Here her recollection began to overflow at her eyes.

'A plague on your whimpering,' said Dalgarno, somewhat harshly.—'Nay, never look pale for the matter, Nell. I am not angry with you, you simple fool. But what would you have me think, when you are eternally looking back upon your dungeon yonder by the river, which smelt of pitch and old cheese worse than a Welshman does of onions, and all this when I am taking you down to a castle as fine as is in Fairyland!'

'Shall we be there to-night, my lord?' said Nelly, drying her tears.

'To-night, Nelly!—no, nor this night fortnight.'

'Now, the Lord be with us and keep us!—But shall we not go by sea, my lord?—I thought everybody came from Scotland by sea. I am sure Lord Glenvarloch and Richie Moniplies came up by sea.'

'There is a wide difference between coming up and going down, Nelly,' answered Lord Dalgarno.

'And so there is, for certain,' said his simple companion. 'But yet I think I heard people speaking of going down to Scotland by sea, as well as coming up. Are you well avised of the way?—Do you think it possible we can go by land, my sweet lord?'

'It is but trying, my sweet lady,' said Lord Dalgarno. 'Men say England and Scotland are in the same island, so one would hope there may be some road betwixt them by land.'

'I shall never be able to ride so far,' said the lady.

'We will have your saddle stuffed softer,' said the lord. 'I tell you that you shall mew your city slough, and change from the caterpillar of a paltry lane into the butterfly of a prince's garden. You shall have as many tires as there are hours in the day—as many handmaidens as there are days in the week—as many menials as there are weeks in the year—and you shall ride a-hunting and hawking with a lord, instead of waiting upon an old ship-chandler, who could do nothing but hawk and spit.'

'Ay, but will you make me your lady?' said Dame Nelly.

'Ay, surely—what else?' replied the lord—'my lady-love.'

'Ay, but I mean your lady-wife,' said Nelly.

'Truly, Nell, in that I cannot promise to oblige you. A lady-wife,' continued Dalgarno, 'is a very different thing from a lady-love.'

'I heard from Mrs. Suddlechop, whom you lodged me with since I left poor old John Christie, that Lord Glenvarloch is to marry David Ramsay the clockmaker's daughter.'

'There is much betwixt the cup and the lip, Nelly. I wear something about me may break the bans of that hopeful alliance before the day is much older,' answered Lord Dalgarno.

'Well, but my father was as good a man as old Davy Ramsay, and as well to pass in the world, my lord; and, therefore, why should you not marry me? You have done me harm enough, I trow—wherefore should you not do me this justice?'

'For two good reasons, Nelly. Fate put a husband on you, and the King passed a wife upon me,' answered Lord Dalgarno.

'Ay, my lord,' said Nelly, 'but they remain in England, and we go to Scotland.'

'The argument is better than thou art aware of,' said Lord Dalgarno. 'I have heard Scottish lawyers say the matrimonial tie may be unclasped in our happy country by the gentle hand of the ordinary course of law, whereas in England it can only be burst by an Act of Parliament. Well, Nelly, we will look into that matter; and whether we get married again or no, we will at least do our best to get unmarried.'

'Shall we indeed, my honey-sweet lord? and then I will think less about John Christie, for he will marry again, I warrant you, for he is well to pass; and I would be glad to think he had somebody to take care of him, as I used to do, poor loving old man! He was a kind man, though he was a score of years older than I; and I hope and pray he will never let a young lord cross his honest threshold again!'

Here the dame was once more much inclined to give way to a passion of tears; but Lord Dalgarno conjured down the emotion, by saying, with some asperity—'I am weary of these April passions, my pretty mistress, and I think you will do well to preserve your tears for some more pressing occasion. Who knows what turn of fortune may in a few minutes call for more of them than you can render?'

'Goodness, my lord! what mean you by such expressions? John Christie (the kind heart!) used to keep no secrets from me, and I hope your lordship will not hide your counsel from me?'

'Sit down beside me on this bank,' said the nobleman; 'I am bound to remain here for a short space, and if you can be but silent, I should like to spend a part of it in considering how far I can, on the present occasion, follow the respectable example which you recommend to me.'

The place at which he stopped was at that time little more than a mound, partly surrounded by a ditch, from which it derived the name of Camlet Moat. A few hewn stones there were, which had escaped the fate of many others that had been used in building different lodges in the forest for the royal keepers. These vestiges, just sufficient to show that 'here in former times the hand of man had been,' marked the ruins of the abode of a once illustrious but long-forgotten family, the Mandevilles, Earls of Essex, to whom Enfield Chase and the extensive domains adjacent had belonged in elder days. A wild woodland prospect led the eye at various points through broad and seemingly interminable alleys, which, meeting at this point as at a common centre, diverged from each other as they receded, and had, therefore, been selected by Lord Dalgarno as the rendezvous for the combat, which, through the medium of Richie Moniplies, he had offered to his injured friend Lord Glenvarloch.

'He will surely come!' he said to himself; 'cowardice was not wont to be his fault—at least he was bold enough in the Park. Perhaps yonder churl may not have carried my message? But no—he is a sturdy knave—one of those would prize their master's honour above their life.—Look to the palfrey, Lutin, and see thou let him not loose, and cast thy falcon glance down every avenue to mark if any one comes.—Buckingham has undergone my challenge, but the proud minion pleads the King's paltry commands for refusing to answer me. If I can baffle this Glenvarloch, or slay him—if I can spoil him of his honour or his life, I shall go down to Scotland with credit sufficient to gild over past mischances. I know my dear countrymen—they never quarrel with any one who brings them home either gold or martial glory, much more if he has both gold and laurels.'

As he thus reflected, and called to mind the disgrace which he had suffered, as well as the causes he imagined for hating Lord Glenvarloch, his countenance altered under the influence of his contending emotions, to the terror of Nelly, who, sitting unnoticed at his feet, and looking anxiously in his face, beheld the cheek kindle, the mouth become compressed, the eye dilated, and the whole countenance express the desperate and deadly resolution of one who awaits an instant and decisive encounter with a mortal enemy. The loneliness of the place, the scenery so different from that to which alone she had been accustomed, the dark and sombre air which crept so suddenly over the countenance of her seducer, his command imposing silence upon her, and the apparent strangeness of his conduct in idling away so much time without any obvious cause, when a journey of such length lay before them, brought strange thoughts into her weak brain. She had read of women, seduced from their matrimonial duties by sorceries allied to the hellish powers, nay, by the Father of Evil himself, who, after conveying his victim into some desert remote from human kind, exchanged the pleasing shape in which he gained her affections, for all his natural horrors. She chased this wild idea away as it crowded itself upon her weak and bewildered imagination; yet she might have lived to see it realised allegorically, if not literally, but for the accident which presently followed.

The page, whose eyes were remarkably acute, at length called out to his master, pointing with his finger at the same time down one of the alleys, that horsemen were advancing in that direction. Lord Dalgarno started up, and, shading his eyes with his hand, gazed eagerly down the alley; when, at the same instant, he received a shot, which, grazing his hand, passed right through his brain, and laid him a lifeless corpse at the feet, or rather across the lap, of the unfortunate victim of his profligacy. The countenance, whose varied expression she had been watching for the last five minutes, was convulsed for an instant, and then stiffened into rigidity for ever. Three ruffians rushed from the brake from which the shot had been fired, ere the smoke was dispersed. One, with many imprecations, seized on the page; another on the female, upon whose cries he strove by the most violent threats to impose silence; while the third began to undo the burden from the page's horse. But an instant rescue prevented their availing themselves of the advantage they had obtained.

It may easily be supposed that Richie Moniplies, having secured the assistance of the two Templars, ready enough to join in anything which promised a fray, with Jin Vin to act as their guide, had set off, gallantly mounted and well armed, under the belief that they would reach Camlet Moat before the robbers, and apprehend them in the fact. They had not calculated that, according to the custom of robbers in other countries, but contrary to that of the English highwaymen of those days, they meant to insure robbery by previous murder. An accident also happened to delay them a little while on the road. In riding through one of the glades of the forest, they found a man dismounted and sitting under a tree, groaning with such bitterness of spirit, that Lowestoffe could not forbear asking if he was hurt. In answer, he said he was an unhappy man in pursuit of his wife, who had been carried off by a villain; and as he raised his countenance, the eyes of Richie, to his great astonishment, encountered the visage of John Christie.

'For the Almighty's sake, help me, Master Moniplies!' he said; 'I have learned my wife is but a short mile before, with that black villain Lord Dalgarno.'

'Have him forward by all means,' said Lowestoffe; 'a second Orpheus seeking his Eurydice!—Have him forward—we will save Lord Dalgarno's purse, and ease him of his mistress—Have him with us, were it but for the variety of the adventure. I owe his lordship a grudge for rooking me. We have ten minutes good.'

But it is dangerous to calculate closely in

matters of life and death. In all probability the minute or two which was lost in mounting John Christie behind one of their party might have saved Lord Dalgarno from his fate. Thus his criminal amour became the indirect cause of his losing his life; and thus 'our pleasant vices are made the whips to scourge us.'

The riders arrived on the field at full gallop the moment after the shot was fired; and Richie, who had his own reasons for attaching himself to Colepepper, who was bustling to untie the portmanteau from the page's saddle, pushed against him with such violence as to overthrow him, his own horse at the same time stumbling and dismounting his rider, who was none of the first equestrians. The undaunted Richie immediately arose, however, and grappled with the ruffian with such good will, that, though a strong fellow, and though a coward now rendered desperate, Moniplies got him under, wrenched a long knife from his hand, dealt him a desperate stab with his own weapon, and leaped on his feet; and, as the wounded man struggled to follow his example, he struck him upon the head with the butt-end of a musketoon, which last blow proved fatal.

'Bravo, Richie!' cried Lowestoffe, who had himself engaged at sword-point with one of the ruffians, and soon put him to flight, — 'Bravo! why, man, there lies Sin, struck down like an ox, and Iniquity's throat cut like a calf.'

'I know not why you should upbraid me with my upbringing, Master Lowestoffe,' answered Richie, with great composure; 'but I can tell you, the shambles is not a bad place for training one to this work.'

The other Templar now shouted loudly to them,—'If ye be men, come hither—here lies Lord Dalgarno, murdered!'

Lowestoffe and Richie ran to the spot, and the page took the opportunity, finding himself now neglected on all hands, to ride off in a different direction; and neither he nor the considerable sum with which his horse was burdened, was ever heard of from that moment.

The third ruffian had not waited the attack of the Templar and Jin Vin, the latter of whom had put down old Christie from behind him that he might ride the lighter; and the whole five now stood gazing with horror on the bloody corpse of the young nobleman, and the wild sorrow of the female, who tore her hair, and shrieked in the most disconsolate manner, until her agony was at once checked, or rather received a new direction, by the sudden and unexpected appearance of her husband, who, fixing on her a cold and severe look, said, in a tone suited to his manner —'Ay, woman! thou takest on sadly for the loss of thy paramour.'—Then, looking on the bloody corpse of him from whom he had received so deep an injury, he repeated the solemn words of Scripture —'"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it."—I, whom thou hast injured, will be first to render thee the decent offices due to the dead.'

So saying, he covered the dead body with his cloak, and then, looking on it for a moment, seemed to reflect on what he had next to perform. As the eye of the injured man slowly passed from the body of the seducer to the partner and victim of his crime, who had sunk down to his feet, which she clasped without venturing to look up, his features, naturally coarse and saturnine, assumed a dignity of expression which overawed the young Templars, and repulsed the officious forwardness of Richie Moniplies, who was at first eager to have thrust in his advice and opinion. 'Kneel not to me, woman,' he said, 'but kneel to the God thou hast offended, more than thou couldst offend such another worm as thyself. How often have I told thee, when thou wert at the gayest and the lightest, that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall? Vanity brought folly, and folly brought sin, and sin hath brought death, his original companion. Thou must needs leave duty, and decency, and domestic love, to revel it gaily with the wild and with the wicked; and there thou liest, like a crushed worm, writhing beside the lifeless body of thy paramour. Thou hast done me much wrong—dishonoured me among friends—driven credit from my house, and peace from my fireside—But thou wert my first and only love, and I will not see thee an utter castaway, if it lies with me to prevent it.—Gentlemen, I render ye such thanks as a broken-hearted man can give.—Richard, commend me to your honourable master.—I added gall to the bitterness of his affliction, but I was deluded.—Rise up, woman, and follow me.'

He raised her up by the arm, while, with streaming eyes and bitter sobs, she endeavoured to express her penitence. She kept her hands spread over her face, yet suffered him to lead her away; and it was only as they turned round a brake which concealed the scene they had left, that she turned back, and, casting one wild and hurried glance towards the corpse of Dalgarno, uttered a shriek, and, clinging to her husband's arm, exclaimed wildly,—'Save me—save me! They have murdered him!'

Lowestoffe was much moved by what he had witnessed; but he was ashamed, as a town gallant, of his own unfashionable emotion, and did a force to his feelings when he exclaimed,—'Ay, let them go—the kind-hearted, believing, forgiving husband—the liberal, accommodating spouse. O, what a generous creature is your true London husband!—Horns hath he, but, tame as a fatted ox, he goreth not. I should like to see her, when she has exchanged her mask and riding-beaver for her peaked hat and muffler. We will visit them at Paul's Wharf, coz—it will be a convenient acquaintance.'

'You had better think of catching the gipsy thief Lutin,' said Richie Moniplies; 'for, by my faith, he is off with his master's baggage and the siller.'

A keeper, with his assistants, and several other persons, had now come to the spot, and made hue and cry after Lutin, but in vain. To their custody the Templars surrendered the dead bodies, and, after going through some formal investigation, they returned with Richard and Vincent to London, where they received great applause for their gallantry.—Vincent's errors were easily expiated in consideration of his having been the means of breaking up this band of villains; and there is some reason to think, that what would

have diminished the credit of the action in other instances, rather added to it in the actual circumstances, namely, that they came too late to save Lord Dalgarno.

George Heriot, who suspected how matters stood with Vincent, requested and obtained permission from his master to send the poor young fellow on an important piece of business to Paris. We are unable to trace his fate further, but believe it was prosperous, and that he entered into an advantageous partnership with his fellow-apprentice, upon old Davie Ramsay retiring from business, in consequence of his daughter's marriage. That eminent antiquary, Dr. Dryasdust, is possessed of an antique watch, with a silver dial-plate, the mainspring being a piece of catgut instead of a chain, which bears the names of Vincent and Tunstall, Memory Monitors.

Master Lowestoffe failed not to vindicate his character as a man of gaiety, by inquiring after John Christie and Dame Nelly; but, greatly to his surprise (indeed, to his loss, for he had wagered ten pieces that he would domesticate himself in the family), he found the good-will, as it was called, of the shop was sold, the stock auctioned, and the late proprietor and his wife gone, no one knew whither. The prevailing belief was, that they had emigrated to one of the new settlements in America.

Lady Dalgarno received the news of her unworthy husband's death with a variety of emotions, among which, horror that he should have been cut off in the middle career of his profligacy was the most prominent. The incident greatly deepened her melancholy, and injured her health, already shaken by previous circumstances. Repossessed of her own fortune by her husband's death, she was anxious to do justice to Lord Glenvarloch, by treating for the recovery of the mortgage. But the scrivener, having taken fright at the late events, had left the city and absconded, so that it was impossible to discover into whose hands the papers had now passed. Richard Moniplies was silent for his own reasons; the Templars who had witnessed the transaction kept the secret at his request; and it was universally believed that the scrivener had carried off the writings along with him. We may here observe, that fears similar to those of the scrivener freed London for ever from the presence of Dame Suddlechop, who ended her career in the *rasphaus* (viz. Bridewell) of Amsterdam.

The stout old Lord Huntinglen, with a haughty carriage and unmoistened eye, accompanied the funeral procession of his only son to its last abode; and perhaps the single tear which fell at length upon the coffin, was given less to the fate of the individual than to the extinction of the last male of his ancient race.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Jacques. There is, sure, another flood toward, and these couples are coming to the ark!—Here comes a pair of very strange beasts.

As You Like It.

The fashion of such narratives as the present changes like other earthly things. Time was that the tale-teller was obliged to wind up his story by a circumstantial description of the wedding, bedding, and throwing the stocking, as the grand catastrophe to which, through so many circumstances of doubt and difficulty, he had at length happily conducted his hero and heroine. Not a circumstance was then omitted, from the manly ardour of the bridegroom, and the modest blushes of the bride, to the parson's new surplice and the silk tabinet mantua of the bridesmaid. But such descriptions are now discarded, for the same reason, I suppose, that public marriages are no longer fashionable, and that, instead of calling together their friends to a feast and a dance, the happy couple elope in a solitary post-chaise, as secretly as if they meant to go to Gretna Green, or to do worse. I am not ungrateful for a change which saves an author the trouble of attempting in vain to give a new colour to the commonplace description of such matters; but, notwithstanding, I find myself forced upon it in the present instance, as circumstances sometimes compel a stranger to make use of an old road which has been for some time shut up. The experienced reader may have already remarked that the last chapter was employed in sweeping out of the way all the unnecessary and less interesting characters, that I might clear the floor for a blithe bridal.

In truth, it would be unpardonable to pass over slightly what so deeply interested our principal personage, King James. That learned and good-humoured monarch made no great figure in the politics of Europe; but then, to make amends, he was prodigiously busy when he could find a fair opportunity of intermeddling with the private affairs of his loving subjects; and the approaching marriage of Lord Glenvarloch was matter of great interest to him. He had been much struck (that is, for him, who was not very accessible to such emotions) with the beauty and embarrassment of the pretty Peg a-Ramsay, as he called her, when he first saw her, and he glorified himself greatly on the acuteness which he had displayed in detecting her disguise, and in carrying through the whole inquiry which took place in consequence of it.

He laboured for several weeks, while the courtship was in progress, with his own royal eyes, so as well-nigh to wear out, he declared, a pair of her father's best barnacles, in searching through old books and documents, for the purpose of establishing the bride's pretensions to a noble though remote descent, and thereby remove the only objection which envy might conceive against the match. In his own opinion, at least, he was eminently successful; for, when Sir Mungo Malagrowther, one day in the presence-chamber, took upon him to grieve bitterly for the bride's lack of pedigree, the monarch cut him short with, 'Ye may save your grief for your ain next occasions, Sir Mungo; for, by our royal saul, we will uphauld her father, Davie Ramsay, to be a gentleman of nine descents, whase great-gudesire came of the auld martial stock of the House of Dalwolsey, than whom better men never did, and better never will, draw sword for king and country. Heard ye never of Sir William Ramsay of Dalwolsey, man, of whom John Fordoun saith—"He was *bellicosissimus, nobilissimus*"?—His

castle stands to witness for itsel', not three miles from Dalkeith, man, and within a mile of Bannockrigg. Davie Ramsay came of that auld and honoured stock, and I trust he hath not derogated from his ancestors by his present craft. They all wrought wi' steel, man; only the auld knights drilled holes wi' their swords in their enemies' corselets, and he saws nicks in his brass wheels. And I hope it is as honourable to give eyes to the blind, as to slash them out of the head of those that see; and to show us how to value our time as it passes, as to fling it away in drinking, brawling, spear-splintering, and such-like unchristian doings. And you maun understand that Davie Ramsay is no mechanic, but follows a liberal art, which approacheth almost to the act of creating a living being, seeing it may be said of a watch, as Claudius saith of the sphere of Archimedes the Syracusan—

Inclusus variis famulatur spiritus astris,
Et vivum certis motibus urget opus.'

'Your Majesty had best give auld Davie a coat of-arms as well as a pedigree,' said Sir Mungo.

'It's done or ye bade, Sir Mungo,' said the king; 'and I trust we, who are the fountain of all earthly honour, are free to spirt a few drops of it on one so near our person, without offence to the Knight of Castle Girnigo. We have already spoken with the learned men of the Herald's College, and we propose to grant him an augmented coat-of-arms, being his paternal coat charged with the crown-wheel of a watch in chief for a difference; and we purpose to add Time and Eternity for supporters, as soon as the Garter King-at-Arms shall be able to devise how Eternity is to be represented.'

'I would make him twice as muckle as Time,'* said Archie Armstrong, the court fool, who chanced to be present when the king stated this dilemma.

'Peace, man—ye shall be whippet,' said the king in return for this hint; 'and you, my liege subjects of England, may weel take a hint from what we have said, and not be in such a hurry to laugh at our Scottish pedigrees, though they be somewhat long derived, and difficult to be deduced. Ye see that a man of right gentle blood may, for a season, lay by his gentry, and yet ken whaur to find it when he has occasion for it. It would be as unseemly for a packman, or pedlar, as ye call a travelling merchant, whilk is a trade to which our native subjects of Scotland are specially addicted, to be blazing his genealogy in the faces of those to whom he sells a bawbee's worth of ribbon, as it would be to him to have a beaver on his head, and a rapier by his side, when the pack was on his shoulders. Na, na—he hings his sword on the cleek, lays his beaver on the shelf, puts his pedigree into his pocket, and gangs as doucely and cannily about his peddling craft as if his blood was nae better than ditch-water; but let our pedlar be transformed, as I have ken'd it happen mair than ance, into a bien thriving merchant, then ye shall have a transformation, my lords—

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas—

Out he pulls his pedigree, on he buckles his sword, gives his beaver a brush, and cocks it in the face of all creation. We mention these things at the mair length, because we would have you all to know, that it is not without due consideration of the circumstances of all parties, that we design, in a small and private way, to honour with our own royal presence the marriage of Lord Glenvarloch with Margaret Ramsay, daughter and heiress of David Ramsay, our horologer, and a cadet only thrice removed from the ancient House of Dalwolsey. We are grieved we cannot have the presence of the noble chief of that house at the ceremony; but where there is honour to be won abroad, the Lord Dalwolsey is seldom to be found at home. *Sic fuit, est, et erit.*—Jingling Geordie, as ye stand to the cost of the marriage feast, we look for good cheer.'

Heriot bowed, as in duty bound. In fact, the king, who was a great politician about trifles, had manœuvred greatly on this occasion, and had contrived to get the prince and Buckingham despatched on an expedition to Newmarket, in order that he might find an opportunity in their absence of indulging himself in his own gossiping, *coshering* habits, which were distasteful to Charles, whose temper inclined to formality, and with which even the favourite, of late, had not thought it worth while to seem to sympathize. When the levee was dismissed, Sir Mungo Malagrowther seized upon the worthy citizen in the court-yard of the palace, and detained him, in spite of all his efforts, for the purpose of subjecting him to the following scrutiny:—

'This is a sair job on you, Master George—the King must have had little consideration—this will cost you a bonnie penny, this wedding dinner?'

'It will not break me, Sir Mungo,' answered Heriot; 'the King hath a right to see the table which his bounty hath supplied for years, well covered for a single day.'

'Vera true, vera true,—we'll have a' to pay, I doubt, less or mair—a sort of penny-wedding it will prove, where all men contribute to the young folk's maintenance, that they may not have just four bare legs in a bed thegither. What do you purpose to give, Master George?—we begin with the city when money is in question.'†

'Only a trifle, Sir Mungo—I give my god-daughter the marriage ring; it is a curious jewel—I bought it in Italy; it belonged to Cosmo de Medici. The bride will not need my help—she has an estate which belonged to her maternal grandfather.'

'The auld soap-boiler,' said Sir Mungo; 'it will need some of his suds to scour the blot out of the Glenvarloch shield—I have heard that estate was no great things.'

* Chaucer says, there is nothing new but what it has been old. The reader has here the original of an anecdote which has since been fathered on a Scottish chief of our own time.

† The penny-wedding of the Scots, now disused even among the lowest ranks, was a peculiar species of merry-making, at which, if the wedded pair were popular, the guests who convened contributed considerable sums under pretence of paying for the bridal festivity, but in reality to set the married folk afloat in the world.

'It is as good as some posts at court, Sir Mungo, which are coveted by persons of high quality,' replied George Heriot.

'Court favour, said ye? Court favour, Master Heriot!' replied Sir Mungo, choosing then to use his malady of misapprehension; 'moonshine in water, poor thing, if that is all she is to be tochered with. I am truly solicitous about them.'

'I will let you into a secret,' said the citizen, 'which will relieve your tender anxiety. The dowager Lady Dalgarno gives a competent fortune to the bride, and settles the rest of her estate upon her nephew the bridegroom.'

'Ay, say ye sae?' said Sir Mungo, 'just to show her regard to her husband that is in the tomb—lucky that her nephew did not send him there; it was a strange story that death of poor Lord Dalgarno—some folk think the poor gentleman had much wrong. Little good comes of marrying the daughter of the house you are at feud with; indeed, it was less poor Dalgarno's fault, than theirs that forced the match on him; but I am glad the young folks are to have something to live on, come how it like, whether by charity or inheritance. But if the Lady Dalgarno were to sell all she has, even to her very wyliecoat, she canna gie them back the fair Castle of Glenvarloch—that is lost and gane—lost and gane.'

'It is but too true,' said George Heriot: 'we cannot discover what has become of the villain Andrew Skurliewhitter, or what Lord Dalgarno has done with the mortgage.'

'Assigned it away to some one, that his wife might not get it after he was gane; it would have disturbed him in his grave, to think Glenvarloch should get that land back again,' said Sir Mungo; 'depend on it, he will have ta'en sure measures to keep that noble lordship out of her grips or her nevoy's either.'

'Indeed it is but too probable, Sir Mungo,' said Master Heriot; 'but, as I am obliged to go and look after many things in consequence of this ceremony, I must leave you to comfort yourself with the reflection.'

'The bride-day, you say, is to be on the thirtieth of the instant month?' said Sir Mungo, hallooing after the citizen; 'I will be with you in the hour of cause.'

'The King invites the guests,' said George Heriot, without turning back.

'The base-born, ill-bred mechanic!' soliloquized Sir Mungo; 'if it were not the odd score of pounds he lent me last week, I would teach him how to bear himself to a man of quality! But I will be at the bridal banquet in spite of him.'

Sir Mungo contrived to get invited, or commanded, to attend on the bridal accordingly, at which there were but few persons present; for James, on such occasions, preferred a snug privacy; which gave him liberty to lay aside the encumbrance, as he felt it to be, of his regal dignity. The company was very small, and indeed there were at least two persons absent whose presence might have been expected. The first of these was the Lady Dalgarno, the state of whose health, as well as the recent death of her husband, precluded her attendance on the ceremony. The other absentee was Richie Moniplies, whose conduct for some time past had been extremely mysterious. Regulating his attendance on Lord Glenvarloch entirely according to his own will and pleasure, he had, ever since the rencontre in Enfield Chase, appeared regularly at his bedside in the morning, to assist him to dress, and at his wardrobe in the evening. The rest of the day he disposed of at his own pleasure, without control from his lord, who had now a complete establishment of attendants. Yet he was somewhat curious to know how the fellow disposed of so much of his time; but on this subject Richie showed no desire to be communicative.

On the morning of the bridal day, Richie was particularly attentive in doing all a valet-de-chambre could, so as to set off to advantage the very handsome figure of his master; and when he had arranged his dress with the utmost exactness, and put to his long curled locks what he called 'the finishing touch of the redding-kaim,' he gravely kneeled down, kissed his hand, and bade him farewell, saying that he humbly craved leave to discharge himself of his lordship's service.

'Why, what humour is this?' said Lord Glenvarloch; 'if you mean to discharge yourself of my service, Richie, I suppose you intend to enter my wife's?'

'I wish her good ladyship that shall soon be, and your good lordship, the blessings of as good a servant as myself, in Heaven's good time,' said Richie; 'but fate hath so ordained it, that I can henceforth only be your servant in the way of friendly courtesy.'

'Well, Richie,' said the young lord, 'if you are tired of service, we will seek some better provision for you; but you will wait on me to the church, and partake of the bridal dinner?'

'Under favour, my lord,' answered Richie, 'I must remind you of our covenant, having presently some pressing business of mine own, whilk will detain me during the ceremony; but I will not fail to pree Master George's good cheer, in respect he has made very costly fare, whilk it would be unthankful not to partake of.'

'Do as you list,' answered Lord Glenvarloch; and, having bestowed a passing thought on the whimsical and pragmatical disposition of his follower, he dismissed the subject for others better suited to the day.

The reader must fancy the scattered flowers which strewed the path of the happy couple to church—the loud music which accompanied the procession—the marriage service performed by a bishop—the king, who met them at Saint Paul's, giving away the bride,—to the great relief of her father, who had thus time, during the ceremony, to calculate the just quotient to be laid on the pinion of report in a timepiece which he was then putting together.

When the ceremony was finished, the company were transported in the royal carriages to George Heriot's, where a splendid collation was provided for the marriage guests in the Foljambe apartments. The king no sooner found himself in this snug retreat, than, casting from him his sword and belt with as much haste as if they burned his fingers, and flinging his plumed hat on the table, as who should say, Lie there,

NOTES TO THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL.

NOTE A, p 541 —GEORGE HERIOT'S HOSPITAL

[After Heriot's death in 16 the site originally designed for the Hospital at the foot of Gray's Close Cowgate not far from the old Mint consisted of houses which belonged to Heriot, and which he bequeathed to his executors for that purpose In June 1 7 when Dr Balcanquall Dean of Rochester, came to Edinburgh to make arrangements for carrying Heriot's intentions into effect of founding 'so great a work, it was concluded that this site was quite ineligible and fortunately the provost and council agreed to transfer certain acres which they had recently purchased, known as the High Riggs to the south of the Grassmarket for the proposed building and William Wallace, the king's master mason was appointed to superintend the work On the 1st of July 1628 after a sermon, the ground stone was laid Wallace did not live to complete the building having died in October 1631 That the present quadrangular building was actually designed by him is clear from the minutes of the governors, and the various items of the treasurer's account from the day when the usual drink money was paid for laying the foundation to Wallace and his workmen with the sums they received from week to week A good deal of useless discussion has taken place in regard to the architect — 1 Dean Balcanquall on this head is said to have brought with him a design by Inigo Jones 2 The Dean himself has been named he having furnished not the pattern of the building but the statute in 1 7 for the government of the Hospital and 3 William Aytoun junior appointed master mason as successor to Wallace 1631 32 has also been lauded but without the slightest evidence in either of these cases to deprive Wallace of the honour The governors voted a sum to Wallace's widow in consideration of his extraordinary pain at the beginning thereof, UPON THE MODELL AND FRAME THAIROF Aytoun was likewise expressly enjoined to prosecute and follow forth THE MODELL FRAME AND BUILDING OF THE SAID WARK as the same is already begun Aytoun who died in 1640, was succeeded as master mason by John Mylne but the want of funds prevented the Hospital being completed with a handsome spire as exhibited in an old engraving, about 1646 while the building was still in progress See the Rev Dr Steven's *History of the Hospital* edited by Dr Bedford, 1859 and extracts in a paper 'Who was the Architect of Heriot's Hospital?' in the *Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Scotland*, sess 1851 52, p 13]

NOTE B, p 543 —DEBAUCHERY OF THE PERIOD

Harington's *Nugæ Antiquæ* vol ii p 352 For the gross debauchery of the period, too much encouraged by the example of the monarch, who was in other respects neither without talent nor a good natured disposition see Winwood's Memorials, Howel's Letters, and other memorials of the time, but particularly consult the Private Letters and Correspondence of Steenie *alias* Buckingham, with his reverend Dad and Gossip King James, which abound with the grossest as well as the most childish language The learned Mr D'Israeli, in an attempt to vindicate the character of James, has only succeeded in obtaining for himself the character of a skilful and ingenious advocate, without much advantage to his royal client [This work will be found in the collected edition of Mr D'Israeli's writings, edited by his son, Lord Beaconsfield]

NOTE C, p 544 —ALSATIAN CHARACTERS.

'*Cheatly*, a rascal who, by reason of debts, dares not stir out of Whitefriars, but there inveigles young heirs of entail and helps them to goods and money upon great disadvantages, is bound for them and shares with them till he undoes them A lewd impudent, debauched fellow very expert in the cant about town

Shamwell cousin to the Belfords, who, being ruined by Cheatly is made a decoy duck for others, not daring to stir out of Alsatia where he lives Is bound with Cheatly for heirs, and lives upon them a dissolute, debauched life

Captain Hackum a blockheaded bully of Alsatia, a cowardly impudent blustering fellow formerly a sergeant in Flanders who has run from his colours, and retreated into Whitefriars for a very small debt where by the Alsatians he is dubbed a captain marries one that lets lodgings sells cherry brandy and is a bawd

'*Scrapeall* a hypocritical repeating, praying, psalm singing, precise fellow, pretending to great piety, a godly knave who joins with Cheatly and supplies young heirs with goods and money —*Dramatis Personæ to the Squire of Alsatia*, SHADWELL *Works*, vol iv

NOTE D, p 543 —COMPOSITION OF THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL

['In the autumn of 1821 Scott amused some leisure hours with writing a series of Private Letters supposed to have been discovered in the repositories of a noble English family and giving a picture of manners in town and country during the early part of the reign of James I These letters were printed as fast as he penned them in a handsome quarto form and he furnished the margin with a running commentary of notes drawn up in the character of a disappointed chaplain a keen Whig, or rather Radical overflowing on all occasions with spleen against monarchy and aristocracy When the printing had reached the seventy second page, however, he was told candidly by his friends that however clever his imitation of the epistolary style of the period in question, he was throwing away the materials of as good a romance as he had ever penned and in a few days afterwards he said to Lockhart patting his pony's neck till she danced under him 'You were all quite right—if the letters had passed for genuine, they would have found favour only with a few musty antiquaries

'The novel was proceeded with forthwith, and appeared in May of the following year (1822) It was considered as ranking in the first class of Scott's romances Indeed, as a historical portraiture, that of James I stands forth preeminent, and almost alone, nor, perhaps, in reperusing the Waverley Novels deliberately as a series, does any one of them leave so complete an impression as the picture of an age *The Fortunes of Nigel* is, in fact, the best commentary on the old English drama—hardly a single picturesque point of manners touched by Ben Jonson and his contemporaries but has been dovetailed into this story, and all so easily and naturally, as to form the most striking contrast to the historical romances of authors who *cram*, as the schoolboys phrase it, and then set to work oppressed and bewildered with their crude and undigested burden.'—J G LOCKHART]

NOTE E, p 549 —DAVID RAMSAY

David Ramsay watchmaker and horologer to James I., was a real person, though the Author has taken the liberty of pressing him into the service of fiction Although his profession led him to cultivate the exact sciences, like many at this period he mingled them with pursuits which were mystical and fantastic The truth was, that the boundaries between truth and falsehood in mathematics, astronomy, and similar pursuits, were not exactly known,

and there existed a sort of *terra incognita* between them, in which the wisest men bewildered themselves David Ramsay risked his money on the success of the vaticinations which his researches led him to form, since he sold clocks and watches under condition that their value should not become payable till King James was crowned in the Pope's chair at Rome Such wagers were common in that day, as may be seen by looking at Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*

David Ramsay was also an actor in another singular scene, in which the notorious astrologer Lilly was a performer, and had no small expectation on the occasion, since he brought with him a half quartern sack to put the treasure in

'David Ramsay, his Majesty's clock maker, had been informed that there was a great quantity of treasure buried in the cloister of Westminster Abbey He acquaints Dean Withnam therewith, who was also then Bishop of Lincoln The Dean gave him liberty to search after it, with this proviso, that if any was discovered, his church should have a share of it Davy Ramsay finds out one John Scott, who pretended the use of the Mosaical rods to assist him herein * I was desired to join with him, unto which I consented One winter's night, Davy Ramsay with several gentlemen, myself, and Scott entered the cloisters We played the hazel rods round about the cloisters Upon the west end of the cloisters the rods turned one over another, an argument that the treasure was there The labourers digged at least six feet deep and then we met with a coffin, but which in regard it was not heavy, we did not open, which we afterwards much repented

'From the cloisters we went into the abbey church, where, upon a sudden (there being no wind when we began), so fierce and so high, so blustering and loud a wind did rise, that we verily believed the west end of the church would have fallen upon u Our rods would not move at all the candles and torches also but one were extinguished, or burned very dimly John Scott my partner, was amazed, looked pale, knew not what to think or do, until I gave directions and command to dismiss the demons, which when done all was quiet again and each man returned unto his lodging late about twelve o'clock at night I could never since be induced to join with any such like actions

'The true miscarriage of the business was by reason of so many people being present at the operation for there was about thirty some laughing others deriding us, so that, if we had not dismissed the demons I believe most part of the abbey church would have been blown down Secrecy and intelligent operators with a strong confidence and knowledge of what they are doing, are best for the work' LILLY'S *Life and Times* p 46

David Ramsay had a son called William Ramsay, who appears to have possessed all his father's credulity He became an astrologer, and in 1651 52, published *Vox Stellarum* an Introduction to the Judgment of Eclipses and the Annual Revolutions of the World The edition of 1652 is inscribed to his father It would appear, as indeed it might be argued from his mode of disposing of his goods, that the old horologer had omitted to make hay while the sun shone for his son in his dedication has this exception to the paternal virtues, 'It's true your carelessness in laying up while the sun shone for the tempests of a stormy day, hath given occasion to some inferior spirited people not to value you according to what you are by nature and in yourself, for such look not to a man longer than he is in prosperity, esteeming none but for their wealth, not wisdom, power nor virtue From these expressions, it is to be apprehended that while old David Ramsay, a follower of the Stuarts, sunk under the Parliament government, his son William had advanced from being a dupe to astrology to the dignity of being himself a cheat.

NOTE F, p 554 —GEORGE HERIOT

This excellent person was but little known by his actions, when alive but we may well use in this particular, the striking phrase of Scripture, 'that being dead he yet speaketh' We have already mentioned, in the Introduction, the splendid charity of which he was the founder; the few notices of his personal history are slight and meagre.

George Heriot was born at Trabroun, in the parish of Gladsmuir; he was the eldest son of a goldsmith in Edinburgh, descended from a family of some consequence in East Lothian. His father enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens, and was their representative in Parliament. He was, besides, one of the deputies sent by the inhabitants of the city to propitiate the king, when he had left Edinburgh abruptly, after the riot of 17th December 1596

George Heriot, the son, pursued his father's occupation of a goldsmith, then peculiarly lucrative, and much connected with that of a money broker He enjoyed the favour and protection of James and of his consort, Anne of Denmark He married for his first wife, a maiden of his own rank, named Christian Marjoribanks, daughter of a respectable burgess This was in 1586 He was afterwards named jeweller to the queen, whose account to him for a space of ten years amounted to nearly £40,000. George Heriot, having lost his wife, connected himself with the distinguished house of Rosebery by marrying a daughter of James Primrose, Clerk to the Privy Council Of this lady he was deprived by her dying in child birth in 1612, before attaining her twenty first year After a life spent in honourable and successful industry, George Heriot died in London, to which city he had followed his royal master, on the 12th February 1624, at the age of sixty-one years His picture (copied by Scougal from a lost original) in which he is represented in the prime of life, is thus described 'His fair hair, which overshades the thoughtful brow and calm, calculating eye, with the cast of humour on the lower part of the countenance, are all indicative of the genuine Scottish character, and well distinguish a person fitted to move steadily and wisely through the world with a strength of resolution to insure success, and a disposition to enjoy it —*Historical and Descriptive Account of Heriot's Hospital with a Memoir of the Founder*, by Messrs James and John Johnstone. Edinburgh, 1827

I may add as everything concerning George Heriot is interesting, that his second wife, Alison Primrose, was interred in Saint Gregory's Church, from the register of which parish the Rev Mr Barham, rector, has, in the kindest manner, sent me the following extract —'Mrs. Alison the wife of Mr George Heriot, gentleman, 20th April 1612 Saint Gregory's before the Great Fire of London which consumed the cathedral, formed one of the towers of old Saint Paul's, and occupied the space of ground now filled by Queen Anne's statue In the south aisle of the choir Mrs Heriot reposed under a handsome monument, bearing the following inscription —

'*Sanctissimæ et charissimæ conjugi* ALISONÆ HERIOT, *Jacobi Primrosii, Regiæ Majestatis in Sanctiori Concilio Regni Scotiæ Amanuensis, filiæ feminæ omnibus tum animi tum corporis dotibus, ac pio cultu instructissimæ, mæstissimus ipsius maritus* GEORGIUS HERIOT, ARMIGER, *Regis, Reginæ, Principum Henrici et Caroli Gemmarius, bene merenti, non sine lachrymis, hoc Monumentum pie posuit*

'*Obiit Mensis Aprilis die 16, anno salutis 1612, ætatis 20, in ipso flore juventæ, et mihi, parentibus, et amicis tristissimum sui desiderium reliquit*

Hic Alicia Primrosa
Jacet crudo abrupta fato,
Intempestiv is
Ut rosa pressa manus
Sordium hisden s
Ann rum impleverit orbes,
Pulchra pudica
Patris delicium atque viri
Quum gravida heu! nunquam
Mater decessit et inde
Cura dolorq Patri
Cura dolorq viro
Non sublata tamen
Tantum translata recessit
Nunc Rosa prima Poli
Quæ fuit antea soli

The loss of a young, beautiful, and amiable partner, at a period so interesting, was the probable reason of her husband devoting his fortune to a charitable institution The epitaph occurs in Strype's edition of Stowe's *Survey of London*, Book iii page 228.

NOTE G, p 559 —PROCLAMATION AGAINST THE SCOTS COMING TO ENGLAND

The English agreed in nothing more unanimously than in censuring James on account of the beggarly rabble which not only attended the king at his coming first out of Scotland, 'but,' says Osborne, 'which, through his whole reign, like a fluent spring, were found still crossing the Tweed' Yet it is certain, from the number of proclamations published by the Privy Council in Scotland, and bearing marks of the king's own diction, that he was sensible of the whole inconveniences and unpopularity

* The same now called, I believe the Divining Rod, and applied to the discovery of water not obvious to the eye

attending the importunate crowd of disrespectable suitors, and as desirous to get rid of them as his Southern subjects could be But it was in vain that his Majesty argued with his Scottish subjects on the disrespect they were bringing on their native country and sovereign, by causing the English to suppose there were no well nurtured or independent gentry in Scotland, they who presented them selves being, in the opinion and conceit of all beholders, 'but idle rascals, and poor miserable bodies It was even in vain that the vessels which brought up this unwelcome cargo of petitioners were threatened with fine and confiscation, the undaunted suitors continued to press forward and, as one of the proclamations says, many of them under pretence of requiring payment of 'auld debts due to them by the King, which, it is observed with great naïveté, is of all kinds of importunity, most unpleasing to his Majesty The expressions in the text are selected from these curious proclamations.

NOTE H p 567 KING JAMES

The dress of this monarch together with his personal appearance, is thus described by a contemporary

'He was of a middle stature, more corpulent through [i e by means of] his clothes than in his body yet fat enough His legs were very weak having had, it was thought, some foul play in his youth or rather before he was born, that he was not able to stand at seven years of age That weakness made him ever leaning on other men's shoulders His walk was ever circular [his fingers ever in that walk ever fiddling about —[i] ut [illegible] is now laid aside] He would make a great deal too bold with God in his passion both with cursing and swearing and a strain higher, verging on blasphemy but would in his better temper, say he hoped God would not impute them as sins, and lay them to his charge, seeing they proceeded from passion He had need of great assistance, rather than hope that would daily make thus bold with God —DALRYMPLE's *Fragments of Scottish History*, p [illegible], Edinb 1798, 4to

NOTE I, p 571 SIR MUNGO MALAGROWTHER

It will perhaps be recognised by some of my countrymen, that the caustic Scottish knight as described in Chapter VI, borrowed some of his attributes from a most worthy and respectable baronet who was to be met with in Edinburgh society about twenty-five or thirty years ago It is not by any means to be inferred that the living person resembled the imaginary one in the course of life ascribed to him or in his personal attributes But his fortune was little adequate to his rank and the antiquity of his family, and to avenge himself for this disparity the worthy baronet lost no opportunity of making the most severe sons of fortune feel the edge of his satire This he had the art of disguising under the personal infirmity of deafness and usually introduced his most severe things by an affected mistake of what was said around him For example, at a public meeting of a certain county, this worthy gentleman had chosen to display a laced coat, of such a pattern as had not been seen in society for the better part of a century The young men who were present amused themselves with rallying him on his taste, when he suddenly singled out one of the party — Auld d ye think my coat—auld fashioned?—indeed it canna be new; but it was the wark of a braw tailor, and that was your grandfather, who was at the head of the trade in Edinburgh about the beginning of last century' Upon another occasion, when this type of Sir Mungo Malagrowther happened to hear a nobleman, the high chief of one of those Border clans who were accused of paying very little attention in ancient times to the distinctions of *Meum* and *Tuum*, addressing a gentleman of the same name [illegible]

[illegible] cows, and the other gentleman's ancestors did [illegible] them,'—fame ascribing the origin of the latter family to a butcher It may be well imagined, that, among a people that have been always punctilious about genealogy, such a person, who had a general acquaintance with all the flaws and specks in the shields of the proud, the pretending, and the *nouveaux riches*, must have had the same scope for amusement as a monkey in a china shop.

NOTE J, p 582—MISTRESS ANNA TURNER

Mistress Anna Turner was a dame somewhat of the occupation of Mistress Suddlechop in the text; that is, half milliner, half procuress, and secret agent in all manner of proceedings She was a trafficker in the poisoning of Sir Thomas Overbury, for which so many subordinate agents lost their lives, while, to the great scandal of justice, the Earl of Somerset and his Countess were suffered to escape, upon a threat of Somerset to make public some secret which nearly affected his master, King James Mistress Turner introduced into England a French custom of using yellow starch in *getting up* bands and cuffs, and, by Lord Coke's orders she appeared in that fashion at the place of execution She was the widow of a physician and had been eminently beautiful, as appears from the description of her in the poem called Overbury's Vision There was produced in court a parcel of dolls or puppets belonging to this lady some naked, some dressed, and which she used for exhibiting fashions upon But, greatly to the horror of the spectators, who accounted these figures to be magical devices there was, on their being shown, 'heard a crack from the scaffold which caused great fear, tumult, and confusion among the spectators and throughout the hall every one fearing hurt, as if the devil had been present and grown angry to have his workmanship showed to such as were not his own scholars Compare this curious passage in the *History of King James for the First Fourteen Years*, 1651, with the *Aulicus Coquinarius* of Dr Heylin Both works are published in the *Secret History of the Court of King James* with Notes, edited by Sir Walter Scott, Edinb 1811, 2 vols 8vo

NOTE K, p 586 —LORD HUNTINGLEN

The merit of having rescued James I from the dagger of Alexander Ruthven is here fictitiously ascribed to an imaginary Lord Huntinglen In reality, as may be read in every history, his preserver was John Ramsay, afterwards created Earl of Holderness who stabbed the younger Ruthven with his dagger while he was struggling with the King Sir Anthony Weldon informs us, that, upon the annual return of the day the King's deliverance was commemorated by an anniversary feast The time was the fifth of August, upon which precedes the situation historian, 'Sir John Ramsay for his good service in that preservation was the principal guest and so did the King grant him any boon he would ask that day But he had such limitation made to his asking, as made his suit as unprofitable as the action for which he asked it was unserviceable to the King

NOTE L, p 593 BUCKINGHAM.

Buckingham who had a frankness in his high and unsettled ambition, was always ready to bid defiance to those by whom he was thwarted or opposed He aspired to be created Prince of Tipperary in Ireland, and Lord High Constable of Ireland Coventry, then Lord Keeper, opposed what seemed such an unreasonable extent of power as was annexed to the office of Constable On this opposition, according to Sir Anthony Weldon, 'the duke peremptorily accosted Coventry, "Who made you Lord Keeper, Coventry?" He replied, "The King" Buckingham replied, "It's false, 'twas I did make you, and you shall know that I, who made you, can, and will, unmake you" Coventry thus answered him, "Did I conceive that I held my place by your favour, I would presently unmake myself, by rendering up the seals to his Majesty" Then Buckingham, in a scorn and fury, flung from him, saying, "You shall not keep it long" and surely, had not Felton prevented him, he had made good his word.'—WELDON'S *Court of King James and Charles*.

NOTE M, p 596 – PAGES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

About this time the ancient customs arising from the long prevalence of chivalry began to be grossly varied from the original purposes of the institution. None was more remarkable than the change which took place in the breeding and occupation of *pages* This peculiar species of menial originally consisted of youths of noble birth, who that they might be trained to the exercise of arms, were early removed from their paternal homes, where too much indulgence might have been expected, to be placed in the family of some prince or man of rank and military renown where they served, as it were, an apprenticeship to the duties of chivalry and courtesy Their education was severely moral, and pursued with great strictness in respect to useful exercises, and what were deemed elegant

accomplishments. From being pages, they were advanced to the next gradation of squires; from squires, these candidates for the honours of knighthood were frequently made knights.

But in the sixteenth century the page had become, in many instances, a mere domestic, who sometimes, by the splendour of his address and appearance, was expected to make up in show for the absence of a whole band of retainers with swords and bucklers. We have Sir John's authority when he cashiers part of his train:

> Falstaff will learn the humour of the age,
> French thrift, you rogues, myself and skirted page.

Jonson, in a high tone of moral indignation, thus reprobated the change. The Host of the New Inn replies to Lord Lovel, who asks to have his son for a page, that he would, with his own hands, hang him sooner

> Than damn him to this desperate course of life.
> *Lovel.* Call you that desperate, which by a line
> Of institution, from our ancestors
> Hath been derived down to us, and received
> In a succession, for the noblest way
> Of brushing up our youth in letters, arms,
> Fair mien, discourses, civil exercise,
> And all the blazon of a gentleman?
> Where can he learn to vault, to ride, to fence,
> To move his body gracefully, to speak
> The language pure, or to turn his mind
> Or manners more to the harmony of nature,
> Than in these nurseries of nobility?
> *Host.* Ay, that was when the nursery's self was noble,
> And only virtue made it, not the market,
> That titles were not vented at the drum,
> And common outcry; goodness gave the greatness,
> And greatness worship; every house became
> An academy, and those parts
> We see departed in the practice now
> Quite from the institution.
> *Lovel.* Why do you say so,
> Or think so enviously? do they not still
> Learn thus the Centaurs' skill, the art of Thrace,
> To ride? or Pollux' mystery, to fence?
> The Pyrrhick gestures, both to stand and spring
> In armour, to be active for the wars,
> To study figures, numbers, and proportions,
> May yield them great in counsels and the arts,
> To make their English sweet upon their tongue,
> As reverend Chaucer says?
> *Host.* Sir, you mistake:
> To play Sir Pandarus, my copy hath it,
> And carry messages to Madam Cressid;
> Instead of backing the brave steed o' mornings,
> To kiss the chambermaid, and for a leap
> O' the vaulting horse, to ply the vaulting house;
> For exercise of arms a bale of dice,
> And two or three packs of cards to show the cheat
> And nimbleness of hand; mistake a cloak
> From my lord's back, and pawn it; ease his pockets
> Of a superfluous watch, or geld a jewel
> Of an odd stone or so; twinge three or four buttons
> From off my lady's gown. These are the arts,
> Or seven liberal deadly sciences
> Of pagery, or rather paganism,
> As the tides run; to which if he apply him,
> He may, perhaps, take a degree at Tyburn,
> A year the earlier; come to read a lecture
> Upon Aquinas, at Saint Thomas a Waterings,
> And so go forth a laureate in hemp circle.
>
> THE NEW INN, *Act* I.

NOTE N, p. 596.—LORD HENRY HOWARD.

Lord Henry Howard was the second son of the poetical Earl of Surrey, and possessed considerable parts and learning. He wrote, in the year 1583, a book called *A Defensative against the Poison of supposed Prophecies.* He gained the favour of Queen Elizabeth, by having, he says, directed his battery against a sect of prophets and pretended soothsayers, whom he accounted *infesti regibus*, as he expresses it. In the last years of the queen, he became James's most ardent partisan, and conducted with great pedantry, but much intrigue, the correspondence betwixt the Scottish king and the younger Cecil. Upon James's accession, he was created Earl of Northampton, and Lord Privy Seal. According to De Beaumont, the French Ambassador, Lord Henry Howard was one of the greatest flatterers and calumniators that ever lived.

NOTE O, p. 597.—SKIRMISHES IN THE PUBLIC STREETS.

Edinburgh appears to have been one of the most disorderly towns in Europe, during the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. The diary of the honest citizen Birrel repeatedly records such incidents as the following:—'The 24 of November [1567], at two afternoon, the Laird of Airth and the Laird of Weems met on the High Gate of Edinburgh, and they and their followers fought a very bloody skirmish, where there were many hurt on both sides with shot of pistol.' Those skirmishes also took place in London itself. In Shadwell's play of the Scowrers, an old rake thus boasts of his early exploits:—'I knew the Hectors, and before them the Muns, and the Tityretus; they were brave fellows indeed! In these days, a man could not go from the Rose Garden to the Piazza once, but he must venture his life twice, my dear Sir Willie.' But it appears that the affrays, which, in the Scottish capital, arose out of hereditary quarrels and ancient feuds, were in London the growth of the licentiousness and arrogance of young debauchees.

NOTE P, p. 600.—FRENCH COOKERY.

The exertion of French ingenuity mentioned in the text is noticed by some authorities of the period; the siege of Leith was also distinguished by the protracted obstinacy of the besieged, in which was displayed all that the age possessed of defensive war, so that Brantome records that those who witnessed this siege had from that very circumstance a degree of consequence yielded to their persons and opinions. He tells a story of Strozzi himself, from which it appears that his jests lay a good deal in the line of the *cuisine*. He caused a mule to be stolen from one Brusquet, on whom he wished to play a trick, and served up the flesh of that unclean animal so well disguised, that it passed with Brusquet for venison.

NOTE Q, p. 600.—CUCKOO'S NEST.

This quarrel between the pretended captain and the citizen of London, is taken from a burlesque poem called The Counter Scuffle, that is, the Scuffle in the Prison at Wood Street, so called. It is a piece of low humour, which had at the time very considerable vogue. The prisoners, it seems, had fallen into a dispute amongst themselves 'which calling was of most repute,' and a lawyer put in his claim to be most highly considered. The man of war repelled his pretence with much arrogance:—

> 'Wert not for us, thou swad,' quoth he,
> 'Where wouldst thou fly to get a fee?
> But to defend such things as thee
> 'Tis pity;
> For such as you esteem us least,
> Who ever have been ready prest
> To guard you and your cuckoo's nest,
> The City.'

The offence is no sooner given than it is caught up by a gallant citizen, a goldsmith, named Ellis:—

> 'Of London city I am free,
> And there I first my wife did see,
> And for that very cause,' said he,
> 'I love it.
> And he that calls it cuckoo's nest,
> Except he says he speaks in jest,
> He is a villain and a beast,—
> I'll prove it!
>
> For though I am a man of trade,
> And free of London city made,
> Yet can I use gun, bill and blade
> In battle.
> And citizens, if need require,
> Themselves can fight, the foe retire,
> Whatever this low country squire
> May prattle.'

The dispute terminates in the scuffle, which is the subject of the poem. The whole may be found in the second edition of Dryden's *Miscellany*, 12mo, vol. iii. 1716.

NOTE R, p. 602.—BURBAGE.

Burbage, whom Camden terms another Roscius, was probably the original representative of Richard III., and seems to have been early almost identified with his prototype. Bishop Corbet, in his *Iter Boreale*, tells us that mine host of Market Bosworth was full of ale and history:

> Hear him. See ye yon wood? There Richard lay
> With his whole army: look the other way,
> And lo where Richmond in a bed of gorse,
> Encamp'd himself o'ernight and all his force:
> Upon this hill they met. Why, he could tell
> The inch where Richmond stood, where Richard fell:
> Besides, what of his knowledge he could say,
> He had authentic notice from the Play;
> Which I might guess, by's mustering up the ghosts
> And policies, not incident to hosts;
> But chiefly by that one perspicuous thing,
> Where he mistook a player for a king;
> For when he would have said, King Richard died,
> And call'd, A horse! a horse! he Burbage cried.'
>
> RICHARD CORBET'S POEMS, *Edition* 1815, p. 193.

Note S, p 632 —Earl of Bothwell

[Among the original documents preserved among the archives of the Hospital, there are various precepts or receipts signed by Francis (Stewart) Earl of Bothwell, but only one of them dated, 1594, which show that George Heriot and he had many transactions In that year Bothwell broke out in rebellion, and abandoned by Queen Elizabeth, excommunicated by the Church, and deserted by his followers, he was obliged to fly for safety to France, and thence to Spain, where he renounced the Protestant faith, and lived for many years in obscurity and immorality Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch his stepson, succeeded to his large estates, which had been conveyed to him by the earl before his treasonable attempts and forfeiture]

Note T, p 638 The Skimmington

A species of triumphal procession in honour of female supremacy, when it rose to such a height as to attract the attention of the neighbourhood It is described at full length in Hudibras (Part II Canto II) As the procession passed on those who attended it in an official capacity were wont to sweep the threshold of the houses in which Fame affirmed the mistresses to exercise paramount authority, which was given and received as a hint that their inmates might in their turn be made the subject of a similar ovation The Skimmington which in some degree resembled the proceeding of Mumbo Jumbo in an African village has been long discontinued in England, apparently because female rule has become either milder or less frequent than among our ancestors

Note U, p 669 —Mhic Allastar More

This is the Highland patronymic of the late gallant Chief of Glengarry The allusion in the text is to an unnecessary alarm taken by some lady at the ceremonial of the coronation of George IV at the sight of the pistols which the chief wore as a part of his Highland dress The circumstance produced some confusion which was talked of at the time All who knew Glengarry (and the Author knew him well) were aware that his principles were of devoted loyalty to the person of his sovereign

Note V, p. 670. King James's Drinking Bottle

Roger Coke, in his *Detection of the Court and State of England* London 1697 p 70 observes of James I 'The king was excessively addicted to hunting and drinking not ordinary French and Spanish wines but strong Greek wines, and thought he would compound his hunting with these wines and to that purpose he was attended by a special officer, who was as much as he could be, always at hand to fill the king's cup in hunting when he called for it I have heard my father say that, hunting with the king after the king had drunk of the wine he also drank of it, and though he was young and of a healthful disposition, it so deranged his head that it spoiled his pleasure and disordered him for three days after Whether it was from drinking these wines, or from some other cause the king became so lazy and so unwieldy that he was trussed on horseback and as he was set, so would he ride without stirring himself in the saddle nay when his hat was set upon his head he would not take the trouble to alter it, but it sate as it was put on '

The trussing, for which the demipique saddle of the day afforded particular facility, is alluded to in the text and the Author, among other nick nacks of antiquity, possesses a leathern flask, like those carried by sportsmen which is labelled, 'King James's Hunting Bottle, with what authenticity is uncertain Coke seems to have ex [illegible]

any turn to do with him, made him sometimes overtaken, which he would the next day remember, and repent with tears It is true he drank very often, which was rather out of a custom than any delight, and his drinks were of that kind for strength as Frontiniack, Canary, high country wine tent wine and Scottish ale, that had he not had a very strong brain, he might have been daily overtaken, though he seldom drank at any one time above four spoonfuls many times not above one or two.'—*Secret History of King James*, vol. ii. p 3, Edin 1811.

Note W, p 670 – Scene in Greenwich Park.

I cannot here omit mentioning, that a painting of the old school is in existence having a remarkable resemblance to the scene described in this chapter, although it be nevertheless true that the similarity is in all respects casual and that the Author knew not of the existence of the painting till it was sold amongst others, with the following description attached to it in a well drawn up catalogue

'Federigo Zucchero

'*Scene as represented in the Fortunes of Nigel, by Federigo Zucchero, the King's painter*

'This extraordinary picture which independent of its pictorial merit has been esteemed a great literary curiosity, represents most faithfully the meeting, in Greenwich Park, between King James and Nigel Oliphaunt, as described in the Fortunes of Nigel showing that the Author must have taken the anecdote from authenticated facts In the centre of the picture sits King James on horseback, very erect and stiffly Between the king and Prince Charles, who is on the left of the picture the Duke of Buckingham is represented riding a black horse and pointing eagerly towards the culprit Nigel Oliphaunt who is standing on the right side of the picture He grasps with his right hand a gun or crossbow and looks angrily towards the king who seems somewhat confused and alarmed Behind Nigel his servant is restraining two dogs which are barking fiercely Nigel and his servant are both clothed in red the livery of the Oliphaunt family in which to this day the town officers of Perth are clothed there being an old charter, granting to the Oliphaunt family the privilege of dressing the public officers of Perth in their livery The Duke of Buckingham is in all respects equal in magnificence of dress to the king or the prince The only difference that is marked between him and royalty is, that his head is uncovered The king and the prince wear their hats In Lucy Aikin's *Memoirs of the Reign of King James* will be found a letter from Sir Thomas Howard to Lord Harington in which he recommends the latter to come to court mentioning that his Majesty has spoken favourably of him He then proceeds to give him some advice by which he is likely to find favour in the king's eyes He tells him to wear a bushy ruff, well starched, and after various other directions as to his dress, he concludes, but above all things fail not to praise the roan jennet whereon the king doth daily ride In this picture King James is represented on the identical roan jennet In the background of the picture are seen two or three suspicious looking figures as if watching the success of some plot These may have been put in by the painter to flatter the king by making it be supposed that he had actually escaped or successfully combated some serious plot The king is attended by a numerous band of courtiers and attendants all of whom seem moving forward to arrest the defaulter The painting of this picture is extremely [illegible] but the drawing is very Gothic, and there is no attempt at the keeping of perspective The picture is very dark and obscure, which considerably adds to the interest of the scene

Note X, p 670 King James's Timidity

The fears of James for his personal safety were often excited without serious grounds On one occasion, having been induced to visit a coal pit on the coast of Fife, he was conducted a little way under the sea and brought to daylight again on a small island, or what was such at full tide, down which a shaft had been sunk James, who conceived his life or liberty aimed at when he found himself on an islet surrounded by the sea instead of admiring, as his cicerone hoped the unexpected change of scene, cried *Treason* with all his might and could not be pacified till he was rowed ashore At Lochmaben he took an equally causeless alarm from a still lighter circumstance Some *vendisses* a fish peculiar to the loch, were presented to the royal table as a delicacy, but the king, who was not familiar with their appearance, concluded they were poisoned and broke up the banquet 'with most admired disorder

Note Y, p 684 —Punishment of Stubbs by Mutilation

This execution, which so captivated the imagination of Sir Mungo Malagrowther, was really a striking one The criminal, a furious and bigoted puritan, had published a

book * in very violent terms against the match of Elizabeth with the Duke of Alençon, which he termed an union of a daughter of God with a son of Antichrist. Queen Elizabeth was greatly incensed at the freedom assumed in this work, and caused the author, Stubbs, with Page, the publisher, and one Singleton, the printer, to be tried on an Act passed by Philip and Mary against the writers and dispersers of seditious publications They were convicted, and although there was an opinion strongly entertained by lawyers, that the Act was only temporary, and expired with Queen Mary, Stubbs and Page received sentence to have their right hands struck off They accordingly suffered the punishment, the wrist being divided by a cleaver driven through the joint by force of a mallet The printer was pardoned. 'I remember,' says the historian Camden, 'being then present, that Stubbs, when his right hand was cut off, plucked off his hat with the left, and said with a loud voice, "God save the Queen!" The multitude standing about was deeply silent, either out of horror of this new and unwonted kind of punishment, or out of commiseration towards the man, as being of an honest and unblamable repute, or else out of hatred to the marriage, which most men presaged would be the overthrow of religion — CAMDEN'S *Annals for the Year* 1581.

NOTE Z, p 690 —RICHIE MONIPLIES BEHIND THE ARRAS

The practical jest of Richie Moniplies going behind the arras to get an opportunity of teasing Heriot was a pleasantry such as James might be supposed to approve of It was customary for those who knew his humour to contrive jests of this kind for his amusement The celebrated Archie Armstrong and another jester called Drummond, mounted on other people's backs, used to charge each other like knights in the tilt yard, to the monarch's great amusement The following is an instance of the same kind taken from Webster upon Witchcraft The author is speaking of the faculty called ventriloquism

'But to make this more plain and certain, we shall add a story of a notable impostor or ventriloquist from the testimony of Mr Ady, which we have had confirmed from the mouth of some courtiers, that both saw and knew him, and is this — It hath been (saith he) credibly reported, that there was a man in the court in King James his days, that could act this imposture so lively that he could call the king by name, and cause the king to look round about him, wondering who it was that called him, whereas he that called him stood before him in his presence with his face towards him But after this imposture was known, the king, in his merriment, would sometimes take occasionally this impostor to make sport upon some of his courtiers, as, for instance.

'There was a knight belonging to the court, whom the king caused to come before him in his private room (where no man was but the king, and this knight and the impostor), and feigned some occasion of serious discourse with the knight, but when the king began to speak, and the knight, bending his attention to the king, suddenly there came a voice as out of another room, calling the knight by name, "Sir John, Sir John; come away, Sir John,' at which the knight began to frown that any man

hn, Sir John
sack' At that, Sir John began to swell with anger, and looked into the next rooms to see who it was that dared to call him so importunately, and could not find out who it was, and having chid with whomsoever he found, he returned again to the king The king had no sooner begun to speak as formerly, but the voice came again, "Sir John, come away, your sack stayeth for you" At that Sir John began to stamp with madness, and looked out and returned several times to the king, but could not be quiet in his discourse with the king, because of the voice that so often troubled him, till the king had sported enough.'—*Webster on Witchcraft*, p 124.

*[The title of this work by John Stubbs is The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulph wherein England is like to be swallowed by another French Marriage, if the Lord forbid not the Banes by letting her Majestie see the sin and punishment thereof It is anonymous and has neither printer's name nor place 1579 sm 8 o]

NOTE AA, p 697 —LADY LAKE.

Whether out of a meddling propensity common to all who have a gossiping disposition, or from the love of justice, which ought to make part of a prince's character, James was very fond of inquiring personally into the *causes célèbres* which occurred during his reign In the imposture of the Boy of Bilson, who pretended to be possessed, and of one Richard Haydock, a poor scholar, who pretended to preach during his sleep, the king, to use the historian Wilson's expression, took delight in sounding with the line of his understanding the depth of these brutish impositions, and in doing so showed the acuteness with which he was endowed by nature. Lady Lake's story consisted in a clamorous complaint against the Countess of Exeter, whom she accused of a purpose to put to death Lady Lake herself, and her daughter, Lady Ross, the wife of the countess's own son in law, Lord Ross, and a forged letter was produced, in which Lady Exeter was made to acknowledge such a purpose The account given of the occasion of obtaining this letter, was, that it had been written by the countess at Wimbledon, in presence of Lady Lake and her daughter, Lady Ross, being designed to procure their forgiveness for her mischievous intention. The king remained still unsatisfied, the writing, in his opinion, bearing strong marks of forgery Lady Lake and her daughter then alleged that, besides their own attestation, and that of a confidential domestic, named Diego, in whose presence Lady Exeter had written the confession, their story might also be supported by the oath of their waiting maid, who had been placed behind the hangings at the time the letter was written, and heard the Countess of Exeter read over the confession after she had signed it Determined to be at the bottom of this accusation, James, while hunting one day near Wimbledon, the scene of the alleged confession, suddenly left his sport, and, galloping hastily to Wimbledon, in order to examine personally the room, discovered, from the size of the apartment, that the alleged conversation could not have taken place in the manner sworn to, and that the tapestry of the chamber, which had remained in the same state for thirty years, was too short by two feet, and therefore could not have concealed any one behind it This matter was accounted an exclusive discovery of the king by his own spirit of shrewd investigation. The parties were punished in the Star Chamber by fine and imprisonment.

APPENDIX.

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE.

CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK TO THE REV. DR DRYASDUST.

Dear Sir,—I readily accept of and reply to the civilities with which you have been pleased to honour me in your obliging letter, and entirely agree with your quotation, '*Quam bonum et quam jucundum!*' We may indeed esteem ourselves as come of the same family, or, according to our country proverb, as being all one man's bairns; and there needed no apology on your part for requesting of me any information which I might be able to supply respecting the subject of your curiosity. The interview which you allude to took place in the course of last winter, and is so deeply imprinted on my recollection, that it requires no effort to collect all its most minute details.

You are aware that the share which I had in introducing the romance called The Monastery to public notice, has given me a sort of character in the literature of our Scottish metropolis. I no longer stand in the outer shop of our bibliopolists, bargaining for the objects of my curiosity with an unrespective shop-lad, hustled among boys who come to buy Corderiuses* and copy-books, and servant girls cheapening a pennyworth of paper, but am cordially welcomed by the bibliopolist himself, with, 'Pray, walk into the back-shop, Captain. Boy, get a chair for Captain Clutterbuck. There is the newspaper, captain—to-day's paper;' or, 'Here is the last new work—there is a folder; make free with the leaves;' or, 'Put it in your pocket and carry it home;' or, 'We will make a bookseller of you, sir, you shall have it at trade price.' Or, perhaps, if it is the worthy trader's own publication, his liberality may even extend itself to 'Never mind booking such a trifle to you, sir,—it is an over-copy. Pray, mention the work to your reading friends.' I say nothing of the snug well-selected literary party arranged round a turbot, leg of five-year-old mutton, or some such gear, or of the circulation of a quiet bottle of Robert Cockburn's† choicest black—nay, perhaps of his best blue—to quicken our talk about old books, or our plans for new ones. All these are comforts reserved to such as are freemen of the corporation of letters, and I have the advantage of enjoying them in perfection.

But all things change under the sun; and it is with no ordinary feelings of regret that, in my annual visits to the metropolis, I now miss the social and warm-hearted welcome of the quick-witted and kindly friend‡ who first introduced me to the public; who had more original wit than would have set up a dozen of professed sayers of good things, and more racy humour than would have made the fortune of as many more. To this great deprivation has been added, I trust for a time only, the loss of another bibliopolical friend,§ whose vigorous intellect and liberal ideas have not only rendered his native country the mart of her own literature, but established there a court of letters, which must command respect, even from those most inclined to dissent from many of its canons. The effect of these changes, operated in a great measure by the strong sense and sagacious calculations of an individual, who knew how to avail himself, to an unhoped-for extent, of the various kinds of talent which his country produced, will probably appear more clearly to the generation which shall follow the present.

I entered the shop at the Cross, to inquire after the health of my worthy friend, and learned with satisfaction that his residence in the south had abated the rigour of the symptoms of his disorder. Availing myself, then, of the privileges to which I have alluded, I strolled onward into that labyrinth of small dark rooms, or *crypts*, to speak our own antiquarian language, which form the extensive back-settlements of that celebrated publishing house. Yet, as I proceeded from one obscure recess to another, filled, some of them with old volumes, some with such as, from the equality of their rank on the shelves, I suspected to be the less saleable modern books of the concern, I could not help feeling a holy horror creep upon me, when I thought of the risk of intruding on some ecstatic bard giving vent to his poetical fury; or, it might be, on the yet more formidable privacy of a band of critics, in the act of worrying the game which they had just run down. In such a supposed case, I felt by anticipation the horrors of the Highland seers, whom their gift of deuteroscopy compels to witness things unmeet for mortal eye; and who, to use the expression of Collins,

> —heartless, oft like moody madness stare,
> To see the phantom-train their secret work prepare.

Still, however, the irresistible impulse of an undefined curiosity drove me on through this succession of darksome chambers, till, like the jeweller of Delhi in the house of the magician Bennaskar, I at length reached a vaulted room, dedicated to secrecy and silence, and beheld, seated by a lamp, and employed in reading a blotted revise,‖ the person, or perhaps I should rather say the Eidolon, or representative vision, of the *Author of Waverley!* You will not be surprised at the filial instinct which enabled me at once to acknowledge the features borne by this venerable apparition, and that I at once bended the knee, with the classical salutation of *Salve, magne parens!* The vision, however, cut me short by pointing to a seat, intimating, at the same time, that my presence was not unexpected, and that he had something to say to me.

I sat down with humble obedience, and endeavoured to note the features of him with whom I now found myself so unexpectedly in society. But on this point I can give your reverence no satisfaction; for, besides the obscurity of the apartment, and the fluttered state of my own nerves, I seemed to myself overwhelmed by a sense of filial awe, which prevented my noting and recording what it is probable the personage before me might most desire to have concealed. Indeed, his figure was so closely veiled and wimpled, either with a mantle, morning gown, or some such loose garb, that the verses of Spenser might well have been applied—

> Yet certes by her face and physnomy,
> Whether she man or woman only were,
> That could not any creature well descry.

I must, however, go on as I have begun, to apply the masculine gender; for, notwithstanding very ingenious reasons, and indeed something like positive evidence, have been offered to prove the Author of Waverley to be two ladies of talent, I must abide by the general opinion, that he is of the rougher sex. There are in his writings too many things

> Quæ maribus sola tribuuntur,

to permit me to entertain any doubt on that subject. I will proceed, in the manner of dialogue, to repeat as nearly

*[Corderius.—One of the ... common school books of the last century—*Colloquiorum Centuria* ... *Maturini Corderii*.]

†[Late wine merchant in Edinburgh.]

‡[Mr. John Ballantyne, bookseller. Note F, vol. viii.]

§[Mr. Archibald Constable.]

‖ The uninitiated must be informed that a second proof sheet is so called.

as I can what passed betwixt us, only observing that, in the course of the conversation, my timidity imperceptibly gave way under the familiarity of his address, and that, in the concluding part of our dialogue, I perhaps argued with fully as much confidence as was beseeming

Author of Waverley I was willing to see you, Captain Clutterbuck, being the person of my family whom I have most regard for, since the death of Jedediah Cleishbotham, and I am afraid I may have done you some wrong, in assigning to you The Monastery as a portion of my effects I have some thoughts of making it up to you, by naming you godfather to this yet unborn babe (he indicated the proof sheet with his finger) But first touching The Monastery—How says the world?—you are abroad and can learn

Captain Clutterbuck Hem! hem! The inquiry is delicate—I have not heard any complaints from the publishers

Author.—That is the principal matter, but yet an indifferent work is sometimes towed on by those which have left harbour before it, with the breeze in their poop What say the critics?

Captain—There is a general feeling—that the White Lady is no favourite

Author—I think she is a failure myself, but rather in execution than conception Could I have evoked an *esprit follet*, at the same time fantastic and interesting, capricious and kind a sort of wildfire of the elements bound by no fixed laws, or motives of action faithful and fond, yet teasing and uncertain—

Captain—If you will pardon the interruption, sir, I think you are describing a pretty woman

Author—On my word I believe I am I must invest my elementary spirits with a little human flesh and blood—they are too fine drawn for the present taste of the public

Captain—They object, too, that the robe of your Nixie ought to have been more uniformly noble Her ducking the priest was no Naiad like amusement

Author—Ah! they ought to allow for the capriccios of what is, after all but a better sort of goblin The bath into which Ariel the most delicate creation of Shakespeare's imagination, seduces our jolly friend Trinculo was not of amber and rose water But no one shall find me rowing against the stream I care not who knows it I write for general amusement and, though I never will aim at popularity by what I think unworthy means I will not, on the other hand, be pertinacious in the defence of my own errors against the voice of the public

Captain—You abandon then in the present work (looking, in my turn, towards the proof sheet) the mystery, the magic, and the whole system of signs wonders and omens? There are no dreams, or presages, or obscure allusions to future events?

Author Not a Cock lane scratch, my son not one bounce on the drum of Tedworth not so much as the poor tick of a solitary death watch in the wainscot All is clear and above board a Scots metaphysician might believe every word of it

Captain And the story is I hope, natural and probable, commencing strikingly, proceeding naturally, ending happily—like the course of a famed river, which gushes from the mouth of some obscure and romantic grotto—then gliding on never pausing never precipitating its course, visiting as it were by natural instinct whatever worthy subjects of interest are presented by the country through which it passes widening and deepening in interest as it flows on, and at length arriving at the final catastrophe as at some mighty haven, where ships of all kind strike sail and yard?

Author—Hey! hey! what the deuce is all this? Why, 'tis Ercles' vein, and it would require some one much more like Hercules than I to produce a story which should gush and glide, and never pause and visit, and widen, and deepen, and all the rest on't I should be chin deep in the grave, man, before I had done with my task, and, in the meanwhile, all the quirks and quiddities which I might have devised for my reader's amusement would lie rotting in my gizzard, like Sancho's suppressed witticisms, when he was under his master's displeasure—There never was a novel written on this plan while the world stood

Captain.—Pardon me—Tom Jones

Author.—True, and perhaps Amelia also Fielding had high notions of the dignity of an art which he may be considered as having founded He challenges a comparison between the novel and the epic Smollett, Le Sage, and others, emancipating themselves from the strictness of the rules he has laid down, have written rather a history of the miscellaneous adventures which befall an individual in the course of life, than the plot of a regular and connected epopeia, where every step brings us a point nearer to the final catastrophe These great masters have been satisfied if they amused the reader upon the road, though the conclusion only arrived because the tale must have an end just as the traveller alights at the inn because it is evening

Captain—A very commodious mode of travelling, for the author at least In short, sir, you are of opinion with Bayes—What the devil does the plot signify, except to bring in fine things?

Author—Grant that I were so, and that I should write with sense and spirit a few scenes, unlaboured and loosely put together, but which had sufficient interest in them to amuse in one corner the pain of body, in another to relieve anxiety of mind in a third place to unwrinkle a brow bent with the furrows of daily toil in another, to fill the place of bad thoughts, or to suggest better, in yet another, to induce an idler to study the history of his country, in all save where the perusal interrupted the discharge of serious duties to furnish harmless amusement, might not the author of such a work, however inartificially executed plead for his errors and negligences the excuse of the slave, who, about to be punished for having spread the false report of a victory saved himself by exclaiming Am I to blame, O Athenians, who have given you one happy day?

Captain Will your goodness permit me to mention an anecdote of my excellent grandmother?

Author I see little she can have to do with the subject Captain Clutterbuck

Captain It may come into our dialogue on Bayes's plan—The sagacious old lady—rest her soul!—was a good friend to the Church, and could never hear a minister maligned by evil tongues, without taking his part warmly There was one fixed point, however at which she always abandoned the cause of her reverend *protégé*—it was so soon as she had learned he had preached a regular sermon against slanderers and backbiters

Author And what is that to the purpose?

Captain Only that I have heard engineers say, that one may betray the weak point to the enemy, by too much ostentation of fortifying it

Author—And once more I pray, what is that to the purpose?

Captain—Nay, then, without further metaphor, I am afraid this new production in which your generosity seems willing to give me some concern will stand much in need of apology, since you think proper to begin your defence before the case is on trial—The story is hastily huddled up I will venture a pint of claret

Author A pint of port, I suppose you mean?

Captain I say of claret—good claret of the Monastery Ah sir, would you but take the advice of your friends, and try to deserve at least one half of the public favour you have met with, we might all drink Tokay!

Author I care not what I drink, so the liquor be wholesome

Captain—Care for your reputation, then,—for your fame

Author My fame? I will answer you as a very ingenious, able and experienced friend being counsel for the notorious Jem MacCoul,* replied to the opposite side of the bar, when they laid weight on his client's refusing to answer certain queries, which they said any man who had a regard for his reputation would not hesitate to reply to 'My client, said he by the way, Jem was standing behind him at the time, and a rich scene it was—'is so unfortunate as to have no regard for his reputation, and I should deal very uncandidly with the court, should I say he had any that was worth his attention'—I am, though from very different reasons, in Jem's happy state of indifference Let fame follow those who have a substantial shape A shadow—and an impersonal author is nothing better—can cast no shade

Captain—You are not now perhaps, so impersonal as heretofore These Letters to the Member for the University of Oxford †——

Author—Show the wit, genius, and delicacy of the author, which I heartily wish to see engaged on a subject of more importance, and show, besides, that the preservation of my character of *incognito* has engaged early talent in the discussion of a curious question of evidence. But a cause, however ingeniously pleaded, is not therefore gained.

* [This character was a native of London who was tried and convicted in 1820, for robbing a Glasgow bank of £20,000]

† [Letters to Richard Heber Esq, Member for the University of Oxford containing critical remarks on the Waverley Novels, and an attempt to ascertain the author By J L. Adolphus, Lond 1821]

You may remember the neatly wrought chain of circumstantial evidence, so artificially brought forward to prove Sir Philip Francis's title to the Letters of Junius, seemed at first irrefragable; yet the influence of the reasoning has passed away, and Junius, in the general opinion, is as much unknown as ever. But on this subject I will not be soothed or provoked into saying one word more. To say who I am not, would be one step towards saying who I am; and as I desire not, any more than a certain justice of peace mentioned by Shenstone, the noise or report such things make in the world, I shall continue to be silent on a subject which, in my opinion, is very undeserving the noise that has been made about it, and still more unworthy of the serious employment of such ingenuity as has been displayed by the young letter writer.

Captain.—But allowing, my dear sir, that you care not for your personal reputation, or for that of any literary person upon whose shoulders your faults may be visited, allow me to say that common gratitude to the public which has received you so kindly, and to the critics who have treated you so leniently, ought to induce you to bestow more pains on your story.

Author.—I do entreat you, my son, as Dr Johnson would have said, 'free your mind from cant.' For the critics, they have their business, and I mine; as the nursery proverb goes—

The children in Holland take pleasure in making
What the children in England take pleasure in breaking.

I am their humble jackal, too busy in providing food for them to have time for considering whether they swallow or reject it.—To the public I stand pretty nearly in the relation of the postman who leaves a packet at the door of an individual. If it contains pleasing intelligence, a billet from a mistress, a letter from an absent son, a remittance from a correspondent supposed to be bankrupt,—the letter is acceptably welcome, and read and re-read, folded up, filed, and safely deposited in the bureau. If the contents are disagreeable, if it comes from a dun or from a bore, the correspondent is cursed, the letter is thrown into the fire, and the expense of postage is heartily regretted; while all the time the bearer of the despatches is, in either case, as little thought on as the snow of last Christmas. The utmost extent of kindness between the author and the public which can really exist, is, that the world are disposed to be somewhat indulgent to the succeeding works of an original favourite, were it but on account of the habit which the public mind has acquired; while the author very naturally thinks well of *their* taste who have so liberally applauded *his* productions. But I deny there is any call for gratitude, properly so called, either on one side or the other.

Captain.—Respect to yourself, then, ought to teach caution.

Author.—Ay, if caution could augment the chance of my success. But, to confess to you the truth, the works and passages in which I have succeeded have uniformly been written with the greatest rapidity; and when I have seen some of these placed in opposition with others, and commended as more highly finished, I could appeal to pen and standish, that the parts in which I have come feebly off were by much the more laboured. Besides, I doubt the beneficial effect of too much delay, both on account of the author and the public. A man should strike while the iron is hot, and hoist sail while the wind is fair. If a successful author keep not the stage, another instantly takes his ground. If a writer lie by for ten years ere he produces a second work, he is superseded by others; or if the age is so poor of genius that this does not happen, his own reputation becomes his greatest obstacle. The public will expect the new work to be ten times better than its predecessor; the author will expect it should be ten times more popular, and 'tis a hundred to ten that both are disappointed.

Captain.—This may justify a certain degree of rapidity in publication, but not that which is proverbially said to be no speed. You should take time at least to arrange your story.

Author.—That is a sore point with me, my son. Believe me, I have not been fool enough to neglect ordinary precautions. I have repeatedly laid down my future work to scale, divided it into volumes and chapters, and endeavoured to construct a story which I meant should evolve itself gradually and strikingly, maintain suspense, and stimulate curiosity; and which finally should terminate in a striking catastrophe. But I think there is a dæmon who seats himself on the feather of my pen when I begin to write, and leads it astray from the purpose. Characters expand under my hand; incidents are multiplied; the story lingers, while the materials increase; my regular mansion turns out a Gothic anomaly, and the work is closed long before I have attained the point I proposed.

Captain.—Resolution and determined forbearance might remedy that evil.

Author.—Alas! my dear sir, you do not know the force of paternal affection. When I light on such a character as Bailie Jarvie, or Dalgetty, my imagination brightens, and my conception becomes clearer at every step which I take in his company, although it leads me many a weary mile away from the regular road, and forces me to leap hedge and ditch to get back into the route again. If I resist the temptation, as you advise me, my thoughts become prosy, flat, and dull; I write painfully to myself, and under a consciousness of flagging which makes me flag still more; the sunshine with which fancy had invested the incidents, departs from them, and leaves everything dull and gloomy. I am no more the same author I was in my better mood, than the dog in a wheel, condemned to go round and round for hours, is like the same dog merrily chasing his own tail, and gambolling in all the frolic of unrestrained freedom. In short, sir, on such occasions I think I am bewitched.

Captain.—Nay, sir, if you plead sorcery, there is no more to be said—he must needs go whom the devil drives. And this, I suppose, sir, is the reason why you do not make the theatrical attempt to which you have been so often urged?

Author.—It may pass for one good reason for not writing a play, that I cannot form a plot. But the truth is, that the idea adopted by too favourable judges of my having some aptitude for that department of poetry, has been much founded on those scraps of old plays, which, being taken from a source inaccessible to collectors, they have hastily considered the offspring of my mother wit. Now the manner in which I became possessed of these fragments is so extraordinary, that I cannot help telling it to you. You must know, that some twenty years since I went down to visit an old friend in Worcestershire, who had served with me in the —— Dragoons.

Captain.—Then you have served, sir?

Author.—I have—or I have not, which signifies the same thing. Captain is a good travelling name. I found my friend's house unexpectedly crowded with guests, and, as usual, was condemned—the mansion being an old one—to the *haunted apartment*. I have, as a great modern said, seen too many ghosts to believe in them, so betook myself seriously to my repose, lulled by the wind rustling among the lime trees, the branches of which chequered the moonlight which fell on the floor through the diamonded casement, when behold a darker shadow interposed itself, and I beheld visibly on the floor of the apartment——

Captain.—The White Lady of Avenel, I suppose?—You have told the very story before.

Author.—No. I beheld a female form, with mob cap, bib and apron, sleeves tucked up to the elbow, a dredging-box in the one hand, and in the other a sauce ladle. I concluded, of course, that it was my friend's cook maid walking in her sleep; and as I knew he had a value for Sally, who could toss a pancake with any girl in the country, I got up to conduct her safely to the door. But as I approached her, she said—'Hold, sir! I am not what you take me for;'—words which seemed so apposite to the circumstances, that I should not have much minded them, had it not been for the peculiarly hollow sound in which they were uttered.—'Know, then,' she said, in the same unearthly accents, 'that I am the spirit of Betty Barnes.'—'Who hanged herself for love of the stage-coachman,' thought I; 'this is a proper spot of work!'—'Of that unhappy Elizabeth or Betty Barnes, long cook-maid to Mr Warburton, the painful collector, but, ah! the too careless custodier, of the largest collection of ancient plays ever known—of most of which the titles only are left to gladden the Prolegomena of the Variorum Shakespeare. Yes, stranger, it was these ill-fated hands that consigned to grease and conflagration the scores of small quartos, which, did they now exist, would drive the whole Roxburghe Club out of their senses—it was these unhappy pickers and stealers that singed fat fowls and wiped dirty trenchers with the lost works of Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Jonson, Webster—what shall I say?—even of Shakespeare himself!'

Like every dramatic antiquary, my ardent curiosity after some play named in the Book of the Master of Revels, had often been checked by finding the object of my research numbered amongst the holocaust of victims which this unhappy woman had sacrificed to the God of Good Cheer. It is no wonder, then, that, like the Hermit of Parnell,

I broke the bands of fear, and madly cried,
'You careless jade!'—But scarce the words began,
When Betty brandished high her saucing-pan.

'Beware,' she said, 'you do not, by your ill-timed anger, cut off the opportunity I yet have to indemnify the world for the errors of my ignorance. In yonder coal-hole, not used for many a year, repose the few greasy and blackened fragments of the elder Drama which were not totally destroyed. Do thou then—' Why, what do you stare at, captain? By my soul, it is true, as my friend Major Longbow says, 'What should I tell you a lie for?'

Captain.—Lie, sir! Nay, Heaven forbid I should apply the word to a person so veracious. You are only inclined to chase your tail a little this morning, that's all. Had you not better reserve this legend to form an introduction to 'Three Recovered Dramas,' or so?

Author.—You are quite right—habit's a strange thing, my son. I had forgot whom I was speaking to. Yes, Plays for the closet, not for the stage——

Captain.—Right, and so you are sure to be acted; for the managers, while thousands of volunteers are desirous of serving them, are wonderfully partial to pressed men.

Author.—I am a living witness, having been, like a second Laberius, made a dramatist whether I would or not. I believe my muse would be *Terryfied** into treading the stage, even if I should write a sermon.

Captain.—Truly, if you did, I am afraid folks might make a farce of it; and therefore, should you change your style, I still advise a volume of dramas like Lord Byron's.

Author.—No, his lordship is a cut above me—I won't run my horse against his, if I can help myself. But there is my friend Allan has written just such a play as I might write myself, in a very sunny day, and with one of Bramah's extra-patent pens. I cannot make neat work without such appurtenances.

Captain.—Do you mean Allan Ramsay?

Author.—No, nor Barbara Allan either. I mean Allan Cunningham, who has just published his tragedy of Sir Marmaduke Maxwell, full of merry-making and murdering, kissing and cutting of throats, and passages which lead to nothing, and which are very pretty passages for all that. Not a glimpse of probability is there about the plot, but so much animation in particular passages, and such a vein of poetry through the whole, as I dearly wish I could infuse into my Culinary Remains, should I ever be tempted to publish them. With a popular impress, people would read and admire the beauties of Allan—as it is, they may perhaps only note his defects—or, what is worse, not note him at all.—But never mind them, honest Allan; you are a credit to Caledonia for all that.—There are some lyrical effusions of his, too, which you would do well to read, captain. 'It's hame, and it's hame,' is equal to Burns.

Captain.—I will take the hint. The club at Kennaquhair are turned fastidious since Catalani visited the Abbey. My 'Poortith Cauld' has been received both poorly and coldly, and 'The Banks of Bonnie Doon' have been positively coughed down—*Tempora mutantur.*

Author.—They cannot stand still, they will change with all of us. What then?

A man's a man for a' that.

But the hour of parting approaches.

Captain.—You are determined to proceed, then, in your own system? Are you aware that an unworthy motive may be assigned for this rapid succession of publication? You will be supposed to work merely for the lucre of gain.

Author.—Supposing that I did permit the great advantages which must be derived from success in literature to join with other motives in inducing me to come more frequently before the public,—that emolument is the voluntary tax which the public pays for a certain species of literary amusement. It is extorted from no one, and paid, I presume, by those only who can afford it, and who receive gratification in proportion to the expense. If the capital sum which these volumes have put into circulation be a very large one, has it contributed to my indulgences only? or can I not say to hundreds, from honest Duncan the paper-manufacturer to the most snivelling of the printer's devils, 'Didst thou not share? Hadst thou not fifteen pence?' I profess I think our Modern Athens much obliged to me for having established such an extensive manufacture; and when universal suffrage comes in fashion, I intend to stand for a seat in the House on the interest of all the unwashed artificers connected with literature.

Captain.—This would be called the language of a calico manufacturer.

Author.—Cant again, my dear son—there is lime in this sack too—nothing but sophistication in this world! I do say it, in spite of Adam Smith and his followers, that a successful author is a productive labourer, and that his works constitute as effectual a part of the public wealth as that which is created by any other manufacture. If a new commodity, having an actually intrinsic and commercial value, be the result of the operation, why are the author's bales of books to be esteemed a less profitable part of the public stock than the goods of any other manufacturer? I speak with reference to the diffusion of the wealth arising to the public, and the degree of industry which even such a trifling work as the present must stimulate and reward before the volumes leave the publisher's shop. Without me it could not exist, and to this extent I am a benefactor to the country. As for my own emolument, it is won by my toil, and I account myself answerable to Heaven only for the mode in which I expend it. The candid may hope it is not all dedicated to selfish purposes, and, without much pretensions to merit in him who disburses it, a part may 'wander, Heaven directed, to the poor.'

Captain.—Yet it is generally held base to write from the mere motives of gain.

Author.—It would be base to do so exclusively, or even to make it a principal motive for literary exertion. Nay, I will venture to say, that no work of imagination proceeding from the mere consideration of a certain sum of copy-money ever did or ever will succeed. So the lawyer who pleads, the soldier who fights, the physician who prescribes, the clergyman—if such there be—who preaches, without any zeal for his profession, or without any sense of its dignity, and merely on account of the fee, pay, or stipend, degrade themselves to the rank of sordid mechanics. Accordingly, in the case of two of the learned faculties at least, their services are considered as unappreciable, and are acknowledged, not by any exact estimate of the services rendered, but by a *honorarium*, or voluntary acknowledgment. But let a client or patient make the experiment of omitting this little ceremony of the *honorarium*, which is *censé* to be a thing entirely out of consideration between them, and mark how the learned gentleman will look upon his case. Cant set apart, it is the same thing with literary emolument. No man of sense in any rank of life is, or ought to be, above accepting a just recompense for his time, and a reasonable share of the capital which owes its very existence to his exertions. When Czar Peter wrought in the trenches, he took the pay of a common soldier; and nobles, statesmen, and divines, the most distinguished of their time, have not scorned to square accounts with their bookseller.

Captain.—(*Sings*)

> O if it were a mean thing
> The gentles would not use it;
> And if it were ungodly,
> The clergy would refuse it.

Author.—You say well. But no man of honour, genius, or spirit would make the mere love of gain the chief, far less the only purpose of his labours. For myself, I am not displeased to find the game a winning one; yet, while I pleased the public, I should probably continue it merely for the pleasure of playing; for I have felt as strongly as most folks that love of composition which is perhaps the strongest of all instincts—driving the author to the pen, the painter to the pallet, often without either the chance of fame or the prospect of reward. Perhaps I have said too much of this. I might, perhaps, with as much truth as most people, exculpate myself from the charge of being either of a greedy or mercenary disposition; but I am not, therefore, hypocrite enough to disclaim the ordinary motives, on account of which the whole world around me is toiling unremittingly, to the sacrifice of ease, comfort, health, and life. I do not affect the disinterestedness of that ingenious association of gentlemen mentioned by Goldsmith, who sold their magazine for sixpence a piece merely for their own amusement.

Captain.—I have but one thing more to hint.—The world say you will run yourself out.

Author.—The world say true; and what then? When they dance no longer I will no longer pipe; and I shall not want flappers enough to remind me of the apoplexy.

Captain.—And what will become of us then, your poor family? We shall fall into contempt and oblivion.

Author.—Like many a poor fellow, already overwhelmed with the number of his family, I cannot help going on to increase it—''Tis my vocation, Hal.'—Such of you as deserve oblivion—perhaps the whole of you—may be consigned to it. At any rate, you have been read in your

*[*Terryfied.*—A jocular allusion to the Author's friend Daniel Terry, a celebrated comedian who dramatized more than one of the Waverley Novels which were brought on the stage with great success. Sir Walter himself might have been seen as a spectator, enjoying the performance as much as any one.]

day, which is more than can be said of some of your contemporaries of less fortune and more merit. They cannot say but that you *had* the crown. It is always something to have engaged the public attention for seven years. Had I only written Waverley, I should have long since been, according to the established phrase, 'the ingenious author of a novel much admired at the time.' I believe, on my soul, that the reputation of Waverley is sustained very much by the praises of those who may be inclined to prefer that tale to its successors.

Captain.—You are willing, then, to barter future reputation for present popularity?

Author.—*Meliora spero.* Horace himself expected not to survive in all his works—I may hope to live in some of mine;—*non omnis moriar.* It is some consolation to reflect, that the best authors in all countries have been the most voluminous; and it has often happened, that those who have been best received in their own time have also continued to be acceptable to posterity. I do not think so ill of the present generation, as to suppose that its present favour necessarily infers future condemnation.

Captain.—Were all to act on such principles, the public would be inundated.

Author.—Once more, my dear son, beware of cant. You speak as if the public were obliged to read books merely because they are printed—your friends the booksellers would thank you to make the proposition good. The most serious grievance attending such inundations as you talk of is, that they make rags dear. The multiplicity of publications does the present age no harm, and may greatly advantage that which is to succeed us.

Captain.—I do not see how that is to happen.

Author.—The complaints in the time of Elizabeth and James, of the alarming fertility of the press, were as loud as they are at present;—yet look at the shore over which the inundation of that age flowed, and it resembles now the Rich Strand of the Faery Queen—

> —Bestrew'd all with rich array,
> Of pearl and precious stones of great assay;
> And all the gravel mix'd with golden ore.

Believe me, that even in the most neglected works of the present age, the next may discover treasures.

Captain.—Some books will defy all alchymy.

Author.—They will be but few in number; since, as for writers who are possessed of no merit at all, unless, indeed, they publish their works at their own expense, like Sir Richard Blackmore, their power of annoying the public will be soon limited by the difficulty of finding undertaking booksellers.

Captain.—You are incorrigible. Are there no bounds to your audacity?

Author.—There are the sacred and eternal boundaries of honour and virtue. My course is like the enchanted chamber of Britomart—

> Where as she look'd about, she did behold
> How over that same door was likewise writ,
> *Be Bold—Be Bold,* and everywhere *Be Bold.*
> Whereat she mused, and could not construe it;
> At last she spied at that room's upper end
> Another iron door, on which was writ—
> BE NOT TOO BOLD.

Captain.—Well, you must take the risk of proceeding on your own principles.

Author.—Do you act on yours, and take care you do not stay idling here till the dinner hour is over.—I will add this work to your patrimony, *valeat quantum.*

Here our dialogue terminated; for a little sooty-faced Apollyon from the Canongate came to demand the proof-sheet on the part of Mr M'Corkindale,* and I heard Mr C. rebuking Mr F. in another compartment of the same labyrinth I have described, for suffering any one to penetrate so far into the *penetralia* of their temple.

I leave it to you to form your own opinion concerning the importance of this dialogue, and I cannot but believe I shall meet the wishes of our common parent in prefixing this letter to the work which it concerns.

I am, reverend and dear Sir,

Very sincerely and affectionately,

Yours, etc. etc.

CUTHBERT CLUTTERBUCK.

KENNAQUHAIR, *1st April*, 1822.

*[This journeyman was for many years foreman in Ballantyne's printing office.]

LINK JOE—SEE PAGE 575.

GLOSSARY TO THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL.

A', all.
Abye, suffer for.
Accidens, rudiments of grammar.
Accompt, account.
Acquentel, acquainted.
Addebted, indebted.
Adolescens, etc., a youth of handsome countenance and becoming modesty.
Ae, a.
Ætas parentum, etc., the age of our parents worse than that of our ancestors, has brought us forth worse than them.
Aff, off.
A God's name, in God's name.
Ahint, after, behind.
Aigre, tart.
Ain, own.
Airt, direction, instruction.
Alack-a-day, alas! an expression of sorrow.
Alsatia, Whitefriars, London.
Amaist, almost.
Amang, among.
An, if.
Ance, once.
Andrew or *Andrea Ferrara*, a sword of fine steel, named after maker.
Ane, ane's, one, one's.
Anent, opposite to, concerning.
Angel, a gold coin, value about 10s.
Anguis in herba, a snake in the grass.
Ante-meridiem, before noon.
Appellatio ad Cæsarem, an appeal to Cæsar.
Apud Metamorphoseos, in the Metamorphoses.
Aqua mirabilis, a distilled drink made of spices.
Arcana imperii, etc., imperial secrets; who knows not to dissemble, knows not to govern.
Arras, tapestry.
Arripiens geminas, etc., seizing them twain as the banks receded away.
Asinus fortis, etc., a strong ass lying down between the limits of his journey.
Atomy, an, a skeleton.
Aucht, eight.
Aught, to owe.
Auld, old.
Avised, avisement, advised, advice.
Awa, away.
Aweel, well.
Awes, owes.
Awmous, alms.

Bad friends, enemies.
Back sword, a sword with one sharp edge.
Baillie, Scotch alderman.
Bairn, child; *bairnly*, childish.
Baith, both.
Balas ruby, a variety of ruby.
Bale of dice, a pair of dice.
Balloon, a game resembling tennis.
Bantling, a young child.
Barb, a horse from Barbary.
Barnacles, a pair of spectacles.
Barns-breaking, mischievous escapade.
Basilikon Doron (a royal gift), title of a work on the divine right of kings, written by King James I in 1599.
Bastard, a kind of sweet wine.
Bating, excepting.
Bawbee, halfpenny.
Baxter, baker.
Bear bannock, a cake of barley meal.
Bear na, bear not.
Beati pacifici, blessed are the peacemakers.
Beccafico, a small bird of the warbler species, esteemed a delicacy.
Beholden to, indebted to.
Behoved, required.
Bein, well to do.
Beldam, an old woman, a hag.
Belive, by and by.
Bellicosissimus nobilissimus, most warlike, most noble.
Beshrew, curse.
Bicker, a bowl or dish for liquor, usually of wood.
Bide, remain, wait.
Bide down, keep down.
Bide tryst, keep an engagement.
Bieldy, sheltered.
Biennium, dicis, etc., two years, do you say? well, well, it was very well done, not in a day, as they say—do you understand Lord of Glenvarloch?
Biggin, a linen cap.
Bigging, building.
Bilbo, a Bilboa sword.
Birkie, a young fellow.
Bit bookie, a little book.
Blackfoot, a matchmaker.
Blate, bashful.
Blethering, jabbering.
Bluidy, bloody.
Bode, what is bidden, an offer.
Bona roba, a showy wanton.
Bones, dice.
Bonnie, beautiful, pretty.
Bonnie penny, a considerable sum.
Bounden, bound.
Bow hand, left hand; on the wrong side.
Brae, hill-side.
Braggadocio, boasting fellow.
Braid, broad.
Bravery, fine dress.
Bravo, a daring villain.
Braw, well-dressed, handsome.
Breeks, breeches.
Brewis, broth.
Broche, a spit.
Broke, broken.
Brook, bear, endure.
Broom shank, handle of a broom.
Brownie, a spirit supposed to haunt old houses.
Bucking basket, basket for carrying washing in.
Buff, a military coat made of buff-skin.
Buff, to stand, to be proof against.
Bumbailey, an under-bailiff.
Bunemost, uppermost.
Burgonet, a kind of helmet.
Burrows town, a royal borough.

Ca', call, move.
Cadger, packman, huckster.
Calf ward, place where calves are kept.
Callan', callant, a lad.
Cam, came.
Canny, cautious, prudent, useful.
Cantabit vacuus, he will sing, being free from care.
Cantle, crown of the head.
Carcanet, a chain of jewels.
Carena, care not.
Capias, a writ in law.
Capriccio, a loose irregular kind of music.
Carle, fellow.
Carle hemp, hemp that bears the seed, robustness.
Carnifex, executioner; a wretch.
Carnificial, of or belonging to flesh.
Caroche, a carriage.
Cartel, challenge.
Casten, cast.
Catchpoll, tax gatherer, sheriff's officer.
Cauff, chaff; also a calf.
Cauldrife, cold, chilly.

Caup, cup, wooden bowl, also exaction, tithe.
Causey, causeway, street.
Causeyed, causewayed
Cavaliero, cavalier
Ceevileesed, civilized, polite
Cens'd, accounted, rated
Cerebellum, the small brain
Cerebrum, the brain proper.
Chalmer, chamber
Change house, alehouse
Chappit, struck.
Chattels, all goods and moveable property
Cheek by joul, cheek for chowl, close together very intimate
Chenzie mail chain mail
Cher milor, my dear lord
Chiel' or *chield*, fellow, young man
Chopins, choppines, high pattens formerly worn by ladies
Chuck farthing a game, pitching a coin at a mark.
Chucks, pebbles such as children play with
Chuff, surly fellow
Cimelia, treasures
Claithing, *claithes*, clothes
Clary, a sweet cordial flavoured with clary flowers.
Claught, a hold blow
Claver, to talk foolishl
Cleek, hook
Clippit, clipped
Cloot, divided hoof.
Clour, stroke
Clout, cloth
Clouted, patched mended
Coals, would not carry not suffer an injury unavenged
Cock a leeky, leek soup in which a cock has been boiled
Cockles, cockles of the heart, inmost recesses of the heart
Cock-loft, top loft
Cocksbones, *Cocksnails Cock and pie*, oaths
Cock sure, absolutely certain.
Coif, covering for the head, a wig
Coistril, a coward, cowardly.
Collop, Collops, slice of meat, minced meat.
Communis lingua a common language
Compone lachrymas, dry up your tears
Compting, accounting
Conditionalier, conditionally.

Congé, leave to depart, a bow or curtsey.
Contra expectanda, contrary to expectation.
Contrair, contrary.
Cony catcher, a sharper
Corn pickle, a grain of corn
Cosherinq, familiar, hospitable
Cossike practice, algebra
Coted, outstripped
Cotton in with, agree or succeed with
Couchee, bed time
Counterscarp slope of a fortification
Coup tumble
Coup de maitre, master stroke
Couped ower, overset
Coup the crans, to be overturned gone wrong
Couteau de chasse, a hunting knife
Cowerits, covers
Craft, art, skill
Craig, neck
Crap crept
Crasso in aere in the dense atmosphere
Craw, crow
Crick in the neck, a spasm or cramp in the neck
Crouse, bold brisk
Crow to pluck, a quarrel to settle
Crush a cup of wine, finish a cup of wine
Cuckoldly, sneaking
Cuddy, donkey
Cullionly, mean, base
Cully one meanly deceived
Cumber and trouble cumbrous and useful
Cunn, a groan
Cusser, a stallion
Cutter, thief *cutter law* to protect each other
Cutty quean, a worthless woman

Daft, crazy
Daggled trailed in mud
Daikering, strolling, trafficking
Dang, knock
Debonair, compliant
De consolatione, on consolation
De contractu, etc., on contract of pledge, all agree on this point.
Decus, a crown piece.
Deevil, deil, devil.
De secretis, concerning secret things.
Dieux ardieux, etc., ye gods, he was a superb
D second sight.

Dexter, right hand.
Ding, to drive, beat, strike.
Dinna, do not.
Dirdum, stir
Dirk, a dagger
Dishabille, negligent dress
Dishclout, dishcloth.
Distraught, distracted
Divinitus evasit providentially escaped
Donnard, stupid
Donnerit stunned
Dooms, absolutely sure.
Dootless, doubtless
Doublet, vest
Doublet, a counterfeit gem
Doublets, the same number on both dice
Douce, quiet, respectable
Dover, slumber stupor.
Doocot dovecot.
Dinna do not
Drabbing lewd conduct
Draff, the wash given to swine
Draff pock, a sack for grains
Dreamna dream not.
Drouthy, dry, thirsty
Drumble, to drone, drag, lag
Dud, rag
Dulce ... ...
Dule weeds, mourning
Dune done
Dunt, knock

E... ...
E..., ...
E..., uninterrupted
Enow enough
E... memento etc., remember to stick to your ... in difficulties
Esculapius, medical man
Esprit follet goblin.
Ethnic heathen
Et quid, etc., and what do the people of England speak of to-day—your Voss has he written nothing new? Certainly no thing I regret, which has recently appeared in type
Euge! belle! optime! well done! excellently! best!
Eschew to shun
Exempli gratia, for example
Exies, hysterics.
Ex nihilo nihil fit, from nothing, nothing comes.

Ex proposito, on purpose.

Facilis descensus Averni, the descent to Hell is easy.
Fadge, suit; succeed.
Falchion, a short, crooked sword.
Fallow, fellow.
False, false, falsehood.
Fanfaron a swaggerer.
Fangs, claws or talons.
Fare ye weel, farewell.
Farthingale, a hoop petticoat
Fash trouble.
Fash your beard, trouble yourself
Fashious troublesome
Fashioner tailor
Faund, found
Fause, false
Fautor patron abettor
Fay condemned, timid
Febrifuge, medicine for subduing fever
Fence louper, fence-leaper applied to sheep
Fico a fig.
Fit foot
Flat caps, London citizens
Flech flutter
Flos sulphur, etc, sulphur ointment.
Floss or floss silk, downy silk
Forfeit, offence trespass
Forgie, forgive
Forpit, quarter of a peck
Fouat, the house leek, also a cake
Foul fiend the devil.
Foumart, foulmart a polecat
Frae from
Friar's chicken chicken broth boiled with eggs
Frippery, old clothes
Frontless, shameless.
Fule a fool.

Gaffer, old man, overseer, talkative person.
Gage pawn.
Gang, gane, go gone.
Gar, cause, make, compel.
Garnish, a feast.
Garniture, ornamental appendages.
Gate, gait, way, manner.
Gawdy, gaudy, festivity.
Gear, goods, money.
Geld, to castrate.
Genievre, gin.
Genius loci, genius of the place.
Gens-d'armes, men-at-arms, armed police.

George-a green, a popular hero of Wakefield, played quarter-staff against all comers
Ghittern, a guitar.
Gie, gien, give, given
Giff-gaff, nothing for nothing, tit for tat.
Gill, a female.
Gillie white foot, a running footman.
Gin, if.
Gip, a college servant, also a cheat.
Girnigo, a contemptuous term for a peevish person
Glaiks, glamour, tricks *gie the glaiks*, to deceive, jilt
Gleed, squinting awry
Gleek, a game at cards
God den, Godd en good evening
Gospeller, Protestant, Puritan.
Gouk a fool.
Graffs, graves
Gramercy, many thanks
Grande entrée, open or official access into Court
Grannam grandmother
Grat, wept
Gree agree.
Greet, weep
Grip, grasp, hold fast
Grippit, laid hold of
Grit, great.
Go to, a phrase of scorn
Gowd gold.
Groaning-cheese cheese provided at births
Grogram a stuff made of silk and mohair
Grosart, grossart, goose berry
Gude, gude night, good good-night
Gudes, goods wares
Guerdon, reward
Gully, large knife.
Gusty, savoury
Guts, the intestines
Gutter blood, of mean birth
Gynocracy, petticoat government.
Gyves, fetters

I not.

Hae, have.
Haet, the smallest thing imaginable.
Haffits, cheeks.
Haffin, a hobbledehoy youth.
Haggis, a Scotch pudding of minced meats, spice, and oatmeal.
Haill verity, the whole truth.
Hairboured, harboured.
Hair in his neck, to have a, to know something that will put him in one's power
Hale, whole.
Halidome, solemn oath
Hame, home
Hame sucken, assaulting a person in his own house
Hanger, a short broad sword
Harle, to drag, also to appropriate
Harman Beck, a constable
Harry, rob pillage
Hart of grease, a hart in best condition
Hatch door, a half door
Haud, hold
Havings, manners
Heautontimorumenos, self tormentor the name of a comedy of Terence
Heben wood, ebony
Heel and manger, prodigal and unconcerned
Het, hot
Heugh, dell crag
Hidalgo, a Spanish nobleman
Hinny, honey, darling
Hirdie girdie, topsy turvy
Hirpling walking as if lame
Hirsel, a flock
Horn mad, stark mad, outrageous
Horologe timepiece
Horse graith, horse harness
Hose, trousers and stockings in one piece
Hound, hunt, a hunt
Hough, lower part of thigh
Hout tout, tut tut.
Huff, a boaster
Hustle cap, pitching half pence at a mark
Hypothecated, pledged

Ignoto, unknown
Il etoit, etc, he was indeed stronger than I. Ah the great reverse he had
I lictor, etc go, lictor, bind his hands, cover his head, hang him on the accursed tree.
Ilka, each, every.
Ilk ane every one.
Ilk ither, each other.
Ill willy, ill-natured, niggardly.
Imo Rex, etc, yes, your most august majesty, I staid almost two years among the people of Leyden.
Inclusus variis, etc., an enclosed spirit attends the various stars, and urges on the living work with regulated motion.
Incognito, disguise
In cuerpo, without a cloak, in undress
Incumbite remis fortiter, apply yourselves strongly to the oars
Indirection, dishonest means
Infandum, etc, to renew horrible pain
Infesti regibus, dangerous to kings
Ingine, genius, ingenuity
Inkle, a kind of crewel or embroidery worsted
In malum partem, in ill part.
In meditatione fugæ, meditating flight
In nova fert, etc, my mind carries me to speak of forms changed (bodies)
Inter parietes ecclesiæ, within the walls of a church
In terrorem, a terror to evil doers
In verbo regis, by the king word
Iter boreale, the road to the North.

Jacobus, gold coin=25s
Jacta est alea, the die is cast
J'ai connu etc I formerly knew a Lord Glenvarloch in Scotland
Jaud jade, a worthless horse
Je m'en souviens I remember it
Jennet, a small Spanish horse
Jerkin a jacket
Jill flirt, a thoughtless, giddy girl
Jipper, to peril
Jolter pate blockhead
Jouk and let the jaw gae by, stoop and let the wave go by.
Jowl, toll of a bell
Junketing, feasting, merrymaking.
Justus et tenax propositi, a just man, and tenacious of his purpose.

Kemp, to strive for victory.
Ken, ken'd, know, known.
Kickshaw, a light made-up dish, a trifle, also a coxcomb.
Kimmer, a gossip.
Kirk, church.
Kirk and miln, make a, make what you will of it
Kist, chest.
Kittle, tickle, ticklish.
Knave, boy, servant.
Kraemes booths or stalls formerly situate around Saint Giles's Church, Edinburgh
Kythed, caused, shown.

Lady Light o' love, a wanton young woman
Laigh low.
Lair learning
Landlouper, adventurer.
Lang, long
Lang syne, long ago.
Latten a kind of brass
Lavender, in pawn, also in hiding, in confinement
Laverock the lark.
Lawfu' lawful
Leaguer lass a camp or soldier's lass
Leasing, lying, a falsehood
Leddy lady
Lee, to tell a lie.
Le fanfaron, etc, the boaster of vices which he had not.
Leeving, living
Leman, a gallant, a mistress
Le pere etc, the father of my lord, apparently.
Le petit Leyth, little Leith.
Leugh, laughed.
Leveret a young hare.
Lick, blow, stroke
Lief, dear, beloved *as lief*, as soon, gladly.
Lift sky
Light o love See *Lady*.
Like, please.
Link-boy, a boy that carries a link or torch.
List, please.
Lither, lazy
Loof, palm of the hand.
Loon, a lad, a clown, rascal.
Loun, lound, calm, low.
Loupin, leaping.
Lug, lugg, the ear.
Lustre, a period of five years
Luve, love.

Maggot, whim, fancy.
Mahound, Mahomet.
Mail trunk, clothes trunk.

Main, a fight, hand at dice.
Mair, more.
Mair tint on Flodden Edge, more lost on Flodden field, a very disastrous battle for the Scotch
Maist, most; *'maist*, almost.
Maître de cuisine, head cook.
Malapert, impudent
Maleficarum malleus, the hammer of malefactors.
Malison, a curse
Mak a kirk and a mill o't, make what you will of it
Marbre, marble
Marle, marvel, wonder
Marmozet, a small monkey
Marry, indeed, forsooth
Maun, must
Meliora spero, I expect better things
Mell with, meddle with
Menseful, modest, discreet.
Merk, an old Scotch silver coin = 1s. 1½d.
Mess book, mass book
Mess John, the parish minister, parson
Mew, to confine, moult
Miching, mean, cowardly
Mickle, large, much
Mile Scotch, = 1·127 English
Mime, a buffoon.
Mind, recollect
Minish, diminish
Mint, to hint, aim at
Mirk, dark
Misleard, unmannerly
Misocapnus, etc., against tobacco, or a royal treatise on its abuse
Mither, mother
Mob cap, female cap with a broad tie
Mobility, the common people
Modicum, small quantity
Moniplies, a part of tripe, many fold
Montero, huntsman's cap
Mony, many
Mournival of aces, four aces in the hand
Moyle, mule
Muckle, much.
Mulligrubs, low spirits
Mummer, one who makes sport in disguise
Murrey coloured, red.
Musketoon, a short thick musket.
Mysel', myself.

Noe not
Naething, nothing.

Naig, a nag.
Neb, nose
Needsna, needs not.
Ne inducas, etc., do not lead us into temptation; get behind me, Satan
Neophyte, a novice
Nevoy, nephew.
Nicher, neigh, giggle
Nick, to defeat, or cozen
Niffer, to exchange
Night rail, a loose robe worn over the dress at night
Nipperkin, a small cup
Nippit, pinched
No, not
Noble, a gold coin = 6s. 8d.
Noddle, the head
Nonce, purpose, occasion
Non est, etc., it is not to be asked whence comes venison
Non ignara mali, etc., not ignorant of evil I learn to succour the wretched
Non ... renidet, etc., not in my house shines the ceiling
Non olet, it does not smell
Non omnis moriar, I may not all die
Non surdo canis, you are not speaking to a deaf person
Non utendo, by not using
Nooning, a repast at noon
Noose is reeved, knot is tied, sometimes burst
Nowt and stots, north-country folk; literally, young bullocks
Nowt, black cattle
Nullius fidei, of no faith
Nunchion, luncheon

O', of
Oaken towel, oak cudgel
Occiput, hind part of head
O'y Rood, Holyrood
Ombre, basset, gleek, primero, games of card
Or, before
Ony, any
Oppignorate, to pledge
Ou ay, O yes
Out-take, except.
Owches, jewels.
Ower, over, too.
Ox, black, has not trod on you, misfortune has not come to you.

Paik, punish.
Palmer worm, a hairy worm, an insect pest.

Pandite fores, throw open the doors
Paired, variegated
Panged thegither, thronged together
Pardieu, an oath
Parspicuous, perspicuous
Par voye du fait, by way of act
Pasquinado, a lampoon
Passage, hazard, in and in, penneech, and verquire, games of dice
Pauvre chevalier, poor knight
Pater patriæ, father of the country
Pease bogle, scarecrow
Peggy Ramsay, the name of an old song
Penetralia, inner recesses
Penny Scots = $\frac{1}{12}$ of English penny
Pennyworths to his coin, value for his money
Per aquam rejectionis, by refreshing waters
Per aversionem, in the gross
Per diem, by the day
Perdu, in concealment, in desperate straits
Perii, interii, etc., I am ruined, undone, killed; whither can I run? whither not run? Hold, hold whom? who am I to hold? I do not know, I see nothing
Petits plats exquis, exquisite little dishes
Petronel, a horse pistol
Pharmacopeia, drug store
Pick thank, an officious fellow, a toady
Pig, an earthen vessel
Pineal gland, part of brain supposed by Descartes to be seat of soul.
Pisces purga, clean the fish
Pistolet, a little pistol
Pit up, put up, lodge
Placet, petition
Plack, a copper coin = ⅓d sterling
Ploy, entertainment, harmless frolic
Pock, poke, a bag
Pock pudding, a term applied to the English
Point-device, scrupulously neat.
Poortith, poverty
Porringer, a small metal vessel for warming liquors
Post-meridiem, after mid day
Potestas maritalis, the power of a husband.
'Pothecary, apothecary.

Pottle, pot or tankard.
Pouch, pocket.
Pound Scots, =1s. 8d. English.
Pouther, gunpowder
Prælibatio matrimonii, foretaste of marriage
Preceese, preceesely, precise, precisely.
Prie, taste
'Prentices, apprentices.
Prestable, payable.
Principium et fons, head and source.
Princox, a coxcomb.
Propera pedem, hasten away
Proxeneta, a negotiator.
Puir, poor
Pulchra sane puella, truly a beautiful girl
Put, a clown, also a game at cards
Putten, put

Quæ maribus, etc., which are bestowed only on males
Quaich, a small drinking cup
Quam bonum et quam jucundum, how good and how pleasant
Quarrée, the killed game
Quean, a young woman.
Qu'est ce, etc., what have we to do with the past?
Quid de symbol? what of the sign?
Quis desiderio, etc., what shame or limit can there be to the desire for so dear a head
Quoad Anglos, as regards the English
Quoad hominem, locum, as regards the man, the place
Quotha, forsooth.

Rabbit, confound.
Rampallian, a mean wretch.
Ram skin, parchment.
Rave, rent.
Rax, stretch.
Redding kame, unravelling comb.
Redd the gate, clear the way
Redd up, put in order.
'Red-het, red hot.
Red-shank, bare-legged person, a Highlander.
Red-wud, stark mad.
Reek, smoke.
Regis ad exemplar, etc., the whole world is arranged accor the king's

Rend, noise.
Rem acu, etc., you have touched it with a needle, Charles, my baby
Remeid, remedy, redress
Rendition, surrender.
Res angusta domi, straitened circumstances at home
Restrictive, strictly.
Rex, king
Riven, rent
Rook, defraud, clear out
Roopit, hoarse
Rose noble, an old English gold coin=6s 8d
Rôti des plus excellens, a most excellent roast
Row wrang, bowl, bowls roll wrong, things go amiss.
Rout, roar
Rudas, bold masculine woman
Rummer glasses, large drinking glasses
Rundlet, a small barrel

Saam same
Saar sir
Sackless innocent.
Sae so
Sair, sore
Sairly sorely
Sall shall
Salsamenta fac [illegible] cause the salt fish to be well steeped
Salve bis etc. twice hail and four times our Glenvarloch have you not lately returned to Britain from Leyden?
Salve magne parens hail, great parent
Saul soul
Sax, six.
Scandalum magnatum, i.e. scandalum magnum, a great offence.
Scauding, scolding also scalding.
Scaur, scare
Scrape scrap.
Scutcheon, escutcheon armorial shield
Secundum artem, according to rule
Sed semel insanivimus omnes we have all been mad once
Seignory, a lordship.
Semi reducta Venus half concealed Venus.
Series patefacti, etc., a series of murders providentially revealed.
Shabble, a crooked sword, or hanger.
[illegible], shoes.

Shot of, free from.
Shouther, shoulder.
Shule, shovel
Skin flint, a very niggardly person
Sic such
Sic fuit est et erit thus it was is, and will be
Siclike such like
Sicker sure certain
Sifflication supplication petition
Siller, money
Silver vessail, silver vessels
Sinciput, the forehead
Sine mora without delay
Skeigh skittish
Skelder to swindle
Skene, skean a knife
Slashes, openings made in a dress to show its rich lining
Sleepit slept
Sleeveless gate, an idle errand
Slops, trunk breeches
Sma, small
Snail [illegible]
[illegible] gold coins
Snaphaunch or *snaphaunce* a firelock
Sniggle to sniggle also to capture a slippery person
Soldado, a soldier
Soothfast or *suthfast* true
Spak spoke
Spang a spring or leap
Speer, speerings inquire inquiries
Spolia opima the richest booty
Sprauchler climber
Springald a stripling
Spunk out brought to light get abroad
Stante pede instanter instantly and at once
Stead to help assist
Steek shut
[illegible]
Stocking putting in the stocks
Stanern, of stone.
Stoup upright
Strapping up, being hanged
Stunded, made giddy.
Subscrive subscribe
Suld, should
Summa totalis the sum total
Suner, sooner
Surge carnifex, rise up, butcher
Swad a silly coarse person
Swarved swerved
Swashbuckler, swordplayer, bully
Swith instantly
Symbolum, a symbol, token.

Tae, the one.
Taen, taken
Taffeta a fine silk stuff
Tait of woo a lock or small portion of wool
Tanquam in speculum etc. I order you to look into the dishes as into a mirror
Tap top
Tauld told
Tecum certasse to have contended with you
Tempora mutantur times are changed
Tendance attendance
Tenez, mon cher, car c'est à vous hold sir for it is your turn
Terra firma firm ground
Tester canopy of a bed
Testoon, an old silver coin=6d
Thegither together
Thick piled with thick pile as velvet
Through stanes flat gravestones
Tight close hand
Tilted tented, with an awning
Tint lost
Tires attires
Thistle head thistle head
Tither tother the other
Tocher, dowry
Tod lowrie a fox
Toom empty
Torchon a dish cloth
Tout a blast fit of ill humour or ill health
Towel cudgel
Trinkum a trinket
Treen wooden
Trencher a wooden plate for serving meat
Très bon gentilhomme pourtant, a very excellent gentleman nevertheless
Très honoré, very much honoured
Trow believe
Trundel, to throw roll or drive about
Truepenny, an honest fellow
Turbatae Palladis arma, arms of the troubled Pallas
Tourne broche a turnspit
Tutti taiti, pshaw.
Twa two
Twinge, to pull.
Tyke, a dog

Umquhile the late.
Unce ounce
Un vrai diable déchainé, a very unchained devil.
Usque ad mutilationem, even to dismemberment.

Vae atque dolor, grief and pain.
Valeat quantum, may it avail much
Valde quidem, etc., Vossius is indeed well, gracious king, but is a most venerable old man, if I am not mistaken, in his seventieth year
Vapour one the huff, to assume a bullying style.
Varlet a servant, scoundrel
Venienti occurrite morbo, meet the coming disease
Ventre Saint Gris, an oath
Vera very
Veshel vessail, vessel.
Via away
Videlicet namely
Vidi terram etc., I saw the land that it was very good and I bent my shoulder to carry and am become a servant under tribute
Vie the ruff to wager on the trump card
Vi nempe, etc. doubtless by force and in a way common to fathers.
Vix mehercle etc., so help me, Hercules, I had scarcely thought him so old a man, and that Vorstius? the successor as well as adherent of the reprobate Arminius—still is he not a hero? and I may say with Homer he lives and sees the light on earth.
Vivers victuals.
Vidi quidem etc., it is not long since I saw the man, alive, indeed but who can say he flourishes? under the bolts of your eloquence great king, he long ago lies prone and prostrate.

Wad, would
Wadset a mortgage.
Wain, waggon
Walth wealth, abundance
Wanion, vengeance! the devil!
Ware spend.
Warse, warst, worse, worst.
Wasna was not.
Wastrife wasteful.
Waur, worse.
Wee, little small.
Weel, weel dune, well, well done.

Weel put on, well dressed.
Wha, who.
Whare, where.
Whase, whose.
Wheen, a few.
Whigmaleery, gimcrack.
Whilk, which.
Whilome, once, formerly.
Whimsy, a whim.
Whinger, a short hanger used as a knife at meals, a sword in broils.
Whinyard, a short, crooked sword.
Whippet, whipped.
Whomle, turn.
Whunstane, whinstone.
Wi', with.
Winna, will not.
Wit, wisdom, knowledge.
Withers, shoulders of the horse where the collar rests.
Withy, *widdie*, a halter, the gallows.
Witness, with a, effectually, excessively.
Wittol, cuckold.
Wald I, *nold I*, would I, would I not.
Woo', wool.
Wool-ward, dressed in wool only, without a shirt.
Wonnot, wont.
Wot, *wotna*, know, know not.
Woxen, waxen.
Wrang, wrong.
Wud, mad; *red-wud*, stark mad.
Wussing, wishing.
Wylie-coat, under-vest.
Wyte, blame.

Yellow-hammers, gold coins.
Yestate, estate.
Yestreen, yester even, last night.
Yon, yonder.

The acompt of my furnishinge maid to hir ma^tie from the x^th of June 1608 to the ix of apryll 1609 extending to the somme of 2896 li 6 s money of England

George heriote

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK

By Sir WALTER SCOTT, Bart.



PEVERIL AND GANLESSE, *page* 829

LONDON: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
1892



MAJOR BRIDGENORTH SURPRISING JULIAN AND ALICE [illegible]

INTRODUCTION.

"If I had valued myself upon the concealment of my name, as perhaps I ought in prudence to have done, I might have now drawn a line across my name, and my life (who knows?) perhaps for some years after the death of the 'ingenious Author of Waverley.' I was not, however, more desirous of the sort of immortality, which might have lasted some twenty or thirty years, than Falstaff of the embowelling which his Highness promised him after the field of Shrewsbury, by his patron the Prince of Wales. 'Embowelled? If you embowel me to-day, you may powder me and eat me to-morrow!'"*

If my occupation as a romancer were taken from me, I felt I should have at a late hour in life to find me out another, when I could hardly expect to acquire those new tricks which are proverbially said not to be learned by those dogs who are getting old. Besides, I had yet to learn from the public that my intrusions were disagreeable; and while I was endured with some patience, I felt I had all the reputation which I greatly coveted. My memory was well stored both with historical, local, and traditional notices, and I had become almost as licensed a plague to the public as the well-remembered beggar of the yard, whom men distinguish by their favour, perhaps for no better reason than that they had been in the habit of giving him alms as a part of the business of their daily promenade. The general fact is undeniable—all men grow old, all men must wear out; but men of ordinary wisdom, however aware of the general fact, are unwilling to admit in their own case any special instances of failure. Indeed, they can hardly be expected [illegible] to distinguish the effects of the Archbishop of Granada's apoplexy, and are not unwilling to pass over in their composition, as instances of mere carelessness or bad luck, what others may consider as symptoms of mortal decay. I had no choice save that of absolutely laying aside the pen, the use of which at my time of life has become a habit, or to continue its vagaries until the public should let me plainly understand they would no more of me; a hint which I was not unlikely to meet with, and which I was determined to take without waiting for a repetition. This hint, that the reader may plainly understand me, I was determined to take when the publication of a new Waverley novel should not be the subject of some attention in the literary world.†

An accidental circumstance decided my choice of a subject for the present work. It was now several years since my immediate younger brother, Thomas Scott, already mentioned in these notes, had resided for two or three seasons in the Isle of Man, and having access to the registers of that singular territory, had copied many of them, which he subjected to my perusal. These papers were put into my hands while my brother had thoughts of making some literary use of them, I do not well remember what; but he never came to any decision on that head, and grew tired of the task of transcription. The papers, I suppose, were lost in the course of a military man's life. The tenor of them, that is, of the most remarkable, remained engraved on the memory of the Author.

The interesting and romantic story of William Christian especially struck my fancy. I found the same individual, as well as his father, par-

* Part I. Act 5, Sc 4.

† Note A. Strictures on Peveril.

ticularly noticed in some memorials of the island, preserved by the Earl of Derby, and published in Peck's Desiderata Curiosa. *This gentleman was the son of Edward, formerly governor of the island; and William himself was afterwards one of its two Dempsters, or supreme judges. Both father and son embraced the party of the islanders, and contested some feudal rights claimed by the Earl of Derby as king of the island. When the earl had suffered death at Bolton le Moors, Captain Christian placed himself at the head of the Roundheads, if they might be so called, and found the means of holding communication with a fleet sent by the Parliament. The island was surrendered to the Parliament by the insurgent Manxmen. The high-spirited countess and her son were arrested, and cast into prison, where they were long detained, and very indifferently treated. When the Restoration took place, the countess, or by title the queen dowager of the island, seized upon William Dhône, or Fair-haired William, as William Christian was termed, and caused him to be tried and executed, according to the laws of the island, for having dethroned his liege mistress, and imprisoned her and her family. Romancers, and readers of romance, will generally allow that the fate of Christian, and the contrast of his character with that of the high-minded but vindictive Countess of Derby, famous during the Civil Wars for her valiant defence of Latham House, contained the essence of an interesting tale. I have, however, dwelt little either on the death of William Christian, or on the* [illegible] *It was allowed that such* [illegible] *and the heavy fine which* [illegible] *upon the Derby estates for that violent* [illegible] *the countess had been guilty* [illegible] *any opinion on the justice or guilt of that action,* [illegible] *the islanders as they happen to be* [illegible] *sufferer, or perhaps as they* [illegible] *the eyes of* [illegible] *heads of those* [illegible] *that I have done* [illegible] *gentleman, or any of his descendants in his person; at the same time, I have most willingly given his representative an opportunity of stating in this edition of the novel, what he thinks necessary for the vindication of his ancestor, and the reader will find the exposition in the Notes, for which Mr. Christian desires admission.*[1] *I could do no less, considering the polite and gentlemanlike manner in which he stated feelings concerning his ancestry, to which a Scotsman can hardly be supposed to be indifferent.*

In another respect, Mr. Christian with justice complains that Edward Christian, described in the romance as the brother of the gentleman executed in consequence of the countess's arbitrary act of authority, is portrayed as a wretch of unbounded depravity, having only ingenuity and courage to rescue him from abhorrence, as well as hatred. Any personal allusion was entirely undesigned on the part of the Author. The Edward Christian of the tale is a mere creature of the imagination. Commentators have naturally enough identified him with a brother of William Christian, named Edward, who died in prison, after being confined seven or eight years in Peel Castle, in the year 1650. Of him I had no access to know anything; and as I was not aware that such a person had existed, I could hardly be said to have traduced his character. It is sufficient for my justification, that there lived at the period of my story a person named Edward Christian, 'with whom connected, or by whom begot,' I am a perfect stranger, but whom we know to have been engaged in such actions as may imply his having been guilty of anything bad. The fact is, that upon the 5th June 1680, Thomas Blood (the famous crown stealer), Edward Christian, *Arthur O'Brien, and others, were found guilty of being concerned in a conspiracy for taking away the life and character of the celebrated Duke of Buckingham, but that this Edward was the same with the brother of William Christian is impossible, since that brother died in 1650; nor would I have used his christened name of Edward, had I supposed there was a chance of its being connected with any existing family. These genealogical matters are fully illustrated in the Notes to the Appendix.*

I ought to have mentioned in the former editions of this romance, that Charlotte de la Tremouille, Countess of Derby, represented as a Catholic, was, in fact, a French Protestant. For misrepresenting the noble dame in this manner, I have only [illegible] *excuse—'I spoke according to the truth.' In a story, where the greater part is avowedly fiction, the author is at liberty to introduce such* [illegible] *from actual fact as his plot requires,* [illegible] *calculated to enhance it, in which* [illegible] *the religion of the Countess of Derby, during the Popish Plot, appeared to fall. If I have over-estimated a romancer's privileges and* [illegible]*, I am afraid this is not the only nor* [illegible] *case in which I have done so.* [illegible] *words, the heroic countess has far less* [illegible] *of scandal, than the* [illegible] *might be liable to for his post-*[illegible]

The character of [illegible]*, which, from its* [illegible]*, made a* [illegible] *impression on the public, was far from being original. The fine* [illegible] *of Mignon, in Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre, a* [illegible] *work from the pen of Goethe, gave the idea of such a being. But the copy will be found greatly different from my great prototype, nor can I be accused of borrowing anything save the general idea, from an author, the honour of his own country, and an example to the authors of other kingdoms, to whom all must be proud to own an obligation.*

Family tradition supplied me with two circumstances, which are somewhat analogous to that in question. The first is an account of a lawsuit, taken from a Scottish report of adjudged cases, quoted in Note to Chapter XX.

The other—of which the editor has no reason to doubt, having often heard it from those who were witnesses of the fact—relates to the power of a female in keeping a secret (sarcastically said to be impossible), even when that secret refers to the exercise of her tongue.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, a female wanderer came to the door of Mr. Robert Scott, grandfather of the present Author, an

[1] See Appendix, No. I.

farmer in Roxburghshire, and made signs that she desired shelter for the night, which, according to the custom of the times, was readily granted. The next day the country was covered with snow, and the departure of the wanderer was rendered impossible. She remained for many days, her maintenance adding little to the expense of a considerable household; and by the time that the weather grew milder, she had learned to hold intercourse by signs with the household around her, and could intimate to them that she was desirous of staying where she was, and working at the wheel and other employment to compensate for her food. This was a compact not unfrequent at that time, and the dumb woman entered upon her thrift, and proved a useful member of the patriarchal household. She was a good spinner, knitter, carder, and so forth, but her excellence lay in attending to the feeding and bringing up the domestic poultry. Her mode of whistling to call them together was so peculiarly elfish and shrill, that it was thought, by those who heard it, more like that of a fairy than a human being.

In this manner she lived three or four years, nor was there the slightest idea entertained in the family that she was other than the mute and deprived person she had always appeared. But in a moment of surprise she dropped the mask which she had worn so long.

It chanced upon a Sunday that the whole inhabitants of the household were at church, excepting Dumb Lizzie, whose infirmity was supposed to render her incapable of profiting by divine service, and who therefore stayed at home to take charge of the house. It happened that, as she was sitting in the kitchen, a mischievous shepherd boy, instead of looking after his flock on the lea, as was his duty, slunk into the house to see what he could pick up, or perhaps out of mere curiosity. Being tempted by something which was in his eyes a nicety, he put forth his hand unseen, as he conceived, to appropriate it. The dumb woman came suddenly upon him, and, in the surprise, forgot her part, and exclaimed in loud Scotch, and with distinct articulation, 'Ah, you little devil's limb!' The boy, terrified more by the character of the person who rebuked him, than by the mere circumstance of having been taken in the insignificant offence, fled in great dismay to the church, to carry the miraculous news that the dumb woman had found her tongue.

The family returned home in great surprise, but found that their inmate had relapsed into her usual mute condition, would communicate with them only by signs, and in that manner denied positively what the boy affirmed.

From this time confidence was broken betwixt the other inmates of the family and their dumb, or rather silent, guest. Traps were laid for the supposed impostor, all of which she skilfully eluded; firearms were often suddenly discharged near her, but never on such occasions was she seen to start. It seems probable, however, that Lizzie grew tired of all this mistrust, for she one morning disappeared as she came, without any ceremony of leave-taking.

She was seen, it is said, upon the other side of the English border, in perfect possession of her speech. Whether this was exactly the case or not, my informers were no way anxious in inquiring, nor am I able to authenticate the fact. The shepherd boy lived to be a man, and always averred that she had spoken distinctly to him. What could be the woman's reason for persevering so long in a disguise as unnecessary as it was severe, could never be guessed, and was perhaps the consequence of a certain aberration of the mind. I can only add, that I have every reason to believe the tale to be perfectly authentic, so far as it is here given, and it may serve to parallel the supposed case of Fenella.

ABBOTSFORD, *1st July 1831.*

PREFATORY LETTER

FROM THE

REV. DR. DRYASDUST OF YORK, TO CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK

RESIDING AT FAIRY-LODGE, NEAR KENNAQUHAIR, N.B.

VERY WORTHY AND DEAR SIR,—*To you the last I think I might have answered, with the classic,* 'Haud equidem invideo, miror magis.' *For though my converse, from infancy, has been with things of antiquity, yet I love not ghosts or spectres to be commentators thereon; and truly your account of the conversation you held with our great parent, in the crypt, or most intimate recess of the publishers at Edinburgh, had upon me much the effect of the apparition of Hector's phantom on the hero of the Æneid—*

Obstupui, steteruntque comæ.

And, as I said above, I repeat that I envy not the Vision, without enjoying it, you the pleasure of seeing our great parent. But it seems that the lot is now permitted to me, in hours to his own family more freely than formerly; or that the old gentleman is turned somewhat garrulous in these latter days; or, in short, not to multiply conjectures, that there is, as I also have had, the Vision of the Author of Waverley. I do not mean to take any value to myself, when I observe, that this interview was attended with circumstances in some degree more formally and pleasant than those which attended your meeting with him in our worthy publishers', for yours had the appearance of a fortuitous rencontre, whereas mine was preceded by the communication of a large roll of papers, containing a new history, called PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

I no sooner found that this manuscript consisted of a narrative, running to the length of perhaps three hundred and thirty pages in each volume, or thereabouts, than it instantly occurred to me from whom this boon came; and, having set myself to peruse the written sheets, I began to entertain strong expectations that I might, peradventure, next see the Author himself.

Again, it seems to me a marked circumstance, that, whereas an inner apartment of Mr. Constable's shop was thought a place of sufficient solemnity for your audience, our venerable Senior was pleased to afford mine in the recesses of my own lodgings, intra parietes, *as it were, and without the chance of interruption. I must also remark, that the features,* [illegible] *as you will term the apparition of our parent, and to me more precisely distinct than was vouchsafed to you on the former occasion. Of this, hereafter; but Heaven forbid I should glory, or set up any claim of superiority over the other descendants of our common parent, from such decided marks of his preference—*Laus propria sordet. *I am well aware that the honour was bestowed not on my person, but my cloth—that the preference did not exalt the James Dryasdust over Clutterbuck, but the Doctor of Divinity over the Captain.* Cedant arma togæ—*a maxim never to be forgotten at any time, but especially to be remembered when the soldier is upon half pay.*

But I bethink me that I am keeping you all this while in the porch, and wearying you with long inductions, when you would have me properly in medias res. *As you will, it shall be done; for, as his Grace is wont to say of me, wittily, 'No man tells a story so well as Dr. Dryasdust, when he has once got up to the starting-post.'* Jocose hoc. *But to continue.*

*I had skimmed the cream of the narrative which I had received but a week before, and that with no small cost and pain; for the hand of our parent is become so small and so crabbed, that I was obliged to use strong magnifiers. Feeling my eyes a little exhausted towards the close of the second volume, I leaned back in my easy-chair, and began to consider whether several of the objections which have been particularly urged against our father and patron might not be considered as applying, in an especial manner, to the papers I had just perused. 'Here are figments enough,' said I to myself, 'to confuse the march of a whole history—anachronisms enough to overset all chronology! The old gentleman hath broken all bounds—*abiit—evasit—erupit.*'*

As these thoughts passed through my mind, I fell into a fit of musing, which is not uncommon with me after dinner, when I am altogether alone, or have no one with me but my curate. I was awake, however; for I remember seeing, in the embers of the fire, a representation of a mitre, with the towers of a cathedral in the background; moreover, I recollect gazing for a certain time on the comely countenance of Dr. Whiterose

uncle by the mother's side—the same who is mentioned in The Heart of Mid-Lothian—whose portrait, graceful in wig and canonicals, hangs above my mantelpiece. Further, I remember marking the flowers in the frame of carved oak, and casting my eye on the pistols which hang beneath, being the firearms with which, in the eventful year 1746, my uncle meant to have espoused the cause of Prince Charles Edward; for, indeed, so little did he esteem personal safety, in comparison of steady High Church principle, that he waited but the news of the Adventurer's reaching London to hasten to join his standard.

Such a doze as I then enjoyed, I find compatible with indulging the best and deepest cogitations which at any time arise in my mind. I chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy, in a state betwixt sleeping and waking, which I consider as so highly favourable to philosophy, that I have no doubt some of its most distinguished systems have been composed under its influence. My servant is, therefore, instructed to tread as if upon down; my door hinges are carefully oiled; and all appliances used to prevent me from being prematurely and harshly called back to the broad waking day of a laborious world. My custom, in this particular, is so well known, that the very schoolboys cross the alley on tiptoe, betwixt the hours of four and five. My cell is the very dwelling of Morpheus. There is indeed a bustling knave of a broom-man, quem ego—But this is matter for the Quarter Sessions.

As my head sunk back upon the easy-chair in the philosophical mood which I have just described, and the eyes of my body began to close, in order, doubtless, that those of my understanding might be the more widely opened, I was startled by a knock at the door, of a kind more authoritatively boisterous than is given at that hour by any visitor acquainted with my habits. I started up in my seat, and heard the step of my servant hurrying along the passage, followed by a very heavy and measured pace, which shook the long oak-floored gallery in such a manner, as forcibly to arrest my attention. 'A stranger, sir, just arrived from Edinburgh by the north mail, desires to speak with your reverence.' Such were the words with which Jacob threw the door to the wall; and the startled tone in which he pronounced them, although there was nothing particular in the annunciation itself, prepared me for the approach of a visitor of uncommon dignity and importance.

The Author of Waverley entered, a bulky and tall man, in a travelling great-coat, which covered a suit of snuff-brown, cut in imitation of that worn by the great Rambler. * *His flapped hat—for he disdained the modern frivolities of a travelling cap—was bound over his head with a large silk handkerchief, so as to protect his ears from cold at once and from the babble of his pleasant companions in the public coach from which he had just alighted. There was somewhat of a sarcastic shrewdness and sense, which sat on the heavy pent-house of his shaggy grey eyebrow—his features were in other respects largely shaped, and rather heavy, than promising wit or genius; but he had a notable projection of the nose, similar to that line of the Latin poet,—*

—— immodicum surgit pro cuspide rostrum.

A stout walking stick stayed his hand—a double Barcelona protected his neck—his belly was something prominent, 'but that's not much,'—his breeches were substantial thickset—and a pair of top boots, which were slipped down to ease his sturdy calves, did not conceal his comfortable travelling stockings of lamb's wool, wrought, not on the loom, but on wires, and after the venerable ancient fashion, known in Scotland by the name of ridge and furrow. His age seemed to be considerably above fifty, but could not amount to threescore, which I observed with pleasure, trusting there may be a good deal of work had out of him yet, especially as a general haleness of appearance—the compass and strength of his voice—the steadiness of his step—the rotundity of his calf—the depth of his hem, and the sonorous emphasis of his sneeze—were all signs of a constitution built for permanence.

It struck me forcibly as I gazed on this portly person that he realized, in my imagination, the Stout Gentleman in No. II who afforded such subject of varying speculation to our most amusing and elegant Utopian traveller, Master Geoffrey Crayon. † *Indeed but for one little trait in the conduct of the said Stout Gentleman—I mean the gallantry towards his landlady, a thing which would greatly derogate from our Senior's character—I should be disposed to conclude that Master Crayon had, on that memorable occasion, actually passed his time in the vicinity of the Author of Waverley. But our worthy patriarch, be it spoken to his praise, far from cultivating the society of the fair sex, seems, in avoiding the company of womankind, rather to imitate the humour of our friend and relation, Master Jonathan Oldbuck, as I was led to conjecture, from a circumstance which occurred immediately after his entrance.*

Having acknowledged his presence with fitting thanks and gratulations, I proposed to my venerated visitor, as a refreshment best suited to the hour of the day, to summon my cousin and housekeeper, Miss Catherine Whitechurch, with the tea equipage; but he rejected my proposal with disdain worthy of the Laird of Monkbarns. 'No scandal-broth,' he exclaimed, 'no unwholesome woman's chatter for me. Fill the frothed tankard—slice the fatted rump—I desire no society but yours, and no refreshment but what the cask and the gridiron can supply.'

The beefsteak and toast and tankard were speedily got ready, and, whether an apparition or a bodily presentation, my visitor displayed dexterity as a trencherman, which might have attracted the envy of a hungry hunter, after a fox-chase of forty miles. Neither did he fail to make some deep and solemn appeals, not only to the tankard aforesaid, but to two decanters of London particular Madeira and old Port, the first of which I had extracted from its ripening place of deposition, within reach of the genial warmth of the oven; the other, from a deep crypt in mine own ancient cellar, which whilom may have held

* Samuel Johnson, author of the *Rambler*.

† Pseudonym of Washington Irving.

the vintages of the victors of the world, the arch being composed of Roman brick. I could not help admiring and congratulating the old gentleman upon the vigorous appetite which he displayed for the genial cheer of old England. 'Sir,' was his reply, 'I must eat as an Englishman, to qualify myself for taking my place at one of the most select companies of right English spirits, which ever girdled in, and hewed asunder, a mountainous sirloin, and a generous plum-pudding.'

I inquired, but with all deference and modesty, whither he was bound, and to what distinguished Society he applied a description so general. I shall proceed, in humble imitation of your example, to give the subsequent dialogue in a dramatic form, unless when description becomes necessary.

AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY.—*To whom should I apply such a description, save to the only Society to whom it can be thoroughly applicable—those unerring judges of old books and old wine—the Roxburghe Club of London? Have you not heard that I have been chosen a member of that Society of select bibliomaniacs?* *

DRYASDUST (rummaging in his pocket).—*I did hear something of it from Captain Clutterbuck, who wrote to me—ay, here is his letter—that such a report was current among the Scottish antiquaries, who were much alarmed lest you should be seduced into the heresy of preferring English beef to seven-year-old black-faced mutton, Maraschino to whisky, and turtle-soup to cock-a-leekie; in which case, they must needs renounce you as a lost man.—'But,' adds our friend* (looking at the letter)—*his hand is rather of a military description, better used to handle the sword than the pen—'Our friend is so much upon the SHUN!'—the* shun, *I think it is—'that it must be no light temptation which will withdraw him from his incognito.'*

AUTHOR.—*No light temptation, unquestionably; but this is a powerful one, to hob-or-nob with the lords of the literary treasures of Althorpe and Hodnet,† in Madeira negus, brewed by the classical Dibdin—to share those profound debates which stamp accurately on each 'small volume, dark with tarnish'd gold,' its collar, not of S. S. but of R. R.—to toast the immortal memory of Caxton, Valdarar, Pynson, and the other fathers of that great art, which has made all and each of us what we are. These, my dear son, are temptations, to which you see me now in the act of resigning that quiet chimney-corner of life, in which, unknowing and unknown—save by means of the hopeful family to which I have given birth—I proposed to wear out the end of life's evening grey.*‡

So saying, our venerable friend took another emphatic touch of the tankard, as if the very expression had suggested that specific remedy against the evils of life, recommended in the celebrated response of Johnson's anchorite—

Come, my lad, and drink some beer.

When he had placed on the table the silver tankard, and fetched a deep sigh to collect the respiration which the long draught had interrupted, I could not help echoing it, in a note so pathetically compassionate, that he fixed his eyes on me with surprise. 'How is this?' said he, somewhat angrily; 'do you, the creature of my will, grudge me my preferment? Have I dedicated to you, and your fellows, the best hours of my life for these seven years past; and do you presume to grumble or repine, because, in those which are to come, I seek for some enjoyments of life in society so congenial to my pursuits?' I humbled myself before the offended Senior, and professed my innocence in all that could possibly give him displeasure. He seemed partly appeased, but still bent on me an eye of suspicion, while he questioned me in the words of old Norton, in the ballad of the 'Rising in the North Country.'

AUTHOR.—*What would'st thou have, Francis Norton?*
Thou art my youngest son and heir;
Something lies brooding at thy heart—
Whate'er it be, to me declare.§

DRYASDUST.—*Craving, then, your paternal forgiveness for my presumption, I only sighed at the possibility of your venturing yourself amongst a body of critics, to whom, in the capacity of skilful antiquaries, the investigation of truth is an especial duty, and who may therefore visit with the more severe censure those aberrations which it is so often your pleasure to make from the path of true history.*

AUTHOR.—*I understand you. You mean to say these learned persons will have but little toleration for a romance, or a fictitious narrative, founded upon history?*

DRYASDUST.—*Why, sir, I do rather apprehend that their respect for the foundation will be such, that they may be apt to quarrel with the inconsistent nature of the superstructure; just as every classical traveller pours forth expressions of sorrow and indignation when, in travelling through Greece, he chances to see a Turkish kiosk rising on the ruins of an ancient temple.*

AUTHOR.—*But since we cannot rebuild the temple, a kiosk may be a pretty thing, may it not? Not quite correct in architecture, strictly and classically criticised, but presenting something uncommon to the eye, and something fantastic to the imagination, on which the spectator gazes with pleasure of the same description which arises from the perusal of an Eastern tale.*

DRYASDUST.—*I am unable to dispute with you*

* The Author has pride in recording, that he had the honour to be elected a member of this distinguished association, merely as the Author of Waverley, without any other designation; and it was an additional inducement to throw off the mask of an anonymous author, that it gives him a right to occupy the vacant chair at that festive board.

† [Althorpe, the seat of the Earls Spencer, in the county of Northampton, contains perhaps the most valuable private collection of early printed books, either in England or elsewhere. Full justice has been rendered to this library by the Rev. Dr. Dibdin, in his *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, and his *Ædes Althorpianæ*, forming seven large and handsome volumes, profusely illustrated. Mr. Heber's collection, intended for his seat of Hodnet, in Shropshire, was much less fortunate. The greater portion of his library remained in London, until the entire collection, after his death, was dispersed by auction in the years 1834–1837.]

‡ [This drollery in fact alludes, not to the Roxburghe Club, but to an institution of the same class which was just at this time springing into life, under Sir Walter's own auspices, in Edinburgh—the *Bannatyne Club*, of which he was the founder and first president.—J. G. LOCKHART.]

§ [These lines occur in a long ballad (reprinted by Bishop Percy under the above title) on the Northern Rebellion of 1569, which proved so fatal to the Duke of Northumberland.]

in metaphor, sir, but I must say, in discharge of my conscience, that you stand much censured for adulterating the pure sources of historical knowledge. You approach them, men say, like the drunken yeoman, who, once upon a time, polluted the crystal spring which supplied the thirst of his family, with a score of sugar loaves and a hogshead of rum; and thereby converted a simple and wholesome beverage into a stupefying, brutifying, and intoxicating fluid, sweeter, indeed, to the taste than the natural lymph, but, for that very reason, more seductively dangerous.

AUTHOR.—*I allow your metaphor, Doctor, but yet, though good punch cannot supply the want of spring water, it is, when modestly used, no* malum in se, *and I should have thought it a shabby thing of the parson of the parish, had he helped to drink out the well on Saturday night, and preached against the honest hospitable yeoman on Sunday morning. I should have answered him, that the very flavour of the liquor should have put him at once upon his guard, and that if he had taken a drop over much, he ought to blame his own imprudence more than the hospitality of his entertainer.*

DRYASDUST.—*I profess I do not exactly see how this applies.*

AUTHOR.—*No, you are one of those numerous disputants, who will never follow their metaphor a step farther than it goes their own way. I will explain. A poor fellow, like myself, weary with ransacking his own barren and bounded imagination, looks out for some general subject in the huge and boundless field of history, which holds forth examples of every kind—lights on some personage, or some combination of circumstances, or some striking trait of manners, which he thinks may be advantageously used as the basis of a fictitious narrative—bedizens it with such colouring as his skill suggests—ornaments it with such romantic circumstances as may heighten the general effect—invests it with such shades of character as will best contrast with each other—and thinks, perhaps, he has done some service to the public if he can present to them a lively fictitious picture, for which the original anecdote or circumstance which he made free to press into his service only furnished a slight sketch. Now, I cannot perceive any harm in this. The stores of history are accessible to every one, and are no more exhausted or impoverished by the hints thus borrowed from them, than the fountain is drained by the water which we subtract for domestic purposes. And in reply to the sober charge of falsehood against a narrative announced positively to be fictitious, one can only answer by Prior's exclamation,*

Odzooks, must one swear to the truth of a song?

DRYASDUST.—*Nay, but I fear me that you are here eluding the charge. Men do not seriously accuse you of misrepresenting history; although I assure you I have seen some grave treatises in which it was thought necessary to contradict your assertions.*

AUTHOR.—*That certainly was to point a discharge of artillery against a wreath of morning mist.*

DRYASDUST.—*But besides, and especially, it is said that you are in danger of causing history to be neglected—readers being contented with such frothy and superficial knowledge as they acquire from your works, to the effect of inducing them to neglect the severer and more accurate sources of information.*

AUTHOR.—*I deny the consequence. On the contrary, I rather hope that I have turned the attention of the public on various points, which have received elucidation from writers of more learning and research, in consequence of my novels having attached some interest to them. I might give instances, but I hate vanity—I hate vanity. The history of the divining rod is well known—it is a slight valueless twig in itself, but indicates, by its motion, where veins of precious metal are concealed below the earth, which afterwards enrich the adventurers by whom they are laboriously and carefully wrought. I claim no more merit for my historical hints, but this is something.*

DRYASDUST.—*We severer antiquaries, sir, may grant that this is true—to wit, that your works may occasionally have put men of solid judgment upon researches which they would not perhaps have otherwise thought of undertaking. But this will leave you still accountable for misleading the young, the indolent, and the giddy, by thrusting into their hands works which, while they have so much the appearance of conveying information as may prove perhaps a salve to their consciences for employing their leisure in the perusal, yet leave their giddy brains contented with the crude, uncertain, and often false statements, which your novels abound with.*

AUTHOR.—*It would be very unbecoming in me, reverend sir, to accuse a gentleman of your cloth of cant, but pray, is there not something like it in the pathos with which you enforce these dangers? I aver, on the contrary, that by introducing the busy and the youthful to 'truths severe in fairy fiction dressed,'* I am doing a real service to the more ingenious and the more apt among them; for the love of knowledge wants but a beginning—the least spark will give fire when the train is properly prepared, and having been interested in fictitious adventures ascribed to a historical period and characters, the reader begins next to be anxious to learn what the facts really were, and how far the novelist has justly represented them.*

But even where the mind of the more careless reader remains satisfied with the light perusal he has afforded to a tale of fiction, he will still lay down the book with a degree of knowledge, not perhaps of the most accurate kind, but such as he might not otherwise have acquired. Nor is this limited to minds of a low and incurious description; but, on the contrary, comprehends many persons otherwise of high talents, who, nevertheless, either from lack of time or of perseverance, are willing to sit down contented with the slight information which is acquired in such a manner. The great Duke of Marlborough, for example,

* The Doctor has denied the Author's title to shelter himself under this quotation, but the Author continues to think himself entitled to all the shelter, which, threadbare as it is, it may yet be able to afford him. The *truth severe* applies not to the narrative itself, but to the moral it conveys, in which the Author has not been thought deficient. The 'fairy fiction' is the conduct of the story which the tale is invented to elucidate.

having quoted, in conversation, some fact of English history rather inaccurately, was requested to name his authority. 'Shakespeare's Historical Plays,' answered the conqueror of Blenheim; 'the only English history I ever read in my life.' And a hasty recollection will convince any of us how much better we are acquainted with those parts of English history which that immortal bard has dramatised, than with any other portion of British story.

DRYASDUST.—*And you, worthy sir, are ambitious to render a similar service to posterity?*

AUTHOR.—*May the saints forefend I should be guilty of such unfounded vanity! I only show what has been done when there were giants in the land. We pigmies of the present day may at least, however, do something; and it is well to keep a pattern before our eyes, though that pattern be inimitable.*

DRYASDUST.—*Well, sir, with me you must have your own course; and for reasons well known to you, it is impossible for me to reply to you in argument. But I doubt if all you have said will reconcile the public to the anachronisms of your present volumes. Here you have a Countess of Derby fetched out of her cold grave, and saddled with a set of adventures dated twenty years after her death, besides being given up as a Catholic, when she was, in fact, a zealous Huguenot.*

AUTHOR.—*She may sue me for damages, as in the case Dido* versus *Virgil.*

DRYASDUST.—*A worse fault is, that your manners are even more incorrect than usual. Your Puritan is faintly traced in comparison to your Cameronian.*

AUTHOR.—*I agree to the charge; but although I still consider hypocrisy and enthusiasm as fit food for ridicule and satire, yet I am sensible of the difficulty of holding fanaticism up to laughter or abhorrence, without using colouring which may give offence to the sincerely worthy and religious. Many things are lawful, which we are taught are not convenient; and there are many tones of feeling which are too respectable to be insulted, though we do not altogether sympathise with them.*

DRYASDUST.—*Not to mention, my worthy sir, that perhaps you may think the subject exhausted.*

AUTHOR.—*The devil take the men of this generation for putting the worst construction on their neighbour's conduct!*

So saying, and flinging a testy sort of adieu towards me with his hand, he opened the door, and ran hastily down stairs. I started on my feet, and rang for my servant, who instantly came. I demanded what had become of the stranger—he denied that any such had been admitted—I pointed to the empty decanters, and he—he had the assurance to intimate, that such vacancies were sometimes made when I had no better company than my own. I do not know what to make of this doubtful matter, but will certainly imitate your example, in placing this dialogue, with my present letter, at the head of PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

I am, Dear Sir,
Very much your faithful and
Obedient Servant,
JONAS DRYASDUST.

Michaelmas Day, 18[illegible], *York.*



JULIAN ATTEMPTING TO [illegible]
HIS FATHER [illegible]

CHAPTER I.

> When civil dudgeon first grew high,
> And men fell out, they knew not why;
> When foul words, jealousies, and fears,
> Set folks together by the ears—
>
> BUTLER.

WILLIAM the Conqueror of England was, or supposed himself to be, the father of a certain William Peveril, who attended him to the battle of Hastings, and there distinguished himself. The liberal-minded monarch, who assumed in his charters the veritable title of Gulielmus Bastardus, was not likely to let his son's illegitimacy be any bar to the course of his royal favour, when the laws of England were issued from the mouth of the Norman victor, and the lands of the Saxons were at his unlimited disposal. William Peveril obtained a liberal grant of property and lordships in Derbyshire, and became the erector of that Gothic fortress, which, hanging over the mouth of the Devil's Cavern, so well known to tourists, gives the name of Castleton to the adjacent village.

From this feudal baron, who chose his nest upon the principles on which an eagle selects her eyrie, and built it in such a fashion as if he had intended it, as an Irishman said of the Martello towers, for the sole purpose of puzzling posterity, there was, or conceived themselves to be, descended (for their pedigree was rather hypothetical) an opulent family of knightly rank, in the same county of Derby. The great fief of Castleton, with its adjacent wastes and forests, and all the wonders which they contain, had been forfeited in King John's stormy days, by one William Peveril, and had been granted anew to the Lord Ferrers of that day. Yet this William's descendants, though no longer possessed of what they alleged to have been their original property, were long distinguished by the proud title of Perverils of the Peak, which served to mark their high descent and lofty pretensions.

In Charles the Second's time, the representative of this ancient family was Sir Geoffrey Peveril, a man who had many of the ordinary attributes of an old-fashioned country gentleman, and very few individual traits to distinguish him from the general portrait of that worthy class of mankind. He was proud of small advantages, angry at small disappointments, incapable of forming any resolution or opinion abstracted from his own prejudices—he was proud of his birth, lavish in his housekeeping, convivial with those kindred and acquaintances who would allow his superiority in rank—contentious and quarrelsome with all that crossed his pretensions—kind to the poor, except when they plundered his game—a Royalist in his political opinions, and one who detested alike a Roundhead, a poacher, and a Presbyterian. In religion Sir Geoffrey was a High Churchman, of so exalted a strain that many thought he still nourished in private the Roman Catholic tenets, which his family had only renounced in his father's time, and that he had a dispensation for conforming in outward observances to the Protestant faith. There was at least such a scandal amongst the Puritans, and the influence which Sir Geoffrey Peveril certainly appeared to possess amongst the Catholic gentlemen of Derbyshire and Cheshire, seemed to give countenance to the rumour.

Such was Sir Geoffrey, who might have passed

to his grave without further distinction than a brass plate in the chancel, had he not lived in times which forced the most inactive spirits into exertion, as a tempest influences the sluggish waters of the deadest mere. When the Civil Wars broke out, Peveril of the Peak, proud from pedigree, and brave by constitution, raised a regiment for the king, and showed upon several occasions more capacity for command than men had heretofore given him credit for.

Even in the midst of the civil turmoil, he fell in love with, and married, a beautiful and amiable young lady of the noble house of Stanley; and from that time had the more merit in his loyalty, as it divorced him from her society, unless at very brief intervals, when his duty permitted an occasional visit to his home. Scorning to be allured from his military duty by domestic inducements, Peveril of the Peak fought on for several rough years of civil war, and performed his part with sufficient gallantry, until his regiment was surprised and cut to pieces by Poyntz, Cromwell's enterprising and successful general of cavalry. The defeated Cavalier escaped from the field of battle, and, like a true descendant of William the Conqueror, disdaining submission, threw himself into his own castellated mansion, which was attacked and defended in a siege of that irregular kind which caused the destruction of so many baronial residences during the course of those unhappy wars. Martindale Castle, after having suffered severely from the cannon which Cromwell himself brought against it, was at length surrendered when in the last extremity. Sir Geoffrey himself became a prisoner, and while his liberty was only restored upon a promise of remaining a peaceful subject to the Commonwealth in future, his former delinquencies, as they were termed by the ruling party, were severely punished by fine and sequestration.

But neither his forced promise, nor the fear of further unpleasant consequences to his person or property, could prevent Peveril of the Peak from joining the gallant Earl of Derby the night before the fatal engagement in Wiggan Lane, where the earl's forces were dispersed. Sir Geoffrey having had his share in that action, escaped with the relics of the Royalists after the defeat, to join Charles II. He witnessed also the final defeat of Worcester, where he was a second time made prisoner; and as, in the opinion of Cromwell and the language of the times, he was regarded as an obstinate malignant, he was in great danger of having shared with the Earl of Derby his execution at Bolton-le-Moors, having partaken with him the dangers of two actions. But Sir Geoffrey's life was preserved by the interest of a friend, who possessed influence in the councils of Oliver. This was a Mr. Bridgenorth, a gentleman of middling quality, whose father had been successful in some commercial adventure during the peaceful reign of James I.; and who had bequeathed his son a considerable sum of money, in addition to the moderate patrimony which he inherited from his father.

The substantial, though small-sized brick building of Moultrassie Hall, was but two miles distant from Martindale Castle, and the young Bridgenorth attended the same school with the heir of the Peverils. A sort of companionship, if not intimacy, took place betwixt them, which continued during their youthful sports — the rather that Bridgenorth, though he did not at heart admit Sir Geoffrey's claims of superiority to the extent which the other's vanity would have exacted, paid deference in a reasonable degree to the representative of a family so much more ancient and important than his own, without conceiving that he in any respect degraded himself by doing so.

Mr. Bridgenorth did not, however, carry his complaisance so far as to embrace Sir Geoffrey's side during the Civil War. On the contrary, as an active justice of the peace, he rendered much assistance in arraying the militia in the cause of the Parliament, and for some time held a military commission in that service. This was partly owing to his religious principles, for he was a zealous Presbyterian, partly to his political ideas, which, without being absolutely democratical, favoured the popular side of the great national question. Besides, he was a moneyed man, and to a great extent had a shrewd eye to his worldly interest. He understood how to improve the opportunities which civil war afforded, of advancing his fortune, by a dexterous use of his capital; and he was not at a loss to perceive that these were likely to be obtained in joining the Parliament; while the king's cause, as it was managed, held out nothing to the wealthy but a course of exaction and compulsory loans. For these reasons, Bridgenorth became a decided Roundhead, and all friendly communication betwixt his neighbour and him was abruptly broken asunder. This was done with the less acrimony, that, during the Civil War, Sir Geoffrey was almost constantly in the field, following the vacillating and unhappy fortunes of his master; while Major Bridgenorth, who soon renounced active military service, resided chiefly in London, and only occasionally visited the Hall.

Upon these visits, it was with great pleasure he received the intelligence, that Lady Peveril had shown much kindness to Mrs. Bridgenorth, and had actually given her and her family shelter in Martindale Castle, when Moultrassie Hall was threatened with pillage by a body of Prince Rupert's ill-disciplined Cavaliers. This acquaintance had been matured by frequent walks together, which the vicinity of their places of residence suffered the Lady Peveril to have with Mrs. Bridgenorth, who deemed herself much honoured in being thus admitted into the society of so distinguished a lady. Major Bridgenorth heard of this growing intimacy with great pleasure, and he determined to repay the obligation, as far as he could without much hurt to himself, by interfering with all his influence in behalf of her unfortunate husband. It was chiefly owing to Major Bridgenorth's mediation, that Sir Geoffrey's life was saved after the battle of Worcester. He obtained him permission to compound for his estate on easier terms than many who had been less obstinate in mali[illegible] and finally, when, in order to r[illegible] for the composition, the knigh[illegible] sell a considerable portion[illegible]

Major Bridgenorth became the purchaser, and that at a larger price than had been paid to any Cavalier under such circumstances, by a member of the Committee for Sequestrations. It is true, the prudent committee-man did not, by any means, lose sight of his own interest in the transaction, for the price was, after all, very moderate, and the property lay adjacent to Moultrassie Hall, the value of which was at least trebled by the acquisition. But then it was also true, that the unfortunate owner must have submitted to much worse conditions, had the committee-man used, as others did, the full advantages which his situation gave him; and Bridgenorth took credit to himself, and received it from others, for having on this occasion fairly sacrificed his interest to his liberality.

Sir Geoffrey Peveril was of the same opinion, and the rather that Mr. Bridgenorth seemed to bear his exaltation with great moderation, and was disposed to show him personally the same deference in his present sunshine of prosperity, which he had exhibited formerly in their early acquaintance. It is but justice to Major Bridgenorth to observe, that in this conduct he paid respect as much to the misfortunes as to the pretensions of his far-descended neighbour, and that, with the frank generosity of a blunt Englishman, he conceded points of ceremony, about which he himself was indifferent, merely because he saw that his doing so gave pleasure to Sir Geoffrey.

Peveril of the Peak did justice to his neighbour's delicacy, in consideration of which he forgot many things. He forgot that Major Bridgenorth was already in possession of a fair third of his estate, and had various pecuniary claims affecting the remainder, to the extent of one-third more. He endeavoured even to forget, what it was still more difficult not to remember, the altered situation in which they and their mansions now stood to each other.

Before the Civil War, the superb battlements and turrets of Martindale Castle looked down on the red brick-built Hall, as it stole out from the green plantations, just as an oak in Martindale Chase would have looked beside one of the stunted and formal young beech-trees with which Bridgenorth had graced his avenue; but after the siege which we have commemorated, the enlarged and augmented Hall was as much predominant in the landscape over the shattered and blackened ruins of the Castle, of which only one wing was left habitable, as the youthful beech, in all its vigour of shoot and bud, would appear to the same aged oak stripped of its boughs, and rifted by lightning, one-half laid in shivers on the ground, and the other remaining a blackened and ungraceful trunk, rent and splintered, and without either life or leaves. Sir Geoffrey could not but feel that the situation and prospects were exchanged as disadvantageously for himself as the appearance of their mansions; and that, though the authority of the man in office under the Parliament, the sequestrator, and the committee-man, had been only exerted for the protection of the Cavalier and the malignant, they would have one Wuua.effectual if applied to procure his utter to the Lord Ferre.t he was become a client, while his descendants, theuelevated into a patron. they alleged to have b.

There were two considerations, besides the necessity of the case and the constant advice of his lady, which enabled Peveril of the Peak to endure, with some patience, this state of degradation. The first was, that the politics of Major Bridgenorth began, on many points, to assimilate themselves to his own. As a Presbyterian, he was not an utter enemy to monarchy, and had been considerably shocked at the unexpected trial and execution of the king; as a civilian and a man of property, he feared the domination of the military; and though he wished not to see Charles restored by force of arms, yet he arrived at the conclusion, that to bring back the heir of the royal family on such terms of composition as might insure the protection of those popular immunities and privileges for which the Long Parliament had at first contended, would be the surest and most desirable termination to the mutations in State affairs which had agitated Britain. Indeed, the major's ideas on this point approached so nearly those of his neighbour, that he had well-nigh suffered Sir Geoffrey, who had a finger in almost all the conspiracies of the Royalists, to involve him in the unfortunate rising of Penruddock and Groves, in the west, in which many of the Presbyterian interest, as well as the Cavalier party, were engaged. And though his habitual prudence eventually kept him out of this and other dangers, Major Bridgenorth was considered, during the last years of Cromwell's domination, and the interregnum which succeeded, as a disaffected person to the Commonwealth, and a favourer of Charles Stuart.

But besides this approximation to the same political opinions, another bond of intimacy united the families of the Castle and the Hall. Major Bridgenorth, fortunate, and eminently so, in all his worldly transactions, was visited by severe and reiterated misfortunes in his family, and became, in this particular, an object of compassion to his poorer and more decayed neighbour. Betwixt the breaking out of the Civil War and the Restoration, he lost successively a family of no less than six children, apparently through a delicacy of constitution, which cut off the little prattlers at the early age when they most wind themselves around the heart of the parents.

In the beginning of the year 1658, Major Bridgenorth was childless; ere it ended, he had a daughter, indeed, but her birth was purchased by the death of an affectionate wife, whose constitution had been exhausted by maternal grief, and by the anxious and harrowing reflection, that from her the children they had lost derived that delicacy of health, which proved unable to undergo the tear and wear of existence. The same voice which told Bridgenorth that he was father of a living child (it was the friendly voice of Lady Peveril), communicated to him the melancholy intelligence that he was no longer a husband. The feelings of Major Bridgenorth were strong and deep, rather than hasty and vehement; and his grief assumed the form of a sullen stupor, from which neither the friendly remonstrances of Sir Geoffrey, who did not fail to be with his neighbour at this distressing conjuncture, even though he knew he must meet the Presbyterian pastor, nor the ghostly exhorta-

tions of this latter person, were able to rouse the unfortunate widower.

At length Lady Peveril, with the ready invention of a female sharpened by the sight of distress and the feelings of sympathy, tried on the sufferer one of those experiments by which grief is often awakened from despondency into tears. She placed in Bridgenorth's arms the infant whose birth had cost him so dear, and conjured him to remember that his Alice was not yet dead, since she survived in the helpless child she had left to his paternal care.

'Take her away—take her away!' said the unhappy man, and they were the first words he had spoken; 'let me not look on her—it is but another blossom that has bloomed to fade, and the tree that bore it will never flourish more.'

He almost threw the child into Lady Peveril's arms, placed his hands before his face, and wept aloud. Lady Peveril did not say 'Be comforted,' but she ventured to promise that the blossom should ripen to fruit.

'Never, never!' said Bridgenorth; 'take the unhappy child away, and let me only know when I shall wear black for her. Wear black!' he exclaimed, interrupting himself, 'what other colour shall I wear during the remainder of my life?'

'I will take the child for a season,' said Lady Peveril, 'since the sight of her is so painful to you; and the little Alice shall share the nursery of our Julian, until it shall be pleasure and not pain for you to look on her.'

'That hour will never come,' said the unhappy father; 'her doom is written—she will follow the rest—God's will be done.—Lady, I thank you—I trust her to your care; and I thank God that my eye shall not see her dying agonies.'

Without detaining the reader's attention longer on this painful theme, it is enough to say that the Lady Peveril did undertake the duties of a mother to the little orphan; and perhaps it was owing, in a great measure, to her judicious treatment of the infant that its feeble hold of life was preserved, since the glimmering spark might probably have been altogether smothered, had it, like the major's former children, undergone the over care and over nursing of a mother rendered nervously cautious and anxious by so many successive losses. The lady was the more ready to undertake this charge, that she herself had lost two infant children; and that she attributed the preservation of the third, now a fine healthy child of three years old, to Julian's being subjected to rather a different course of diet and treatment than was then generally practised. She resolved to follow the same regimen with the little orphan which she had observed in the case of her own boy; and it was equally successful. By a more sparing use of medicine, by a bolder admission of fresh air, by a firm, yet cautious attention to encourage rather than to supersede the exertions of nature, the puny infant, under the care of an excellent nurse, gradually improved in strength and in liveliness.

Sir Geoffrey, like most men of his frank and good natured disposition, was naturally fond of children, and so much compassionated the sorrows of his neighbour, that he entirely forgot his being a Presbyterian, until it became necessary that the infant should be christened by a teacher of that persuasion.

This was a trying case—the father seemed incapable of giving direction; and that the threshold of Martindale Castle should be violated by the heretical step of a dissenting clergyman, was matter of horror to its orthodox owner. He had seen the famous Hugh Peters, with a Bible in one hand and a pistol in the other, ride in triumph through the court door when Martindale was surrendered; and the bitterness of that hour had entered like iron into his soul. Yet such was Lady Peveril's influence over the prejudices of her husband, that he was induced to connive at the ceremony taking place in a remote garden house, which was not properly within the precincts of the castle wall. The lady even dared to be present while the ceremony was performed by the Reverend Master Solsgrace, who had once preached a sermon of three hours' length before the House of Commons, upon a thanksgiving occasion after the relief of Exeter. Sir Geoffrey Peveril took care to be absent the whole day from the Castle, and it was only from the great interest which he took in the washing, perfuming and, as it were, purification of the summer house, that it could have been guessed he knew anything of what had taken place in it.

But whatever prejudices the good knight might entertain against his neighbour's form of religion, they did not in any way influence his feelings towards him as a sufferer under severe affliction. The mode in which he showed his sympathy was rather singular, but exactly suited the character of both, and the terms on which they stood with each other.

Morning after morning the good baronet made Moultrassie Hall the termination of his walk or ride, and said a single word of kindness as he passed. Sometimes he entered the old parlour where the proprietor sat in solitary wretchedness and despondency; but more frequently (for Sir Geoffrey did not pretend to great talents of conversation) he paused on the terrace, and, stopping or halting his horse by the latticed window, said aloud to the melancholy inmate, 'How is it with you, Master Bridgenorth?' (the knight would never acknowledge his neighbour's military rank of major); 'I just looked in to bid you keep a good heart, man, and to tell you that Julian is well and little Alice is well, and all are well at Martindale Castle.'

A deep sigh, sometimes coupled with 'I thank you, Sir Geoffrey; my grateful duty waits on Lady Peveril,' was generally Bridgenorth's only answer. But the news was received on the one part with the kindness which was designed upon the other; it gradually became less painful and more interesting; the lattice window was never closed, nor was the leathern easy chair which stood next to it, ever empty, when the usual hour of the baronet's momentary visit approached. At length the expectation of that passing minute became the pivot upon which the thoughts of poor Bridgenorth turned during all the rest of the day. Most men have known the influence of such brief but ruling moments at some period of their lives. The moment when a lover passes the window of his mistress—the moment when

the epicure hears the dinner-bell—is that into which is crowded the whole interest of the day; the hours which precede it are spent in anticipation; the hours which follow, in reflection on what has passed; and fancy, dwelling on each brief circumstance, gives to seconds the duration of minutes, to minutes that of hours. Thus seated in his lonely chair, Bridgenorth could catch at a distance the stately step of Sir Geoffrey, or the heavy tramp of his war-horse, Black Hastings, which had borne him in many an action; he could hear the hum of 'The King shall enjoy his own again,' or the habitual whistle of 'Cuckolds and Roundheads,' die into reverential silence, as the knight approached the mansion of affliction; and then came the strong hale voice of the huntsman soldier with its usual greeting.

By degrees the communication became something more protracted, as Major Bridgenorth's grief, like all human feelings, lost its overwhelming violence, and permitted him to atten in some degree, to what passed around him, to discharge various duties which pressed upon him, and to give a share of attention to the situation of the country, distracted as it was by the contending factions, whose strife only terminated in the Restoration. Still, however, though slowly recovering from the effects of the shock which he had sustained, Major Bridgenorth felt himself as yet unable to make up his mind to the effort necessary to see his infant; and though separated by so short a distance from the being in whose existence he was more interested than in anything the world afforded, he only made himself acquainted with the windows of the apartment where little Alice was lodged, and was often observed to watch them from the terrace, as they brightened in the evening under the influence of the setting sun. In truth, though a strong-minded man in most respects, he was unable to lay aside the gloomy impression that this remaining pledge of affection was soon to be conveyed to that grave which had already devoured all besides that was dear to him; and he awaited in miserable suspense the moment when he should hear that symptoms of the fatal malady had begun to show themselves.

The voice of Peveril continued to be that of a comforter, until the month of April 1660, when it suddenly assumed a new and different tone. 'The King shall enjoy his own again,' far from ceasing, as the hasty tread of Black Hastings came up the avenue, bore burden to the clatter of his hoofs on the paved court-yard, as Sir Geoffrey sprang from his great war saddle, now once more garnished with pistols of two feet in length, and, armed with steel cap, back and breast, and a truncheon in his hand, he rushed into the apartment of the astonished major, with his eyes sparkling, and his cheek inflamed, while he called out, 'Up! up, neighbour! No time now to mope in the chimney-corner! Where is your buff-coat and broadsword, man? Take the true side once in your life, and mend past mistakes. The King is all lenity, man—all royal nature and mercy. I will get your full pardon.'

'What means all this?' said Bridgenorth.—'Is all well with you—all well at Martindale Castle, Sir Geoffrey?'

'Well as you could wish them, Alice, and Julian, and all. But I have news worth twenty of that—Monk has declared at London against those stinking scoundrels the Rump. Fairfax is up in Yorkshire—for the King—for the King, man! Churchmen, Presbyterians, and all, are in buff and bandoleer for King Charles. I have a letter from Fairfax to secure Derby and Chesterfield with all the men I can make. D—n him, fine that I should take orders from him! But never mind that—all are friends now, and you and I, good neighbour, will charge abreast, as good neighbours should. See there! read—read—read—and then boot and saddle in an instant.

> Hey for Cavaliers—ho for Cavaliers!
> Pray for Cavaliers!
> Dub a-dub, dub-a-dub,
> Have at old Beelzebub,
> Oliver shakes in his bier!'

After thundering forth this elegant effusion of loyal enthusiasm, the sturdy Cavalier's heart became too full. He threw himself on a seat, and exclaiming, 'Did ever I think to live to see this happy day!' he wept, to his own surprise as much as to that of Bridgenorth.

Upon considering the crisis in which the country was placed, it appeared to Major Bridgenorth, as it had done to Fairfax and other leaders of the Presbyterian party, that their frank embracing of the royal interest was the wisest and most patriotic measure which they could adopt in the circumstances, when all ranks and classes of men were seeking refuge from the uncertainty and varied oppression attending the repeated contests between the factions of Westminster Hall and of Wallingford House.* Accordingly he joined with Sir Geoffrey, with less enthusiasm, indeed, but with equal sincerity, taking such measures as seemed proper to secure their part of the country on the king's behalf, which was done as effectually and peaceably as in other parts of England. The neighbours were both at Chesterfield, when news arrived that the king had landed in England; and Sir Geoffrey instantly announced his purpose of waiting upon his Majesty, even before his return to the Castle of Martindale.

'Who knows, neighbour,' he said, 'whether Sir Geoffrey Peveril will ever return to Martindale? Titles must be going amongst them yonder, and I have deserved something among the rest.—Lord Peveril would sound well—or stay, Earl of Martindale—no, not of Martindale—Earl of the Peak.—Meanwhile, trust your affairs to me—I will see you secured—I would you had been no Presbyterian, neighbour—a knighthood—I mean a knight-bachelor, not a knight-baronet—would have served your turn well.'

'I leave these things to my betters, Sir Geoffrey,' said the major, 'and desire nothing so earnestly as to find all well at Martindale when I return.'

'You will—you will find them all well,' said the baronet; 'Julian, Alice, Lady Peveril, and all of them.—Bear my commendations to them,

* [Wallingford Castle, in Berkshire, during the Civil War, was repaired and garrisoned for the king, and was not surrendered till July 1646. A few years later (1653), it was completely demolished.]

and kiss them all, neighbour, Lady Peveril and all—you may kiss a countess when I come back; all will go well with you now you are turned honest man.'

'I always meant to be so, Sir Geoffrey,' said Bridgenorth calmly.

'Well, well, well—no offence meant,' said the knight; 'all is well now—so you to Moultrassie Hall, and I to Whitehall. Said I well, aha! So ho, mine host, a stoup of canary to the King's health ere we get to horse—I forgot, neighbour—you drink no healths.'

'I wish the King's health, as sincerely as if I drank a gallon to it,' replied the major; 'and I wish you, Sir Geoffrey, all success on your journey, and a safe return.'

CHAPTER II.

Why, then, we will have bellowing of beeves,
Broaching of barrels, brandishing of spigots;
Blood shall flow freely, but it shall be gore
Of herds and flocks, and venison and poultry,
Join'd to the brave heart's blood of John-a-Barleycorn!
OLD PLAY.

WHATEVER rewards Charles might have condescended to bestow in acknowledgment of the sufferings and loyalty of Peveril of the Peak, he had none in his disposal equal to the pleasure which Providence had reserved for Bridgenorth on his return to Derbyshire. The exertion to which he had been summoned had had the usual effect of restoring to a certain extent the activity and energy of his character, and he felt it would be unbecoming to relapse into the state of lethargic melancholy from which it had roused him. Time also had its usual effect in mitigating the subjects of his regret; and when he had passed one day at the Hall in regretting that he could not expect the indirect news of his daughter's health, which Sir Geoffrey used to communicate in his almost daily call, he reflected that it would be in every respect becoming that he should pay a personal visit at Martindale Castle, carry thither the remembrances of the knight to his lady, assure her of his health, and satisfy himself respecting that of his daughter. He armed himself for the worst—he called to recollection the thin cheeks, faded eye, wasted hand, pallid lip, which had marked the decaying health of all his former infants.

'I shall see,' he said, 'these signs of mortality once more—I shall once more see a beloved being, to whom I have given birth, gliding to the grave which ought to enclose me long before her. No matter—it is unmanly so long to shrink from that which must be—God's will be done!'

He went accordingly, on the subsequent morning, to Martindale Castle, and gave the lady the welcome assurances of her husband's safety, and of his hopes of preferment.

'For the first, may Almighty God be praised!' said the Lady Peveril; 'and be the other as our gracious and restored sovereign may will it. We are great enough for our means, and have means sufficient for contentment, though not for splendour. And now I see, good Master Bridgenorth, the folly of putting faith in idle presentiments of evil. So often had Sir Geoffrey's repeated attempts in favour of the Stuarts led him into new misfortunes, that when, the other morning, I saw him once more dressed in his fatal armour, and heard the sound of his trumpet, which had been so long silent, it seemed to me as if I saw his shroud, and heard his death-knell. I say this to you, good neighbour, the rather because I fear your own mind has been harassed with anticipations of impending calamity, which it may please God to avert in your case as it has done in mine; and here comes a sight which bears good assurance of it.'

The door of the apartment opened as she spoke, and two lovely children entered. The eldest, Julian Peveril, a fine boy betwixt four and five years old, led in his hand, with an air of dignified support and attention, a little girl of eighteen months, who rolled and tottered along, keeping herself with difficulty upright by the assistance of her elder, stronger, and masculine companion.

Bridgenorth cast a hasty and fearful glance upon the countenance of his daughter, and, even in that glimpse, perceived, with exquisite delight, that his fears were unfounded. He caught her in his arms, pressed her to his heart, and the child, though at first alarmed at the vehemence of his caresses, presently, as if prompted by nature, smiled in reply to them. Again he held her at some distance from him, and examined her more attentively; he satisfied himself that the complexion of the young cherub he had in his arms was not the hectic tinge of disease, but the clear hue of ruddy health; and that, though her little frame was slight, it was firm and springy.

'I did not think that it could have been thus,' he said, looking to Lady Peveril, who had sat observing the scene with great pleasure; 'but praise be to God in the first instance, and next, thanks to you, madam, who have been his instrument.'

'Julian must lose his playfellow now, I suppose?' said the lady; 'but the Hall is not distant, and I will see my little charge often. Dame Martha, the housekeeper at Moultrassie, has sense, and is careful. I will tell her the rules I have observed with little Alice, and'——

'God forbid my girl should ever come to Moultrassie,' said Major Bridgenorth hastily; 'it has been the grave of her race. The air of the low grounds suited them not—or there is perhaps a fate connected with the mansion. I will seek for her some other place of abode.'

'That you shall not, under your favour be it spoken, Major Bridgenorth,' answered the lady. 'If you do so, we must suppose that you are undervaluing my qualities as a nurse. If she goes not to her father's house, she shall not quit mine. I will keep the little lady as a pledge of her safety and my own skill; and since you are afraid of the damp of the low grounds, I hope you will come here frequently to visit her.'

This was a proposal which went to the heart of Major Bridgenorth. It was precisely the point which he would have given worlds to arrive at, but which he saw no chance of attaining.

It is too well known, that those whose families are long pursued by such a fatal disease as existed in his, become, it may be said, superstitious respecting its fatal effects, and ascribe to

place, circumstance, and individual care, much more perhaps than these can in any case contribute, to avert the fatality of constitutional distemper. Lady Peveril was aware that this was peculiarly the impression of her neighbour, that the depression of his spirits, the excess of his care, the feverishness of his apprehensions, the restraint and gloom of the solitude in which he dwelt, were really calculated to produce the evil which most of all he dreaded. She pitied him, she felt for him, she was grateful for former protection received at his hands—she had become interested in the child itself. What female fails to feel such interest in the helpless creature she has tended? And to sum the whole up, the dame had a share of human vanity, and being a sort of Lady Bountiful in her way (for the character was not then confined to the old and the foolish), she was proud of the skill by which she had averted the probable attacks of hereditary malady, so inveterate in the family of Bridgenorth. It needed not, perhaps, in other cases, that so many reasons should be assigned for an act of neighbourly humanity, but civil war had so lately torn the country asunder and broken all the usual ties of vicinage and good neighbourhood, that it was unusual to see them preserved among persons of different political opinions.

Major Bridgenorth himself felt this, and while the tear of joy in his eye showed how gladly he would accept Lady Peveril's proposal, he could not help stating the obvious inconveniences attendant upon her scheme, though it was in the tone of one who would gladly hear them overruled. 'Madam,' he said, 'your kindness makes me the happiest and most thankful of men, but can it be consistent with your own convenience? Sir Geoffrey has his opinions on many points, which have differed and probably do still differ, from mine. He is high born and I of middling parentage only. He uses the Church Service and I the Catechism of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster ——'

'I hope you will find prescribed in neither of them,' said the Lady Peveril, 'that I may not be a mother to your motherless child. I trust, Master Bridgenorth, the joyful Restoration of his Majesty, a work wrought by the direct hand of Providence, may be the means of closing and healing all civil and religious dissensions among us, and that, instead of showing the superior purity of our faith, by persecuting those who think otherwise from ourselves on doctrinal points, we shall endeavour to show its real Christian tendency by emulating each other in actions of goodwill towards man, as the best way of showing our love to God.'

'Your ladyship speaks what your own kind heart dictates,' answered Bridgenorth, who had his own share of the narrow mindedness of the time, 'and sure am I, that if all who call themselves Loyalists and Cavaliers, thought like you—and like my friend Sir Geoffrey —(this he added after a moment's pause, being perhaps rather complimentary than sincere)—'we, who thought it our duty in time past to take arms for freedom of conscience, and against arbitrary power, might now sit down in peace and contentment. But I wot not how it may fall. You have sharp and hot spirits amongst you, I will not say our power was always moderately used, and revenge is sweet to the race of fallen Adam.'

'Come, Master Bridgenorth,' said the Lady Peveril gaily, 'these evil omenings do but point out conclusions, which, unless they were so anticipated, are most unlikely to come to pass. You know what Shakespeare says

> To fly the boar before the boar pursues,
> Were to incense the boar to follow us,
> And make pursuit when he did mean no chase *

But I crave your pardon—it is so long since we have met, that I forgot you love no play books.'

'With reverence to your ladyship,' said Bridgenorth, 'I were much to blame did I need the idle words of a Warwickshire stroller to teach me my grateful duty to your ladyship on this occasion, which appoints me to be directed by you in all things which my conscience will permit.'

'Since you permit me such influence, then,' replied the Lady Peveril, 'I shall be moderate in exercising it, in order that I may, in my domination at least, give you a favourable impression of the new order of things. So, if you will be a subject of mine for one day, neighbour, I am going at my lord and husband's command, to issue out my warrants to invite the whole neighbourhood to a solemn feast at the Castle, on Thursday next, and I not only pray you to be personally present yourself, but to prevail on your worthy pastor and such neighbours and friends, high and low, as may think in your own way, to meet with the rest of the neighbourhood, to rejoice on this joyful occasion of the King's Restoration, and thereby to show that we are to be henceforward a united people.'

The Parliamentarian major was considerably embarrassed by this proposal. He looked upward, and downward, and around, cast his eye first to the oak carved ceiling, and anon fixed it upon the floor, then threw it around the room till it lighted on his child, the sight of whom suggested another and a better train of reflections than ceiling and floor had been able to supply.

'Madam,' he said, 'I have long been a stranger to festivity, perhaps from constitutional melancholy, perhaps from the depression which is natural to a desolate and deprived man, in whose ear mirth is marred, like a pleasant air when performed on a mistuned instrument. But though neither my thoughts nor temperament are jovial or mercurial, it becomes me to be grateful to Heaven for the good he has sent me by the means of your ladyship. David, the man after God's own heart, did wash and eat bread when his beloved child was removed—mine is restored to me, and shall I not show gratitude under a blessing, when he showed resignation under an affliction? Madam, I will wait on your gracious invitation with acceptance, and such of my friends with whom I may possess influence, and whose presence your ladyship may desire, shall accompany me to the festivity, that our Israel may be as one people.'

Having spoken these words with an aspect which belonged more to a martyr than to a guest bidden to a festival, and having kissed and solemnly blessed his little girl, Major Bridgenorth took his departure for Moultrassie Hall.

* Richard III Act 3, Sc. 2.

CHAPTER III.

Here's neither want of appetite nor mouths;
Pray Heaven we be not scant of meat or mirth!
OLD PLAY.

EVEN upon ordinary occasions, and where means were ample, a great entertainment in those days was not such a sinecure as in modern times, when the lady who presides has but to intimate to her menials the day and hour when she wills it to take place. At that simple period, the lady was expected to enter deeply into the arrangement and provision of the whole affair; and from a little gallery, which communicated with her own private apartment, and looked down upon the kitchen, her shrill voice was to be heard, from time to time, like that of the warning spirit in a tempest, rising above the clash of pots and stewpans—the creaking of spits—the clattering of marrow-bones and cleavers—the scolding of cooks—and all the other various kinds of din which form an accompaniment to dressing a large dinner.

But all this toil and anxiety was more than doubled in the case of the approaching feast at Martindale Castle, where the presiding genius of the festivity was scarce provided with adequate means to carry her hospitable purpose into effect. The tyrannical conduct of husbands, in such cases, is universal; and I scarce know one householder of my acquaintance who has not, on some ill-omened and most inconvenient season, announced suddenly to his innocent helpmate, that he had invited

Some odious Major Rock,
To drop in at six o'clock,

to the great discomposure of the lady, and the discredit, perhaps, of her domestic arrangements.

Peveril of the Peak was still more thoughtless; for he had directed his lady to invite the whole honest men of the neighbourhood to make good cheer at Martindale Castle, in honour of the blessed Restoration of his most sacred Majesty, without precisely explaining where the provisions were to come from. The deer-park had lain waste ever since the siege; the dovecot could do little to furnish forth such an entertainment; the fish-ponds, it is true, were well provided (which the neighbouring Presbyterians noted as a suspicious circumstance); and game was to be had for the shooting, upon the extensive heaths and hills of Derbyshire. But these were but the secondary parts of a banquet; and the house-steward and bailiff, Lady Peveril's only coadjutors and counsellors, could not agree how the butcher-meat—the most substantial part, or, as it were, the main body of the entertainment—was to be supplied. The house-steward threatened the sacrifice of a fine yoke of young bullocks, which the bailiff, who pleaded the necessity of their agricultural services, tenaciously resisted; and Lady Peveril's good and dutiful nature did not prevent her from making some impatient reflections on the want of consideration of her absent knight, who had thus thoughtlessly placed her in so embarrassing a situation.

These reflections were scarcely just, if a man is only responsible for such resolutions as he adopts when he is fully master of himself. Sir Geoffrey's loyalty, like that of many persons in his situation, had, by dint of hopes and fears, victories and defeats, struggles and sufferings, all arising out of the same moving cause, and turning, as it were, on the same pivot, acquired the character of an intense and enthusiastic passion; and the singular and surprising change of fortune, by which his highest wishes were not only gratified, but far exceeded, occasioned for some time a kind of intoxication of loyal rapture which seemed to pervade the whole kingdom. Sir Geoffrey had seen Charles and his brothers, and had been received by the Merry Monarch with that graceful, and at the same time frank urbanity, by which he conciliated all who approached him; the knight's services and merits had been fully acknowledged, and recompense had been hinted at, if not expressly promised. Was it for Peveril of the Peak, in the jubilee of his spirits, to consider how his wife was to find beef and mutton to feast his neighbours?

Luckily, however, for the embarrassed lady, there existed some one who had composure of mind sufficient to foresee this difficulty. Just as she had made up her mind, very reluctantly, to become debtor to Major Bridgenorth for the sum necessary to carry her husband's commands into effect, and whilst she was bitterly regretting this departure from the strictness of her usual economy, the steward, who, by the by, had not been absolutely sober since the news of the king's landing at Dover, burst into the apartment, snapping his fingers, and showing more marks of delight than was quite consistent with the dignity of my lady's large parlour.

'What means this, Whitaker?' said the lady somewhat peevishly; for she was interrupted in the commencement of a letter to her neighbour on the unpleasant business of the proposed loan,—'Is it to be always thus with you?—Are you dreaming?'

'A vision of good omen, I trust,' said the steward, with a triumphant flourish of the hand; 'far better than Pharaoh's, though, like his, it be of fat kine.'

'I prithee be plain, man,' said the lady, 'or fetch some one who can speak to purpose.'

'Why, odds-my-life, madam,' said the steward, 'mine errand can speak for itself. Do you not hear them low? Do you not hear them bleat? A yoke of fat oxen, and half a score prime wethers. The castle is victualled for this bout, let them storm when they will; and Gatherill may have his d—d mains ploughed to the boot.'

The lady, without further questioning her elated domestic, rose and went to the window, where she certainly beheld the oxen and sheep which had given rise to Whitaker's exultation.

'Whence come they?' said she, in some surprise.

'Let them construe that who can,' answered Whitaker; 'the fellow who drove them was a west-country man, and only said they came from a friend to help to furnish out your ladyship's entertainment; the man would not stay to drink—I am sorry he would not stay to drink—I crave your ladyship's pardon for not keeping him by the ears to drink—it was not my fault.'

'That I'll be sworn it was not,' said the lady,

'Nay, madam, by G—, I assure you it was not,' said the zealous steward; 'for, rather than the castle should lose credit, I drank his health myself in double ale, though I had had my morning draught already. I tell you the naked truth, my lady, by G—!'

'It was no great compulsion, I suppose,' said the lady; 'but, Whitaker, suppose you should show your joy on such occasions, by drinking and swearing a little less, rather than a little more, would it not be as well, think you?'

'I crave your ladyship's pardon,' said Whitaker, with much reverence; 'I hope I know my place. I am your ladyship's poor servant; and I know it does not become me to drink and swear like your ladyship—that is, like his honour, Sir Geoffrey, I would say. But I pray you, if I am not to drink and swear after my degree, how are men to know Peveril of the Peak's steward, —and I may say butler too, since I have had the keys of the cellar ever since old Spigots was shot dead on the north-west turret, with a black jack in his hand,—I say, how is an old Cavalier like me to be known from those cuckoldy Roundheads that do nothing but fast and pray, if we are not to drink and swear according to our degree?'

The lady was silent, for she well knew speech availed nothing; and, after a moment's pause, proceeded to intimate to the steward that she would have the persons, whose names were marked in a written paper, which she delivered to him, invited to the approaching banquet.

Whitaker, instead of receiving the list with the mute acquiescence of a modern major-domo, carried it into the recess of one of the windows, and, adjusting his spectacles, began to read it to himself. The first names, being those of distinguished Cavalier families in the neighbourhood, he muttered over in a tone of approbation —paused and pshawed at that of Bridgenorth—yet acquiesced, with the observation, 'But he is a good neighbour, so it may pass for once.' But when he read the name and surname of Nehemiah Solsgrace, the Presbyterian parson, Whitaker's patience altogether forsook him; and he declared he would as soon throw himself into Eldon Hole,* as consent that the intrusive old Puritan howlet, who had usurped the pulpit of a sound orthodox divine, should ever darken the gates of Martindale Castle by any message or mediation of his. 'The false crop-eared hypocrites,' cried he, with a hearty oath, 'have had their turn of the good weather. The sun is on our side of the hedge now, and we will pay off old scores, as sure as my name is Richard Whitaker.'

'You presume on your long services, Whitaker, and on your master's absence, or you had not dared to use me thus,' said the lady.

The unwonted agitation of her voice attracted the attention of the refractory steward, notwithstanding his present state of elevation; but he no sooner saw that her eye glistened, and her cheek reddened, than his obstinacy was at once subdued.

'A murrain on me,' he said, 'but I have made my lady angry in good earnest! and that is an unwonted sight for to see.—I crave your pardon, my lady! It was not poor Dick Whitaker disputed your honourable commands, but only that second draught of double ale. We have put a double stroke of malt to it, as your ladyship well knows, ever since the happy Restoration. To be sure, I hate a fanatic as I do the cloven foot of Satan; but then your honourable ladyship hath a right to invite Satan himself, cloven foot and all, to Martindale Castle; and to send me to hell's gate with a billet of invitation—and so your will shall be done.'

The invitations were sent round accordingly, in all due form; and one of the bullocks was sent down to be roasted whole at the market-place of a little village called Martindale-Moultrassie, which stood considerably to the eastward both of the Castle and Hall, from which it took its double name, at about an equal distance from both; so that, suppose a line drawn from the one manor-house to the other to be the base of a triangle, the village would have occupied the salient angle. As the said village, since the late transference of a part of Peveril's property, belonged to Sir Geoffrey and to Bridgenorth in nearly equal portions, the lady judged it not proper to dispute the right of the latter to add some hogsheads of beer to the popular festivity.

In the meanwhile, she could not but suspect the major of being the unknown friend who had relieved her from the dilemma arising from the want of provisions; and she esteemed herself happy when a visit from him, on the day preceding the proposed entertainment, gave her, as she thought, an opportunity of expressing her gratitude.

CHAPTER IV.

> No, sir—I will not pledge—I'm one of those
> Who think good wine needs neither bush nor preface
> To make it welcome. If you doubt my word,
> Fill the quart-cup, and see if I will choke on't.
>
> OLD PLAY.

THERE was a serious gravity of expression in the disclamation with which Major Bridgenorth replied to the thanks tendered to him by Lady Peveril, for the supply of provisions which had reached her castle so opportunely. He seemed first not to be aware what she alluded to; and, when she explained the circumstance, he protested so seriously that he had no share in the benefit conferred, that Lady Peveril was compelled to believe him, the rather that, being a man of plain downright character, affecting no refined delicacy of sentiment, and practising almost a quaker-like sincerity of expression, it would have been much contrary to his general character to have made such a disavowal, unless it were founded in truth.

'My present visit to you, madam,' said he, 'had indeed some reference to the festivity of to-morrow.' Lady Peveril listened, but, as her visitor seemed to find some difficulty in expressing himself, she was compelled to ask an explanation. 'Madam,' said the major, 'you are not perhaps entirely ignorant that the more tender-conscienced among us have scruples at certain

* A chasm in the earth supposed to be unfathomable, one of the wonders of the Peak.

practices, so general amongst your people at times of rejoicing, that you may be said to insist upon them as articles of faith, or at least greatly to resent their omission.'

'I trust, Master Bridgenorth,' said the Lady Peveril, not fully comprehending the drift of his discourse, 'that we shall, as your entertainers, carefully avoid all allusions or reproaches founded on past misunderstanding.'

'We would expect no less, madam, from your candour and courtesy,' said Bridgenorth; 'but I perceive you do not fully understand me. To be plain, then, I allude to the fashion of drinking healths, and pledging each other in draughts of strong liquor, which most among us consider as a superfluous and sinful provoking of each other to debauchery and the excessive use of strong drink; and which, besides, if derived, as learned divines have supposed, from the custom of the blinded Pagans, who made libations and invoked idols when they drank, may be justly said to have something in it heathenish, and allied to demon-worship.'

The lady had already hastily considered all the topics which were likely to introduce discord into the proposed festivity; but this very ridiculous, yet fatal discrepancy, betwixt the manners of the parties on convivial occasions, had entirely escaped her. She endeavoured to soothe the objecting party, whose brows were knit like one who had fixed an opinion by which he was determined to abide.

'I grant,' she said, 'my good neighbour, that this custom is at least idle, and may be prejudicial if it leads to excess in the use of liquor, which is apt enough to take place without such conversation. But I think, when it hath not this consequence, it is a thing indifferent, affords a unanimous mode of expressing our good wishes to our friends, and our loyal duty to our sovereign; and, without meaning to put any force upon the inclination of those who believe otherwise, I cannot see how I can deny my guests and friends the privilege of drinking a health to the King, or to my husband, after the old English fashion.'

'My lady,' said the major, 'if the age of fashion were to command it, Popery is one of the oldest English fashions that I have heard of; but it is our happiness that we are not benighted like our fathers, and therefore we must act according to the light that is in us, and not after their darkness. I had myself the honour to attend the Lord Keeper Whitelocke, when, at the table of the Chamberlain of the kingdom of Sweden, he did positively refuse to pledge the health of his queen, Christina, thereby giving great offence, and putting in peril the whole purpose of that voyage; which it is not to be thought so wise a man would have done, but that he held such compliance a thing not merely indifferent, but rather sinful and damnable.'

'With all respect to Whitelocke,' said the Lady Peveril, 'I continue of my own opinion, though, Heaven knows, I am no friend to riot or wassail. I would fain accommodate myself to your scruples, and will discourage all other pledges; but surely those of the King and of Peveril of the Peak may be permitted?'

'I dare not,' answered Bridgenorth, 'lay even the ninety-ninth part of a grain of incense upon an altar erected to Satan.'

'How, sir!' said the lady; 'do you bring Satan into comparison with our master King Charles, and with my noble lord and husband?'

'Pardon me, madam,' answered Bridgenorth, 'I have no such thoughts—indeed, they would ill become me. I do wish the King's health and Sir Geoffrey's devoutly, and I will pray for both. But I see not what good it should do their health if I should prejudice my own by quaffing pledges out of quart-flagons.'

'Since we cannot agree upon this matter,' said Lady Peveril, 'we must find some resource by which to offend those of neither party. Suppose you winked at our friends drinking these pledges, and we should connive at your sitting still?'

But neither would this composition satisfy Bridgenorth, who was of opinion, as he expressed himself, that it would be holding a candle to Beelzebub. In fact, his temper, naturally stubborn, was at present rendered much more so by a previous conference with his preacher, who, though a very good man in the main, was particularly and illiberally tenacious of the petty distinctions which his sect adopted; and, while he thought with considerable apprehension on the accession of power which Popery, Prelacy, and Peveril of the Peak were like to acquire by the late Revolution, became naturally anxious to put his flock on their guard, and prevent their being kidnapped by the wolf. He disliked extremely that Major Bridgenorth, indisputably the head of the Presbyterian interest in that neighbourhood, should have given his only daughter to be, as he termed it, nursed by a Canaanitish woman; and he told him plainly that he liked not this going to feast in the high places with the uncircumcised in heart, and looked on the whole conviviality only as a making merry in the house of Tirzah.

Upon receiving this rebuke from his pastor, Bridgenorth began to suspect he might have been partly wrong in the readiness which, in his first ardour of gratitude, he had shown to enter into intimate intercourse with the Castle of Martindale; but he was too proud to avow this to the preacher, and it was not till after a considerable debate betwixt them, that it was mutually agreed their presence at the entertainment should depend upon the condition, that no healths or pledges should be given in their presence. Bridgenorth, therefore, as the delegate and representative of his party, was bound to stand firm against all entreaty, and the lady became greatly embarrassed. She now regretted sincerely that her well-intended invitation had ever been given, for she foresaw that its rejection was to awaken all former subjects of quarrel, and perhaps to lead to new violences amongst people who had not many years since been engaged in civil war. To yield up the disputed point to the Presbyterians, would have been to offend the Cavalier party, and Sir Geoffrey in particular, in the most mortal degree; for they made it as firm a point of honour to give healths, and compel others to pledge them, as the Puritans made it a deep article of religion to refuse both. At length the lady changed the discourse, introduced that of Major Bridgenorth's child, caused

it to be sent for and put into his arms. The mother's stratagem took effect; for, though the Parliamentary major stood firm, the father, as in the case of the Governor of Tilbury, was softened, and he agreed that his friends should accept a compromise. This was, that the major himself, the reverend divine, and such of their friends as held strict Puritan tenets, should form a separate party in the large parlour, while the hall should be occupied by the jovial Cavaliers, and that each party should regulate their potations after their own conscience, or after their own fashion.

Major Bridgenorth himself seemed greatly relieved after this important matter had been settled. He had held it matter of conscience to be stubborn in maintaining his own opinion, but was heartily glad when he escaped from the apparently inevitable necessity of affronting Lady Peveril by the refusal of her invitation. He remained longer than usual, and spoke and smiled more than was his custom. His first care, on his return, was to announce to the clergyman and his congregation the compromise which he had made, and this not as a matter for deliberation, but one upon which he had already resolved, and such was his authority among them, that, though the preacher longed to pronounce a separation of the parties and to exclaim—'To your tents, O Israel!' he did not see the chance of being seconded by so many as would make it worth while to disturb the unanimous acquiescence in their delegate's proposal.

Nevertheless, each party being put upon the alert by the consequences of Major Bridgenorth's embassy, so many points of doubt and delicate discussion were started in succession, that the Lady Peveril, the only person perhaps, who was desirous of achieving an effectual reconciliation between them, incurred, in reward for her good intentions, the censure of both factions, and had much reason to regret her well meant project of bringing the Capulets and Montagues of Derbyshire together on the same occasion of public festivity.

As it was now settled that the guests were to form two different parties, it became not only a subject of dispute betwixt themselves, which should be first admitted within the Castle of Martindale, but matter of serious apprehension to Lady Peveril and Major Bridgenorth, lest, if they were to approach by the same avenue and entrance, a quarrel might take place betwixt them, and proceed to extremities, even before they reached the place of entertainment. The lady believed she had discovered an admirable expedient for preventing the possibility of such interference, by directing that the Cavaliers should be admitted by the principal entrance, while the Roundheads should enter the Castle through a great breach which had been made in the course of the siege, and across which there had been since made a sort of bypath to drive the cattle down to their pasture in the wood. By this contrivance the Lady Peveril imagined she had altogether avoided the various risks which might occur from two such parties encountering each other, and disputing for precedence. Several other circumstances of less importance were adjusted at the same time, and apparently so much to the satisfaction of the Presbyterian teacher, that, in a long lecture on the subject of the marriage garment, he was at the pains to explain to his hearers, that outward apparel was not alone meant by that scriptural expression, but also a suitable frame of mind for enjoyment of peaceful festivity, and therefore he exhorted the brethren, that, whatever might be the errors of the poor blinded malignants, with whom they were in some sort to eat and drink upon the morrow, they ought not on this occasion to show any evil will against them, lest they should therein become troublers of the peace of Israel.

Honest Doctor Dummerar, the ejected Episcopal Vicar of Martindale *cum* Moultrassie, preached to the Cavaliers on the same subject. He had served the cure before the breaking out of the Rebellion, and was in high favour with Sir Geoffrey not merely on account of his sound orthodoxy and deep learning, but his exquisite skill in playing at bowls, and his facetious conversation over a pipe and tankard of October. For these latter accomplishments, the doctor had the honour to be recorded by old Century White * amongst the roll of lewd, incompetent, profligate clergymen of the Church of England, whom he denounced to God and man, on account chiefly of the heinous sin of playing at games of skill and chance, and of occasionally joining in the social meetings of their parishioners. When the king's party began to lose ground, Doctor Dummerar left his vicarage, and, betaking himself to the camp, showed upon several occasions, when acting as chaplain to Sir Geoffrey Peveril's regiment, that his portly bodily presence included a stout and masculine heart. When all was lost, and he himself, with most other loyal divines, was deprived of his living, he made such shift as he could—now lurking in the garrets of old friends in the university, who shared with him and such as him, the slender means of livelihood which the evil times had left them; and now lying hid in the houses of the oppressed and sequestrated gentry who respected at once his character and sufferings. When the Restoration took place, Doctor Dummerar emerged from some one of his hiding places, and hied him to Martindale Castle, to enjoy the triumph inseparable from this happy change.

His appearance at the Castle in his full clerical dress, and the warm reception which he received from the neighbouring gentry, added not a little to the alarm which was gradually extending itself through the party which were so lately the uppermost. It is true, Doctor Dummerar framed (honest, worthy man) no extravagant views of elevation or preferment, but the probability of his being replaced in the living, from which he had been expelled under very flimsy pretences, inferred a severe blow to

* This was a name given to John White, a nonconformist lawyer, the author of a work which Anthony Wood calls 'an infamous libel,' entitled *The first Century of scandalous, malignant Priests, made and admitted into Benefices by the Prelates* etc Lond 1643, 4to. It is said, his own brethren did persuade him from putting out a second century, for fear it should prove scandalous, etc He died in 1644-45, and was buried in the Temple church, and on a marble stone were these two verses—

Here lieth a *John* a burning shining light,
His name, life actions were all *White*.

the Presbyterian divine, who could not be considered otherwise than as an intruder. The interests of the two preachers, therefore, as well as the sentiments of their flocks, were at direct variance; and here was another fatal objection in the way of Lady Peveril's scheme of a general and comprehensive healing ordinance.

Nevertheless, as we have already hinted, Doctor Dummerar behaved as handsomely upon the occasion as the Presbyterian incumbent had done. It is true that, in a sermon which he preached in the Castle hall to several of the most distinguished Cavalier families, besides a world of boys from the village, who went to see the novel circumstance of a parson in a cassock and surplice, he went at great length into the foulness of the various crimes committed by the rebellious party during the late evil times, and greatly magnified the merciful and peaceful nature of the honourable lady of the manor, who condescended to look upon, or receive into her house in the way of friendship and hospitality, men holding the principles which had led to the murder of the king—the slaying and despoiling his loyal subjects—and the plundering and breaking down of the Church of God. But then he wiped all this handsomely up again with the observation, that, since it was the will of their gracious and newly-restored sovereign, and the pleasure of the worshipful Lady Peveril, that this contumacious and rebellious race should be, for a time, forborne by their faithful subjects, it would be highly proper that all the loyal liegemen should, for the present, eschew subjects of dissension or quarrel with these sons of Shimei; which lesson of patience he enforced by the comfortable assurance that they could not long abstain from their old rebellious practices; in which case, the Royalists would stand exculpated before God and man in extirpating them from the face of the earth.

The close observers of the remarkable passages of the times from which we draw the events of our history, have left it upon record, that these two several sermons, much contrary, doubtless, to the intention of the worthy divines by whom they were delivered, had a greater effect in exasperating, than in composing, the disputes betwixt the two factions. Under such evil auspices, and with corresponding forebodings on the mind of Lady Peveril, the day of festivity at length arrived.

By different routes, and forming each a sort of procession, as if the adherents of each party were desirous of exhibiting its strength and numbers, the two several factions approached Martindale Castle; and so distinct did they appear in dress, aspect, and manners, that it seemed as if the revellers of a bridal party, and the sad attendants upon a funeral solemnity, were moving towards the same point from different quarters.

The puritanical party was by far the fewer in numbers, for which two excellent reasons might be given. In the first place, they had enjoyed power for several years, and, of course, became unpopular among the common people, never at any time attached to those who, being in the immediate possession of authority, are often obliged to employ it in controlling their humours. Besides, the country people of England had, and still have, an animated attachment to field sports, and a natural unrestrained joviality of disposition, which rendered them impatient under the severe discipline of the fanatical preachers; while they were not less naturally discontented with the military despotism of Cromwell's major-generals. Secondly, the people were fickle as usual, and the return of the king had novelty in it, and was therefore popular. The side of the Puritans was also deserted at this period by a numerous class of more thinking and prudential persons, who never forsook them till they became unfortunate. These sagacious personages were called in that age the Waiters upon Providence, and deemed it a high delinquency towards Heaven if they afforded countenance to any cause longer than it was favoured by fortune.

But, though thus forsaken by the fickle and the selfish, a solemn enthusiasm, a stern and determined depth of principle, a confidence in the sincerity of their own motives, and the manly English pride which inclined them to cling to their former opinions, like the traveller in the fable to his cloak, the more strongly that the tempest blew around them, detained in the ranks of the Puritans many, who, if no longer formidable from numbers, were still so from their character. They consisted chiefly of the middling gentry, with others whom industry or successful speculations in commerce or in mining had raised into eminence—the persons who feel most umbrage from the overshadowing aristocracy, and are usually the most vehement in defence of what they hold to be their rights. Their dress was in general studiously simple and unostentatious, or only remarkable by the contradictory affectation of extreme simplicity or carelessness. The dark colour of their cloaks, varying from absolute black to what was called sad-coloured—their steeple-crowned hats, with their broad, shadowy brims—their long swords, suspended by a simple strap around the loins, without shoulder-belt, sword-knot, plate, buckles, or any of the other decorations with which the Cavaliers loved to adorn their trusty rapiers—the shortness of their hair, which made their ears appear of disproportioned size—above all, the stern and gloomy gravity of their looks, announced their belonging to that class of enthusiasts, who, resolute and undismayed, had cast down the former fabric of government, and who now regarded with somewhat more than suspicion that which had been so unexpectedly substituted in its stead. There was gloom in their countenances; but it was not that of dejection, far less of despair. They looked like veterans after a defeat, which may have checked their career and wounded their pride, but has left their courage undiminished.

The melancholy, now become habitual, which overcast Major Bridgenorth's countenance, well qualified him to act as the chief of the group who now advanced from the village. When they reached the point by which they were first to turn aside into the wood which surrounded the Castle, they felt a momentary impressio[n] degradation, as if they were yielding the h

road to their old and oft defeated enemies the Cavaliers. When they began to ascend the winding path, which had been the daily passage of the cattle, the opening of the wooded glade gave them a view of the Castle ditch, half choked with the rubbish of the breach, and of the breach itself, which was made at the angle of a large square flanking tower, one half of which had been battered into ruins, while the other fragment remained in a state strangely shattered and precarious, and seemed to be tottering above the huge aperture in the wall. A stern, still smile was exchanged among the Puritans, as the sight reminded them of the victories of former days. Holdfast Clegg, a millwright of Derby, who had been himself active at the siege, pointed to the breach, and said with a grim smile to Master Solsgrace, 'I little thought that, when my own hand helped to level the cannon which Oliver pointed against yon tower, we should have been obliged to climb like foxes up the very walls which we won by our bow and by our spear. Methought these malignants had then enough of shutting their gates and making high their horns against us.'

'Be patient, my brother,' said Solsgrace; 'be patient, and let not thy soul be disquieted. We enter not this high place dishonourably, seeing we ascend by the gate which the Lord opened to the godly.'

The words of the pastor were like a spark to gunpowder. The countenances of the mournful retinue suddenly expanded, and, accepting what had fallen from him as an omen and a light from Heaven how they were to interpret their present situation, they uplifted, with one consent, one of the triumphant songs in which the Israelites celebrated the victories which had been vouchsafed to them over the heathen inhabitants of the Promised Land:—

Let God arise, and then his foes
Shall turn themselves to flight,
His enemies for fear shall run,
And scatter out of sight.

And as wax melts before the fire,
And wind blows smoke away,
So in the presence of the Lord
The wicked shall decay.

God's army twenty thousand is,
Of angels bright and strong,
The Lord also in Sinai
Is present them among.

Thou didst, O Lord, ascend on high,
And captive ledst them all,
Who in times past thy chosen flock
In bondage did enthral.*

These sounds of devotional triumph reached the joyous band of the Cavaliers, who, decked in whatever pomp their repeated misfortunes and impoverishment had left them, were moving towards the same point, though by a different road, and were filling the principal avenue to the Castle with tiptoe mirth and revelry. The two parties were strongly contrasted; for, during that period of civil dissension, the manners of the different factions distinguished them as completely as separate uniforms might have done. If the Puritan was affectedly plain in his dress, and ridiculously precise in his manners, the Cavalier often carried his love of ornament into tawdry finery, and his contempt of hypocrisy into licentious profligacy. Gay gallant fellows, young and old, thronged together towards the ancient Castle, with general and joyous manifestation of those spirits, which, as they had been buoyant enough to support their owners during the worst of times, as they termed Oliver's usurpation, were now so inflated as to transport them nearly beyond the reach of sober reason. Feathers waved, lace glittered, spears jingled, steeds caracoled; and here and there a petronel, or pistol, was fired off by some one, who found his own natural talents for making a noise inadequate to the dignity of the occasion. Boys—for, as we said before, the rabble were with the uppermost party, as usual—hallooed and whooped, 'Down with the Rump!' and 'Fie upon Oliver!' Musical instruments, of as many different fashions as were then in use, played all at once, and without any regard to each other's tune; and the glee of the occasion, while it reconciled the pride of the high born of the party to fraternize with the general rout, derived an additional zest from the conscious triumph, that their exultation was heard by their neighbours, the crestfallen Roundheads.

When the loud and sonorous swell of the psalm tune, multiplied by all the echoes of the cliffs and ruinous halls, came full upon their ear, as if to warn them how little they were to reckon upon the depression of their adversaries, at first it was answered with a scornful laugh, raised to as much height as the scoffers' lungs would permit, in order that it might carry to the psalmodists the contempt of their auditors; but this was a forced exertion of party spleen. There is something in melancholy feelings more natural to an imperfect and suffering state than in those of gaiety; and when they are brought into collision, the former seldom fail to triumph. If a funeral train and wedding procession were to meet unexpectedly, it will readily be allowed that the mirth of the last would be speedily merged in the gloom of the others. But the Cavaliers, moreover, had sympathies of a different kind. The psalm tune which now came rolling on their ear, had been heard too often, and upon too many occasions had preceded victory gained over the malignants, to permit them, even in their triumph, to hear it without emotion. There was a sort of pause, of which the party themselves seemed rather ashamed, until the silence was broken by the stout old knight, Sir Jasper Cranbourne, whose gallantry was so universally acknowledged, that he could afford, if we may use such an expression, to confess emotions which men whose courage was in any respect liable to suspicion, would have thought it imprudent to acknowledge.

'Adad,' said the old knight, 'may I never taste claret again, if that is not the very tune with which the prick-eared villains began their onset at Wiggan Lane, where they trowled us down like so many ninepins! Faith, neighbours, to say truth, and shame the devil, I did not like the sound of it above half.'

'If I thought the round-headed rogues did it

* [This forms part of Sternhold's version of the 68th [illegible], with some slight variations.]

in scorn of us,' said Dick Wildblood of the Dale, 'I would cudgel their psalmody out of their peasantly throats with this very truncheon;' a motion which, being seconded by old Roger Raine, the drunken tapster of the Peveril Arms in the village, might have brought on a general battle, but that Sir Jasper forbade the feud.

'We'll have no ranting, Dick,' said the old knight to the young franklin; 'adad, man, we'll have none, for three reasons—first, because it would be ungentle to Lady Peveril; then, because it is against the King's peace; and lastly, Dick, because if we did set on the psalm-singing knaves, thou mightest come by the worst, my boy, as has chanced to thee before.'

'Who, I! Sir Jasper!' answered Dick—'I come by the worst!—I'll be d—d if it ever happened but in that accursed lane, where we had no more flank, front, or rear, than if we had been so many herrings in a barrel.'

'That was the reason, I fancy,' answered Sir Jasper, 'that you, to mend the matter, scrambled into the hedge, and stuck there horse and man, till I beat thee through it with my leading-staff; and then, instead of charging to the front, you went right-about, and away as fast as your feet would carry you.'

This reminiscence produced a laugh at Dick's expense, who was known, or at least suspected, to have more tongue in his head than mettle in his bosom. And this sort of rallying on the part of the knight having fortunately abated the resentment which had begun to awaken in the breasts of the Royalist cavalcade, further cause for offence was removed by the sudden ceasing of the sounds which they had been disposed to interpret into those of premeditated insult.

This was owing to the arrival of the Puritans at the bottom of the large and wide breach, which had been formerly made in the wall of the Castle by their victorious cannon. The sight of its gaping heaps of rubbish, and disjointed masses of building, up which slowly winded a narrow and steep path, such as is made amongst ancient ruins by the rare passage of those who occasionally visit them, was calculated, when contrasted with the grey and solid massiveness of the towers and curtains which yet stood uninjured, to remind them of their victory over the stronghold of their enemies, and how they had bound nobles and princes with fetters of iron.

But feelings more suitable to the purpose of their visit to Martindale Castle were awakened in the bosoms even of these stern sectaries, when the lady of the Castle, still in the very prime of beauty and of womanhood, appeared at the top of the breach with her principal female attendants, to receive her guests with the honour and courtesy becoming her invitation. She had laid aside the black dress which had been her sole attire for several years, and was arrayed with a splendour not unbecoming her high descent and quality. Jewels, indeed, she had none; but her long and dark hair was surmounted with a chaplet made of oak leaves, interspersed with lilies; the former being the emblem of the king's preservation in the Royal Oak, and the latter, of his happy Restoration. What rendered her presence still more interesting to those who looked on her, was the presence of the two children whom she held in either hand; one of whom was well known to them all to be the child of their leader, Major Bridgenorth, who had been restored to life and health by the almost maternal care of the Lady Peveril.

If even the inferior persons of the party felt the healing influence of her presence, thus accompanied, poor Bridgenorth was almost overwhelmed with it. The strictness of his caste and manners permitted him not to sink on his knee and kiss the hand which held his little orphan; but the deepness of his obeisance—the faltering tremor of his voice—and the glistening of his eye, showed a grateful respect for the lady whom he addressed—deeper and more reverential than could have been expressed even by Persian prostration. A few courteous and mild words, expressive of the pleasure she found in once more seeing her neighbours as her friends—a few kind inquiries, addressed to the principal individuals among her guests, concerning their families and connections, completed her triumph over angry thoughts and dangerous recollections, and disposed men's bosoms to sympathise with the purposes of the meeting.

Even Solsgrace himself, although imagining himself bound by his office and duty to watch over and counteract the wiles of the 'Amalekitish woman,' did not escape the sympathetic infection; being so much struck with the marks of peace and good-will exhibited by Lady Peveril, that he immediately raised the psalm—

> O what a happy thing it is,
> And joyful for to see,
> Brethren to dwell together in
> Friendship and unity!

Accepting this salutation as a mark of courtesy repaid, the Lady Peveril marshalled in person this party of her guests to the apartment, where ample good cheer was provided for them; and had even the patience to remain while Master Nehemiah Solsgrace pronounced a benediction of portentous length, as an introduction to the banquet. Her presence was in some measure a restraint on the worthy divine, whose prolusion lasted the longer, and was the more intricate and embarrassed, that he felt himself debarred from rounding it off by his usual alliterative petition for deliverance from Popery, Prelacy, and Peveril of the Peak, which had become so habitual to him, that, after various attempts to conclude with some other form of words, he found himself at last obliged to pronounce the first words of his usual formula aloud, and mutter the rest in such a manner as not to be intelligible even by those who stood nearest to him.

The minister's silence was followed by all the various sounds which announce the onset of a hungry company on a well-furnished table; and at the same time gave the lady an opportunity to leave the apartment, and look to the accommodation of her other company. She felt, indeed, that it was high time to do so; and that the Royalist guests might be disposed to misapprehend, or even to resent, the prior attentions which she had thought it prudent to offer to the Puritans.

These apprehensions were not altogether ill-founded. It was in vain that the steward had displayed the royal standard, with its proud

motto of *Tandem Triumphans*, on one of the great towers which flanked the main entrance of the Castle, while from the other floated the banner of Peveril of the Peak, under which many of those who now approached had fought during all the vicissitudes of civil war It was in vain he repeated his clamorous 'Welcome, noble Cavaliers! welcome, generous gentlemen!' There was a slight murmur amongst them, that their welcome ought to have come from the mouth of the colonel's lady—not from that of a menial. Sir Jasper Cranbourne, who had sense as well as spirit and courage, and who was aware of his fair cousin's motives having been indeed consulted by her upon all the arrangements which she had adopted, saw matters were in such a state that no time ought to be lost in conducting the guests to the banqueting apartment, where a fortunate diversion from all these topics of rising discontent might be made, at the expense of the good cheer of all sorts, which the lady's care had so liberally provided

The stratagem of the old soldier succeeded in its utmost extent He assumed the great oaken chair usually occupied by the steward at his audits and Doctor Dummerar having pronounced a brief Latin benediction (which was not the less esteemed by the hearers that none of them understood it), Sir Jasper exhorted the company to whet their appetites to the dinner by a brimming cup to his Majesty's health, filled as high and as deep as their goblets would permit In a moment all was bustle with the clang of wine cups and of flagons In another moment the guests were on their feet like so many statues all hushed as death, but with eyes glancing with expectation, and hands outstretched which displayed their loyal brimmers The voice of Sir Jasper, clear, sonorous and emphatic, as the sound of his war trumpet announced the health of the restored monarch hastily echoed back by the assemblage, impatient to render it due homage Another brief pause was filled by the draining of their cups, and the mustering breath to join in a shout so loud that not only the rafters of the old hall trembled while they echoed it back, but the garlands of oaken boughs and flowers with which they were decorated, waved wildly, and rustled as if agitated by a sudden whirlwind This rite observed, the company proceeded to assail the good cheer with which the table groaned animated as they were to the attack both by mirth and melody for they were attended by all the minstrels of the district, who, like the Episcopal clergy, had been put to silence during the reign of the self entitled saints of the Commonwealth The social occupation of good eating and drinking, the exchange of pledges betwixt old neighbours who had been fellow soldiers in the moment of resistance—fellow sufferers in the time of depression and subjugation, and were now partners in the same general subject of congratulation, soon wiped from their memory the trifling cause of complaint which in the minds of some had darkened the festivity of the day, so that, when the Lady Peveril walked into the hall, accompanied as before with the children and her female attendants, she was welcomed with the acclamations due to the mistress of the banquet and of the Castle—the dame of the noble knight who had led most of them to battle with an undaunted and persevering valour, which was worthy of better success

Her address to them was brief and matronly, yet spoken with so much feeling as found its way to every bosom She apologized for the lateness of her personal welcome, by reminding them that there were then present in Martindale Castle that day, persons whom recent happy events had converted from enemies into friends, but on whom the latter character was so recently imposed, that she dared not neglect with them any point of ceremonial But those whom she now addressed were the best, the dearest, the most faithful friends of her husband's house, to whom and to their valour Peveril had not only owed those successes, which had given them and him fame during the late unhappy times, but to whose courage she in particular had owed the preservation of their leader's life, even when it could not avert defeat A word or two of heartfelt congratulation on the happy restoration of the royal line and authority completed all which she had boldness to add, and, bowing gracefully round her, she lifted a cup to her lips as if to welcome her guests

There still remained and especially amongst the old Cavaliers of the period some glimmering of that spirit which inspired Froissart, when he declares that a knight hath double courage at need when animated by the looks and words of a beautiful and virtuous woman It was not until the reign which was commencing at the moment we are treating of, that the unbounded licence of the age introducing a general course of profligacy degraded the female sex into mere servants of pleasure and, in so doing, deprived society of that noble tone of feeling towards the sex, which considered as a spur to 'raise the clear spirit,' is superior to every other impulse, save those of religion and of patriotism The beams of the ancient hall of Martindale Castle instantly rang with a shout louder and shriller than that at which they had so lately trembled, and the names of the Knight of the Peak and his lady were proclaimed amid waving of caps and hats and universal wishes for their health and happiness

Under these auspices the Lady Peveril glided from the hall and left free space for the revelry of the evening

That of the Cavaliers may be easily conceived, since it had the usual accompaniments of singing, jesting, quaffing of healths, and playing of tunes, which have in almost every age and quarter of the world been the accompaniments of festive cheer The enjoyments of the Puritans were of a different and less noisy character. They neither sang, jested, heard music, nor drank healths, and yet they seemed not the less, in their own phrase, to enjoy the creature comforts which the frailty of humanity rendered grateful to their outward man Old Whitaker even protested that, though much the smaller party in point of numbers, they discussed nearly as much sack and claret as his own more jovial associates. But those who considered the steward's prejudices, were inclined to think that, in order to produce such a result, he must have thrown in his own

by-drinkings—no inconsiderable item—to the sum-total of the Presbyterian potations.

Without adopting such a partial and scandalous report, we shall only say, that on this occasion, as on most others, the rareness of indulgence promoted the sense of enjoyment, and that those who made abstinence, or at least moderation, a point of religious principle, enjoyed their social meeting the better that such opportunities rarely presented themselves. If they did not actually drink each other's healths, they at least showed, by looking and nodding to each other as they raised their glasses, that they all were sharing the same festive gratification of the appetite, and felt it enhanced, because it was at the same time enjoyed by their friends and neighbours. Religion, as it was the principal topic of their thoughts, became also the chief subject of their conversation, and as they sat together in small separate knots, they discussed doctrinal and metaphysical points of belief, balanced the merits of various preachers, compared the creeds of contending sects, and fortified by scriptural quotations those which they favoured. Some contests arose in the course of these debates, which might have proceeded farther than was seemly, but for the cautious interference of Major Bridgenorth. He suppressed also, in the very bud, a dispute betwixt Gaffer Hodgeson of Charnelycot and the Reverend Mr. Solsgrace, upon the tender subject of lay-preaching and lay-ministering; nor did he think it altogether prudent or decent to indulge the wishes of some of the warmer enthusiasts of the party, who felt disposed to make the rest partakers of their gifts in extemporaneous prayer and exposition. These were absurdities that belonged to the time, which, however, the major had sense enough to perceive were unfitted, whether the offspring of hypocrisy or enthusiasm, for the present time and place.

The major was also instrumental in breaking up the party at an early and decorous hour, so that they left the Castle long before their rivals, the Cavaliers, had reached the spring-tide of their merriment; an arrangement which afforded the greatest satisfaction to the lady, who dreaded the consequences which might not improbably have taken place, had both parties met at the same period and point of retreat.

It was near midnight ere the greater part of the Cavaliers, meaning such as were able to effect their departure without assistance, withdrew to the village of Martindale-Moultrassie, with the benefit of the broad moon to prevent the chance of accidents. Their shouts, and the burden of their roaring chorus of—

The King shall enjoy his own again!

were heard with no small pleasure by the lady, heartily glad that the riot of the day was over without the occurrence of any unpleasing accident. The rejoicing was not, however, entirely ended; for the elevated Cavaliers, finding some of the villagers still on foot around a bonfire on the street, struck merrily in with them—sent to Roger Raine of the Peveril Arms, the loyal publican whom we have already mentioned, for two tubs of merry stingo (as it was termed), and lent their own powerful assistance at the *dusting* it off to the health of the king and the loyal General Monk. Their shouts for a long time disturbed, and even alarmed the little village; but no enthusiasm is able to withstand for ever the natural consequences of late hours, and potations pottle-deep. The tumult of the exulting Royalists at last sunk into silence, and the moon and the owl were left in undisturbed sovereignty over the old tower of the village church, which, rising white above a circle of knotty oaks, was tenanted by the bird, and silvered by the planet.*

CHAPTER V.

'Twas when they raised, 'mid sap and siege,
The banners of their rightful liege,
At their she captain's call,
Who, miracle of womankind!
Lent mettle to the meanest hind
That mann'd her castle wall.

WILLIAM S. ROSE.

ON the morning succeeding the feast, the Lady Peveril, fatigued with the exertions and the apprehensions of the former day, kept her apartment for two or three hours later than her own active habits, and the matutinal custom of the time, rendered usual. Meanwhile, Mistress Ellesmere, a person of great trust in the family, and who assumed much authority in her mistress's absence, laid her orders upon Deborah, the governante, immediately to carry the children to their airing in the park, and not to let any one enter the gilded chamber, which was usually their sporting place. Deborah, who often rebelled, and sometimes successfully, against the deputed authority of Ellesmere, privately resolved that it was about to rain, and that the gilded chamber was a more suitable place for the children's exercise than the wet grass of the park on a raw morning.

But a woman's brain is sometimes as inconstant as a popular assembly; and presently, after she had voted the morning was like to be rainy, and that the gilded chamber was the fittest play-room for the children, Mistress Deborah came to the somewhat inconsistent resolution, that the park was the fittest place for her own morning walk. It is certain that, during the unrestrained joviality of the preceding evening, she had danced till midnight with Lance Outram the park-keeper; but how far the seeing him just pass the window in his woodland trim, with a feather in his hat and a cross-bow under his arm, influenced the discrepancy of the opinions Mistress Deborah formed concerning the weather, we are far from presuming to guess. It is enough for us, that, so soon as Mistress Ellesmere's back was turned, Mistress Deborah carried the children into the gilded chamber, not without a strict charge (for we must do her justice) to Master Julian to take care of his little wife, Mistress Alice; and then, having taken so satisfactory a precaution, she herself glided into the park by the glass-door of the still-room, which was nearly opposite to the great breach.

* Note B. Cavaliers and Puritans.

The gilded chamber in which the children were, by this arrangement, left to amuse themselves, without better guardianship than what Julian's manhood afforded, was a large apartment, hung with stamped Spanish leather, curiously gilded, representing in a manner now obsolete, but far from unpleasing, a series of tilts and combats betwixt the Saracens of Grenada, and the Spaniards under the command of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, during that memorable siege, which was terminated by the overthrow of the last fragments of the Moorish empire in Spain.

The little Julian was careering about the room for the amusement of his infant friend, as well as his own, mimicking with a reed the menacing attitude of the Abencerrages and Zegris engaged in the Eastern sport of hurling the *jerid*, or javelin; and at times sitting down beside her, and caressing her into silence and good humour, when the petulant or timid child chose to become tired of remaining an inactive spectator of his boisterous sport; when, on a sudden, he observed one of the panelled compartments of the leather hangings slide apart, so as to show a fair hand, with its fingers resting upon its edge, prepared, it would seem, to push it still farther back. Julian was much surprised, and somewhat frightened, at what he witnessed, for the tales of the nursery had strongly impressed on his mind the terrors of the invisible world. Yet, naturally bold and high-spirited, the little champion placed himself beside his defenceless sister, continuing to brandish his weapon in her defence, as boldly as if he had himself been an Abencerrage of Grenada.

The panel, on which his eye was fixed, gradually continued to slide back, and display more and more the form to which the hand appertained, until, in the dark aperture which was disclosed, the children saw the figure of a lady in a mourning dress, past the meridian of life, but whose countenance still retained traces of great beauty, although the predominant character both of her features and person was an air of almost royal dignity. After pausing a moment on the threshold of the portal which she had thus unexpectedly disclosed, and looking with some surprise at the children, whom she had not probably observed while engaged with the management of the panel, the stranger stepped into the apartment, and the panel, upon a touch of a spring, closed behind her so suddenly that Julian almost doubted it had ever been open, and began to apprehend that the whole apparition had been a delusion.*

The stately lady, however, advanced to him, and said, 'Are not you the little Peveril?'

'Yes,' said the boy, reddening, not altogether without a juvenile feeling of that rule of chivalry which forbade any one to disown his name, whatever danger might be annexed to the avowal of it.

'Then,' said the stately stranger, 'go to your mother's room, and tell her to come instantly to speak with me.'

'I wo'not,' said the little Julian.

'How!' said the lady,—'so young and so disobedient?—but you do but follow the fashion of the time. Why will you not go, my pretty boy, when I ask it of you as a favour?'

'I would go, madam,' said the boy, 'but'—and he stopped short, still drawing back as the lady advanced on him, but still holding by the hand Alice Bridgenorth, who, too young to understand the nature of the dialogue, clung, trembling, to her companion.

The stranger saw his embarrassment, smiled, and remained standing fast, while she asked the child once more, 'What are you afraid of, my brave boy—and why should you not go to your mother on my errand?'

'Because,' answered Julian firmly, 'if I go, little Alice must stay alone with you.'

'You are a gallant fellow,' said the lady, 'and will not disgrace your blood, which never left the weak without protection.'

The boy understood her not, and still gazed with anxious apprehension, first on her who addressed him, and then upon his little companion, whose eyes, with the vacant glance of infancy, wandered from the figure of the lady to that of her companion and protector, and at length, infected by a portion of the fear which the latter's magnanimous efforts could not entirely conceal, she flew into Julian's arms, and, clinging to him, greatly augmented his alarm, and, by screaming aloud, rendered it very difficult for him to avoid the sympathetic fear which impelled him to do the same.

There was something in the manner and bearing of this unexpected inmate which might justify awe at least, if not fear, when joined to the singular and mysterious mode in which she had made her appearance. Her dress was not remarkable, being the hood and female riding attire of the time, such as was worn by the inferior class of gentlewomen; but her black hair was very long, and several locks, having escaped from under her hood, hung down dishevelled on her neck and shoulders. Her eyes were deep black, keen, and piercing, and her features had something of a foreign expression. When she spoke, her language was marked by a slight foreign accent, although in construction it was pure English. Her slightest tone and gesture had the air of one accustomed to command and to be obeyed; the recollection of which probably suggested to Julian the apology he afterwards made for being frightened, that he took the stranger for an enchanted queen.

While the stranger lady and the children thus confronted each other, two persons entered almost at the same instant, but from different doors, whose haste showed that they had been alarmed by the screams of the latter.

The first was Major Bridgenorth, whose ears had been alarmed with the cries of his child, as he entered the hall, which corresponded with what was called the gilded chamber. His intention had been to remain in the more public apartment until the Lady Peveril should make her appearance, with the good-natured purpose of assuring her that the preceding day of tumult had passed in every respect agreeably to his friends, and without any of those alarming consequences which might have been apprehended from a collision betwixt the parties. But when it is considered how severely he had been agitated by apprehensions for his child's safety and health, too well justified by the fate of those who had preceded her, it will not be thought surprising,

* Note C. Concealment of the Countess of Derby

that the infantine screams of Alice induced him to break through the barriers of form, and intrude farther into the interior of the house than a sense of strict propriety might have warranted.

He burst into the gilded chamber, therefore, by a side door and narrow passage, which communicated betwixt that apartment and the hall, and, snatching the child up in his arms, endeavoured, by a thousand caresses, to stifle the screams which burst yet more violently from the little girl, on beholding herself in the arms of one to whose voice and manner she was, but for one brief interview, an entire stranger.

Of course Alice's shrieks were redoubled, and seconded by those of Julian Peveril, who on the appearance of this second intruder was frightened into resignation of every more manly idea of rescue than that which consisted in invoking assistance at the very top of his lungs.

Alarmed by this noise, which in half a minute became very clamorous, Lady Peveril, with whose apartment the gilded chamber was connected by a private door of communication opening into her wardrobe, entered on the scene. The instant she appeared, the little Alice, extricating herself from the grasp of her father, ran towards her protectress, and, when she had once taken hold of her skirts, not only became silent, but turned her large blue eyes, in which the tears were still glistening, with a look of wonder rather than alarm, towards the strange lady. Julian manfully brandished his reed, a weapon which he had never parted with during the whole alarm, and stood prepared to assist his mother if there should be danger in the encounter betwixt her and the stranger.

In fact, it might have puzzled an older person to account for the sudden and confused pause which the Lady Peveril made as she gazed on her unexpected guest, as if dubious whether she did or did not recognise in her still beautiful though wasted and emaciated features a countenance which she had known well under far different circumstances.

The stranger seemed to understand her cause of hesitation, for she said in that heart-thrilling voice which was peculiarly her own—

'Time and misfortune have changed me much, Margaret—that every mirror tells me—yet methinks Margaret Stanley might still have known Charlotte de la Tremouille.'

The Lady Peveril was little in the custom of giving way to sudden emotion, but in the present case she threw herself on her knees in a rapture of mingled joy and grief, and, half embracing those of the stranger, exclaimed in broken language—

'My kind, my noble benefactress—the princely Countess of Derby—the royal Queen in Man—could I doubt your voice, your features for a moment?—Oh, forgive, forgive me!'

The countess raised the suppliant kinswoman of her husband's house, with all the grace of one accustomed from early birth to receive homage and to grant protection. She kissed the Lady Peveril's forehead, and passed her hand in a caressing manner over her face as she said—

'You too are changed, my fair cousin, but it is a change becomes you, from a pretty and [illegible] maiden to a sage and comely matron. But my own memory, which I once held a good one, has failed me strangely, if this gentleman be Sir Geoffrey Peveril.'

'A kind and good neighbour only, madam,' said Lady Peveril; 'Sir Geoffrey is at court.'

'I understood so much,' said the Countess of Derby, 'when I arrived here last night.'

'How, madam!' said Lady Peveril—'Did you arrive at Martindale Castle—at the house of Margaret Stanley, where you have such right to command, and did not announce your presence to her?'

'Oh, I know you are a dutiful subject, Margaret,' answered the countess, 'though it be in these days a rare character; but it was our pleasure,' she added, with a smile, 'to travel incognito—and, finding you engaged in general hospitality, we desired not to disturb you with our royal presence.'

'But how and where were you lodged, madam?' said Lady Peveril; 'or why should you have kept secret a visit which would, if made, have augmented tenfold the happiness of every true heart that rejoiced here yesterday?'

'My lodging was well cared for by Ellesmere—your Ellesmere now, as she was formerly mine—she has acted as quartermaster ere now, you know, and on a broader scale; you must excuse her—she had my positive order to lodge me in the most secret part of your castle'—(here she pointed to the sliding panel)—'she obeyed orders in that, and I suppose also in sending you now hither.'

'Indeed, I have not yet seen her,' said the lady, 'and therefore was totally ignorant of a visit so joyful, so surprising.'

'And I,' said the countess, 'was equally surprised to find none but these beautiful children in the apartment where I thought I heard you moving. Our Ellesmere has become silly—your good nature has spoiled her—she has forgotten the discipline she learned under me.'

'I saw her run through the wood,' said the lady, after a moment's recollection, 'undoubtedly to seek the person who has charge of the children, in order to remove them.'

'Your own darlings, I doubt not,' said the countess, looking at the children. 'Margaret, Providence has blessed you.'

'That is my son,' said Lady Peveril, pointing to Julian, who stood devouring their discourse with greedy ear; 'the little girl—I may call mine too.' Major Bridgenorth, who had in the meantime again taken up his infant, and was engaged in caressing it, set it down as the Countess of Derby spoke, sighed deeply, and walked towards the oriel window. He was well aware that the ordinary rules of courtesy would have rendered it proper that he should withdraw entirely, or at least offer to do so; but he was not a man of ceremonious politeness, and he had a particular interest in the subjects on which the countess's discourse was likely to turn, which induced him to dispense with ceremony. The ladies seemed indeed scarce to notice his presence. The countess had now assumed a chair, and motioned to the Lady Peveril to sit upon a stool which was placed by her side. 'We will have old times once more, though there is here no roaring of rebel guns,

to drive you to take refuge at my side, and almost in my pocket.'

'I have a gun, madam,' said little Julian, 'and the park-keeper is to teach me how to fire it next year.'

'I will list you for my soldier, then,' said the countess.

'Ladies have no soldiers,' said the boy, looking wistfully at her.

'He has the true masculine contempt of our frail sex, I see,' said the countess; 'it is born with the insolent varlets of mankind, and shows itself as soon as they are out of their long clothes.—Did Ellesmere never tell you of Latham House and Charlotte of Derby, my little master?'

'A thousand thousand times,' said the boy, colouring; 'and how the Queen of Man defended it six weeks against three thousand Roundheads, under Rogue Harrison the butcher.'

'It was your mother defended Latham House,' said the countess, 'not I, my little soldier.—Hadst thou been there, thou hadst been the best captain of the three.'

'Do not say so, madam,' said the boy, 'for mamma would not touch a gun for all the universe.'

'Not I, indeed, Julian,' said his mother 'there I was for certain, but as useless a part of the garrison'——

'You forget,' said the countess, 'you nursed our hospital, and made lint for the soldiers' wounds.'

'But did not papa come to help you?' said Julian.

'Papa came at last,' said the countess, 'and so did Prince Rupert—but not, I think, till they were both heartily wished for.—Do you remember that morning, Margaret, when the round-headed knaves, that kept us pent up so long, retreated without bag or baggage, at the first glance of the Prince's standards appearing on the hill—and how you took every high-crested captain you saw for Peveril of the Peak, that had been your partner three months before at the Queen's mask? Nay, never blush for the thought of it—it was an honest affection—and though it was the music of trumpets that accompanied you both to the old chapel, which was almost entirely ruined by the enemy's bullets; and though Prince Rupert, when he gave you away at the altar, was clad in buff and bandolier, with pistols in his belt, yet I trust these warlike signs were no type of future discord?'

'Heaven has been kind to me,' said Lady Peveril, 'in blessing me with an affectionate husband.'

'And in preserving him to you,' said the countess, with a deep sigh; 'while mine, alas! sealed with his blood his devotion to his King*—Oh, had he lived to see this day!'

'Alas! alas! that he was not permitted!' answered Lady Peveril; 'how had that brave and noble Earl rejoiced in the unhoped-for redemption of our captivity!'

The countess looked on Lady Peveril with an air of surprise.

'Thou hast not then heard, cousin, how it stands with our house?—How, indeed, had my noble lord wondered, had he been told that the very monarch for whom he had laid down his noble life on the scaffold at Bolton-le-Moors, should make it his first act of restored monarchy to complete the destruction of our property, already well-nigh ruined in the royal cause, and to persecute me, his widow!'

'You astonish me, madam,' said the Lady Peveril. 'It cannot be that you—that you, the wife of the gallant, the faithful, the murdered Earl—you, Countess of Derby, and Queen in Man—you, who took on you even the character of a soldier, and seemed a man when so many men proved women—that YOU should sustain evil from the event which has fulfilled—exceeded—the hopes of every faithful subject—it cannot be!'

'Thou art as simple, I see, in this world's knowledge as ever, my fair cousin,' answered the countess. 'This Restoration, which has given others security, has placed me in danger—this change which relieved other Royalists, scarce less zealous, I presume to think, than I—has sent me here a fugitive, and in concealment, to beg shelter and assistance from you, fair cousin.'

'From me,' answered the Lady Peveril—'from me, whose youth your kindness sheltered—from the wife of Peveril, your gallant lord's companion in arms—you have a right to command everything; but alas! that you should need such assistance as I can render—forgive me, but it seems like some ill-omened vision of the night—I listen to your words as if I hoped to be relieved from their painful import by awaking.'

'It is indeed a dream—a vision,' said the Countess of Derby; 'but it needs no seer to read it—the explanation hath been long since given—Put not your faith in princes. I can soon remove your surprise.—This gentleman, your friend, is doubtless *honest*?'

The Lady Peveril well knew that the Cavaliers, like other factions, usurped to themselves the exclusive denomination of the *honest* party, and she felt some difficulty in explaining that her visitor was not honest in that sense of the word.

'Had we not better retire, madam,' she said to the countess, rising, as if in order to attend her. But the countess retained her seat.

'It was but a question of habit,' she said; 'the gentleman's principles are nothing to me, for what I have to tell you is widely blazed, and I care not who hears my share of it. You remember—you must have heard, for I think Margaret Stanley would not be indifferent to my fate—that, after my husband's murder at Bolton, I took up the standard which he never dropped until his death, and displayed it with my own hand in our sovereignty of Man.'

'I did indeed hear so, madam,' said the Lady Peveril; 'and that you had bidden a bold defiance to the rebel government, even after all other parts of Britain had submitted to them. My husband, Sir Geoffrey, designed at one time to have gone to your assistance with some few followers; but we learned that the island was rendered to the Parliament party, and that you, dearest lady, were thrown into prison.'

'But you heard not,' said the countess, 'how

* The Earl of Derby and King in Man was beheaded at Bolton-on-the-Moors (on the 15th October 1651), after having been made prisoner in a previous skirmish in Wiggan Lane.

that disaster befell me.—Margaret, I would have held out that island against the knaves as long as the sea continued to flow around it. Till the shoals which surround it had become safe anchorage—till its precipices had melted beneath the sunshine—till of all its strong abodes and castles, not one stone remained upon another,—would I have defended against these villanous, hypocritical rebels my dear husband's hereditary dominion. The little kingdom of Man should have been yielded only when not an arm was left to wield a sword, not a finger to draw a trigger in its defence. But treachery did what force could never have done. When we had foiled various attempts upon the island by open force, treason accomplished what Blake and Lawson, with their floating castles, had found too hazardous an enterprise—a base rebel, whom we had nursed in our own bosoms, betrayed us to the enemy. This wretch was named Christian'——

Major Bridgenorth started and turned towards the speaker, but instantly seemed to recollect himself, and again averted his face. The countess proceeded, without noticing the interruption, which, however, rather surprised Lady Peveril, who was acquainted with her neighbour's general habits of indifference and apathy, and therefore the more surprised at his testifying such sudden symptoms of interest. She would once again have moved the countess to retire to another apartment, but Lady Derby proceeded with too much vehemence to endure interruption.

'This Christian,' she said, 'had ate of my lord his sovereign's bread, and drunk of his cup, even from childhood—for his fathers had been faithful servants to the House of Man and Derby. He himself had fought bravely by my husband's side, and enjoyed all his confidence; and when my princely Earl was martyred by the rebels, he recommended to me, amongst other instructions communicated in the last message I received from him, to continue my confidence in Christian's fidelity. I obeyed, although I never loved the man. He was cold and phlegmatic, and utterly devoid of that sacred fire which is the incentive to noble deeds,—suspected, too, of leaning to the cold metaphysics of Calvinistic subtlety. But he was brave, wise, and experienced, and, as the event proved, possessed but too much interest with the islanders. When these rude people saw themselves without hope of relief, and pressed by a blockade, which brought want and disease into their island, they began to fall off from the faith which they had hitherto shown.'

'What!' said the Lady Peveril, 'could they forget what was due to the widow of their benefactor—she who had shared with the generous Derby the task of bettering their condition?'

'Do not blame them,' said the countess; 'the rude herd acted but according to their kind—in present distress they forgot former benefits, and, nursed in their earthen hovels, with spirits suited to their dwellings, they were incapable of feeling the glory which is attached to constancy in suffering. But that Christian should have headed their revolt—that he, born a gentleman, and bred under my murdered Derby's own care in all that was chivalrous and noble—that *he* should have forgot a hundred benefits—why do I talk of benefits?—that he should have forgotten that kindly intercourse which binds man to man far more than the reciprocity of obligation—that he should have headed the ruffians who broke suddenly into my apartment—immured me with my infants in one of my own castles, and assumed or usurped the tyranny of the island—that this should have been done by William Christian, my vassal, my servant, my friend, was a deed of ungrateful treachery, which even this age of treason will scarcely parallel!'

'And you were then imprisoned,' said the Lady Peveril, 'and in your own sovereignty?'

'For more than seven years I have endured strict captivity,' said the countess. 'I was indeed offered my liberty, and even some means of support, if I would have consented to leave the island, and pledge my word that I would not endeavour to repossess my son in his father's rights. But they little knew the princely house from which I spring—and as little the royal house of Stanley which I uphold, who hoped to humble Charlotte of Tremouille into so base a composition. I would rather have starved in the darkest and lowest vault of Rushin Castle, than have consented to aught which might diminish in one hair's-breadth the right of my son over his father's sovereignty!'

'And could not your firmness, in a case where hope seemed lost, induce them to be generous, and dismiss you without conditions?'

'They knew me better than thou dost, wench,' answered the countess: 'once at liberty, I had not been long without the means of disturbing their usurpation, and Christian would have as soon uncaged a lioness to combat with, as have given me the slightest power of returning to the struggle with him. But time had liberty and revenge in store—I had still friends and partisans in the island, though they were compelled to give way to the storm. Even among the islanders at large, most had been disappointed in the effects which they expected from the change of power. They were loaded with exactions by their new masters, their privileges were abridged, and their immunities abolished, under the pretext of reducing them to the same condition with the other subjects of the pretended republic. When the news arrived of the changes which were current in Britain, these sentiments were privately communicated to me. Calcott and others acted with great zeal and fidelity; and a rising, effected as suddenly and effectually as that which had made me a captive, placed me at liberty and in possession of the sovereignty of Man, as Regent for my son, the youthful Earl of Derby. Do you think I enjoyed that sovereignty long without doing justice on that traitor Christian?'

'How, madam?' said Lady Peveril, who, though she knew the high and ambitious spirit of the countess, scarce anticipated the extremities to which it was capable of hurrying her—'Have you imprisoned Christian?'

'Ay, wench—in that sure prison which felon never breaks from,' answered the countess.

Bridgenorth, who had insensibly [illegible] the Lady them, and was listening with an agony [illegible] placed by which he was unable any longer t[illegible] once more, broke in with the stern exclamation—[illegible] rebel

', I trust you have not dared '——

The Countess interrupted him in her turn.

'I know not who you are who question—and you know not me when you speak to me of that which I dare, or dare not, do. But you seem interested in the fate of this Christian, and you shall hear it.—I was no sooner placed in possession of my rightful power, than I ordered the Dempster of the island to hold upon the traitor a high court of justice, with all the formalities of the isle, as prescribed in its oldest records. The court was held in the open air, before the Dempster and the Keys of the island, assembled under the vaulted cope of heaven, and seated on the terrace of the Zonwald Hill, where of old Druid and Scald held their courts of judgment. The criminal was heard at length in his own defence, which amounted to little more than those specious allegations of public consideration, which are ever used to colour the ugly front of treason. He was fully convicted of his crime, and he received the doom of a traitor.'

'But which, I trust, is not yet executed?' said Lady Peveril, not without an involuntary shudder.

'You are a fool, Margaret,' said the countess sharply; 'think you I delayed such an act of justice, until some wretched intrigues of the new English court might have prompted their interference? No, wench; he passed from the judgment seat to the place of execution, with no further delay than might be necessary for his soul's sake. He was shot to death by a file of musketeers in the common place of execution, called Hangohill.'*

Bridgenorth clasped his hands together, wrung them, and groaned bitterly.

'As you seem interested for this criminal,' added the countess, addressing Bridgenorth, 'I do him but justice in reporting to you, that his death was firm and manly, becoming the general tenor of his life, which, but for that gross act of traitorous ingratitude, had been fair and honourable. But what of that? The hypocrite is a saint, and the false traitor a man of honour, till opportunity, that faithful touchstone, proves their metal to be base.'

'It is false, woman—it is false!' said Bridgenorth, no longer suppressing his indignation.

'What means this bearing, Master Bridgenorth?' said Lady Peveril, much surprised. 'What is this Christian to you, that you should insult the Countess of Derby under my roof?'

'Speak not to me of countesses and of ceremonies,' said Bridgenorth, 'grief and anger leave to me no leisure for idle observances, to humour the vanity of overgrown children. O Christian—worthy, well worthy, of the name thou didst bear! My friend—my brother—the brother of my blessed Alice—the only friend of my desolate estate! art thou then cruelly murdered by a female fury, who but for thee, had deservedly paid with her own blood that of God's saints, which she, as well as her tyrant husband, had spilled like water!—Yes, cruel murderess!' he continued, addressing the countess, 'he whom ——— butchered in thy insane vengeance, ... or many a year the dictates of his own conscience to the interest of thy family, and did not desert it till thy frantic zeal for royalty had well nigh brought to utter perdition the little community in which he was born. Even in confining thee, he acted but as the friends of the madman, who bind him with iron for his own preservation; and for thee, as I can bear witness, he was the only barrier between thee and the wrath of the Commons of England; and, but for his earnest remonstrances, thou hadst suffered the penalty of thy malignancy, even like the wicked wife of Ahab.'

'Master Bridgenorth,' said Lady Peveril, 'I will allow for your impatience upon hearing these unpleasing tidings; but there is neither use nor propriety in further urging this question. If in your grief you forget other restraints, I pray you to remember that the Countess is my guest and kinswoman, and is under such protection as I can afford her. I beseech you, in simple courtesy, to withdraw, as what must needs be the best and most becoming course in these trying circumstances.'

'Nay, let him remain,' said the countess, regarding him with composure, not unmingled with triumph; 'I would not have it otherwise; I would not that my revenge should be summed up in the stinted gratification which Christian's death hath afforded. This man's rude and clamorous grief only proves that the retribution I have dealt has been more widely felt than by the wretched sufferer himself. I would I knew that it had but made sore as many rebel hearts, as there were loyal breasts afflicted by the death of my princely Derby!'

'So please you, madam,' said Lady Peveril, 'since Master Bridgenorth hath not the manners to leave us upon my request, we will, if your ladyship lists, leave him, and retire to my apartment. Farewell, Master Bridgenorth; we will meet hereafter on better terms.'

'Pardon me, madam,' said the major, who had been striding hastily through the room, but now stood fast, and drew himself up, as one who has taken a resolution;—'to yourself I have nothing to say but what is respectful; but to this woman I must speak as a magistrate. She has confessed a murder in my presence—the murder, too, of my brother-in-law—as a man, and as a magistrate, I cannot permit her to pass from hence, excepting under such custody as may prevent her further flight. She has already confessed that she is a fugitive, and in search of a place of concealment, until she should be able to escape into foreign parts.—Charlotte, Countess of Derby, I attach thee of the crime of which thou hast but now made thy boast.'

'I shall not obey your arrest,' said the countess composedly; 'I was born to give, but not to receive, such orders. What have your English laws to do with my acts of justice and of government, within my son's hereditary kingdom? Am I not Queen in Man, as well as Countess of Derby? A feudatory sovereign, indeed; but yet independent so long as my dues of homage are duly discharged. What right can you assert over me?'

'That given by the precepts of Scripture,' answered Bridgenorth—' "Whoso spilleth man's blood, by man shall his blood be spilled."

* The Earl ... Bolton-on ...

* Note D. Execution of Christian.

not the barbarous privileges of ancient feudal customs will avail to screen you from the punishment due for an Englishman murdered upon pretexts inconsistent with the Act of Indemnity.'

'Master Bridgenorth,' said Lady Peveril, 'if by fair terms you desist not from your present purpose, I tell you that I neither dare, nor will, permit any violence against this honourable lady, within the walls of my husband's castle.'

'You will find yourself unable to prevent me from executing my duty, madam,' said Bridgenorth, whose native obstinacy now came in aid of his grief and desire of revenge; 'I am a magistrate, and act by authority.'

'I know not that,' said Lady Peveril. 'That you *were* a magistrate, Master Bridgenorth, under the late usurping powers, I know well; but till I hear of your having a commission in the name of the King, I now hesitate to obey you as such.'

'I shall stand on small ceremony,' said Bridgenorth. 'Were I no magistrate, every man has title to arrest for murder against the terms of the indemnities held out by the King's proclamations, and I will make my point good.'

'What indemnities? What proclamations?' said the Countess of Derby indignantly. 'Charles Stuart may, if he pleases (and it doth seem to please him), consort with those whose hands have been red with the blood, and blackened with the plunder, of his father and of his loyal subjects. He may forgive them if he will, and count their deeds good service. What has that to do with this Christian's offence against me and mine? Born a Manxman—bred and nursed in the island—he broke the laws under which he lived, and died for the breach of them, after the fair trial which they allowed.—Methinks, Margaret, we have enough of this peevish and foolish magistrate—I attend you to your apartment.'

Major Bridgenorth placed himself betwixt them and the door, in a manner which showed him determined to interrupt their passage; when the Lady Peveril, who thought she had already showed more deference to him in this matter than her husband was likely to approve of, raised her voice, and called loudly on her steward Whitaker. That alert person, who had heard high talking, and a female voice with which he was unacquainted, had remained for several minutes stationed in the anteroom, much afflicted with the anxiety of his own curiosity. Of course he entered in an instant.

'Let three of the men instantly take arms,' said his lady; 'bring them into the anteroom, and wait my further orders.'

CHAPTER VI.

You shall have no worse prison than my chamber,
Nor jailer than myself.
THE CAPTAIN.

THE command which Lady Peveril laid on her domestics to arm themselves, was so unlike the usual gentle acquiescence of her manners, that Major Bridgenorth was astonished. 'How mean madam?' said he; 'I thought myself a friendly roof.'

'And you are so, Master Bridgenorth,' said the Lady Peveril, without departing from the natural calmness of her voice and manner; 'but it is a roof which must not be violated by the outrage of one friend against another.'

'It is well, madam,' said Bridgenorth, turning to the door of the apartment. 'The worthy Master Solsgrace has already foretold that the time was returned when high houses and proud names should be once more an excuse for the crimes of those who inhabit the one and bear the other.' I believed him not, but now see he is wiser than I. Yet think not I will endure this tamely. The blood of my brother—of the friend of my bosom—shall not long call from the altar, "How long, O Lord, how long?" If there is one spark of justice left in this unhappy England, that proud woman and I shall meet where she can have no partial friend to protect her.'

So saying, he was about to leave the apartment, when Lady Peveril said, 'You depart not from this place, Master Bridgenorth, unless you give me your word to renounce all purpose against the noble Countess's liberty upon the present occasion.'

'I would sooner,' answered he, 'subscribe to my own dishonour, madam, written down in express words, than to any such composition. If any man offers to interrupt me, his blood be on his own head!' As Major Bridgenorth spoke, Whitaker threw open the door, and showed that, with the alertness of an old soldier, who was not displeased to see things tend once more towards a state of warfare, he had got with him four stout fellows in the Knight of the Peak's livery, well armed with swords and carabines, buff-coats, and pistols at their girdles.

'I will see,' said Major Bridgenorth, 'if any of these men be so desperate as to stop me, a freeborn Englishman, and a magistrate in the discharge of my duty.'

So saying, he advanced upon Whitaker and his armed assistants, with his hand on the hilt of his sword.

'Do not be so desperate, Master Bridgenorth,' exclaimed Lady Peveril; and added, in the same moment, 'Lay hold upon, and disarm him, Whitaker; but do him no injury.'

Her commands were obeyed. Bridgenorth, though a man of moral resolution, was not one of those who undertook to cope in person with odds of a description so formidable. He half-drew his sword, and offered such show of resistance as made it necessary to secure him by actual force; but then yielded up his weapon, and declared that, submitting to force which one man was unable to resist, he made those who commanded, and who employed it, responsible for assailing his liberty without a legal warrant.

'Never mind a warrant on a pinch, Master Bridgenorth,' said old Whitaker; 'sure enough you have often acted upon a worse yourself. My lady's word is as good a warrant, sure, as Old Noll's commission, and you bore that many a day, Master Bridgenorth; and, moreover, you laid me in the stocks for drinking the King's health, Master Bridgenorth, and never cared a farthing about the laws of England.'

'Hold your saucy tongue, Whitaker,' said the Lady Peveril, 'and do you, Master Bridgenorth, not take it to heart that you are detained prisoner, for a few hours, until the Countess of Derby can have nothing to fear from your pursuit. I could easily send an escort with her that might bid defiance to any force you could muster, but I wish, Heaven knows, to bury the remembrance of old civil dissensions, not to awaken new. Once more, will you think better on it—resume your sword again, and forget whom you have now seen at Martindale Castle?'

'Never,' said Bridgenorth. 'The crime of this cruel woman will be the last of human injuries which I can forget. The last thought of earthly kind which will leave me will be the desire that justice shall be done on her.'

'If such be your sentiments,' said Lady Peveril, 'though they are more allied to revenge than to justice, I must provide for my friend's safety, by putting restraint upon your person. In this room you will be supplied with every necessary of life, and every convenience; and a message shall relieve your domestics of the anxiety which your absence from the Hall is not unlikely to occasion. When a few hours, at most two days, are over, I will myself relieve you from confinement, and demand your pardon for now acting as your obstinacy compels me to do.'

The major made no answer but that he was in her hands, and must submit to her pleasure; and then turned sullenly to the window, as if desirous to be rid of their presence.

The countess and the Lady Peveril left the apartment arm in arm; and the lady issued forth her directions to Whitaker concerning the mode in which she was desirous that Bridgenorth should be guarded and treated during his temporary confinement; at the same time explaining to him that the safety of the Countess of Derby required that he should be closely watched.

In all proposals for the prisoner's security, such as the regular relief of guards, and the like, Whitaker joyfully acquiesced and undertook, body for body, that he should be detained in captivity for the necessary period. But the old steward was not half so docile when it came to be considered how the captive's bedding and table should be supplied; and he thought Lady Peveril displayed a very undue degree of attention to her prisoner's comforts. 'I warrant,' he said, 'that the cuckoldy Roundhead ate enough of our fat beef yesterday to serve him for a month; and a little fasting will do his health good. Marry, for drink, he shall have plenty of cold water to cool his hot liver, which I will be bound is still hissing with the strong liquors of yesterday. And as for bedding, there are the fine dry boards—more wholesome than the wet straw I lay upon when I was in the stocks, I trow.'

'Whitaker,' said the lady peremptorily, 'I desire you to provide Master Bridgenorth's bedding and food in the way I have signified to ——— to behave yourself towards him in all ——— 'day! yes, my lady,' said Whitaker, ——— have all your directions punctually obeyed; but, as an old servant, I cannot but speak my mind.'

The ladies retired after this conference with the steward in the antechamber, and were soon seated in another apartment, which was peculiarly dedicated to the use of the mistress of the mansion—having, on the one side, access to the family bedroom, and, on the other, to the still-room which communicated with the garden. There was also a small door, which, ascending a few steps, led to that balcony, already mentioned, that overhung the kitchen, and the same passage, by a separate door, admitted to the principal gallery in the chapel; so that the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Castle were placed almost at once within the reach of the same regulating and directing eye.*

In the tapestried room, from which issued these various sallyports, the countess and Lady Peveril were speedily seated; and the former, smiling upon the latter, said, as she took her hand, 'Two things have happened to-day, which might have surprised me, if anything ought to surprise me in such times.—The first is, that yonder roundheaded fellow should have dared to use such insolence in the house of Peveril of the Peak. If your husband is yet the same honest and downright Cavalier whom I once knew and had chanced to be at home, he would have thrown the knave out of window. But what I wonder at still more, Margaret, is your generalship. I hardly thought you had courage sufficient to have taken such decided measures, after keeping on terms with the man so long. When he spoke of justices and warrants, you looked so overawed that I thought I felt the clutch of the parish beadles on my shoulder, to drag me to prison as a vagrant.'

'We owe Master Bridgenorth some deference, my dearest lady,' answered the Lady Peveril; 'he has served us often and kindly, in these late times; but neither he nor any one else, shall insult the Countess of Derby in the house of Margaret Stanley.'

'Thou art become a perfect heroine, Margaret,' replied the countess.

'Two sieges, and alarms innumerable,' said Lady Peveril, 'may have taught me presence of mind. My courage is, I believe, as slender as ever.'

'Presence of mind is courage,' answered the countess. 'Real valour consists not in being insensible to [illegible] but in being prompt to confront and disarm it; and we may have present occasion for all that we possess,' she added, with some slight emotion, 'for I hear the trampling of horses' steps on the pavement of the court.'

In one moment, the boy Julian, breathless with joy, came flying into the room, to say that papa was returned, with Lamington and Sam Brewer, and that he was himself to ride Black

* The Earl (... at Bolton-on ... having been ... Lane.

* This peculiar collocation of apartments may be seen at Haddon Hall, Derbyshire, once a seat of the Vernons, where in the lady's pew in the chapel there is a sort of scuttle which opens into the kitchen, so that the good lady could ever and anon, without much interruption of her religious duties, give an eye that the roast meat was not permitted to burn, and that the turn broche did his duty. [This old baronial residence now the property of the Rutland family, is pleasantly situated on the [illegible] Wye. It is the delight of artists.]

Hastings to the stable In the second, the tramp of the honest knight's heavy jack boots was heard, as, in his haste to see his lady, he ascended the staircase by two steps at a time He burst into the room, his manly countenance and disordered dress showing marks that he had been riding fast and, without looking to any one else, caught his good lady in his arms, and kissed her a dozen of times —Blushing and with some difficulty Lady Peveril extricated herself from Sir Geoffrey's arms and in a voice of bashful and gentle rebuke bade him, for shame observe who was in the room

'Our,' said the countess 'who is right glad to see that Sir Geoffrey Peveril, though turn'd courtier and favourite still values the treasure which she had some share in bestowing upon him You cannot have forgot the rousing of the Lady of Latham House?'

'The noble Countess of Derby,' said Sir Geoffrey doffing his plumed hat with an air of deep deference and kissing with much gallantry the hand which she held out to him 'I am as glad to see your ladyship in my poor house as I would be to hear that they had found a vein of lead in the Brown Tor I rode hard in the hope of being your escort through the country I feared you might have fallen into bad hands hearing there was a knave sent out with a warrant from the council'

'When heard you so? and from whom?'

'It was from Cholmondley of Vale Royal,' said Sir Geoffrey 'he is come down to make provision for your safety through Cheshire and I promised to bring you there in safety Prince Rupert Ormond and other friends do not doubt the matter will be driven to a fine but they say the Chancellor and Harry Bennet and some others of the oversea counsellors are furious at what they call a breach of the King's proclamation Hang them say I They left us to bear all the beating and now they are incensed that we should wish to clear scores with those who rode us like nightmares'

'What did they talk of for my chastisement?' said the countess

'I wot not,' said Sir Geoffrey 'Some friends as I said, from our kind Cheshire and others, tried to bring it to a fine but some again spoke of nothing but the Tower, and a long imprisonment'

'I have suffered imprisonment long enough for King Charles's sake,' said the countess 'and have no mind to undergo it at his hand Besides, if I am removed from the personal superintendence of my son's dominions in Man I know not what new usurpation may be attempted there I must be obliged to you cousin, to contrive that I may get in security to Vale Royal, and from thence I know I shall be guarded safely to Liverpool'

'You may rely on my guidance and protection, noble lady,' answered her host, 'though you had come here at midnight, and with the rogues' head in your apron, like Judith in the Holy Apocrypha, which I joy to hear once more read in churches'

'Do the gentry resort much to the court?' said the lady

'Ay, madam,' replied Sir Geoffrey, 'and, according to our saying, when miners do begin to bore in these parts, it is *for the grace of God, and what they there may find*'

'Meet the old Cavaliers with much countenance?' continued the countess

'Faith, madam, to speak truth,' replied the knight, 'the King hath so gracious a manner, that it makes every man's hopes blossom, though we have seen but few that have ripened into fruit'

'You have not yourself, my cousin,' answered the countess 'had room to complain of ingratitude I trust few have less deserved it at the King's hand'

Sir Geoffrey was unwilling like most prudent persons to own the existence of expectations which had proved fallacious yet had too little art in his character to conceal his disappointment entirely 'Who I madam?' he said 'Alas! what should a poor country knight expect from the King besides the pleasure of seeing him in Whitehall once more and enjoying his own again? And his Majesty was very gracious when I was presented and spoke to me of Worcester and of my horse Black Hastings—he had forgot his name though —faith, and mine too I believe had not Prince Rupert whispered it to him And I saw some old friends such as his Grace of Ormond, Sir Marmaduke Langdale Sir Philip Musgrave and so forth and had a jolly rouse or two, to the tune of old times'

I should have thought so many wounds received—so many dangers risked—such considerable losses—merited something more than a few smooth words said the countess

'Nay my lady, there were other friends of mine who had the same thought,' answered Peveril Some were of opinion that the loss of so many hundred acres of fair land was worth some reward of honour at least, and there were who thought my descent from William the Conqueror craving your ladyship's pardon for boasting it in your presence would not have become a higher rank or title worse than the pedigree of some who have been promoted But what said the witty Duke of Buckingham, forsooth (whose grandsire was a Leicestershire knight—rather poorer, and scarcely so well born, as myself)? Why, he said, that if all of my degree who deserved well of the King in the late times were to be made peers the House of Lords must meet upon Salisbury Plain!'

And that bad jest passed for a good argument!' said the countess, 'and well it might, where good arguments pass for bad jests —But here comes one I must be acquainted with'

This was little Julian, who now re entered the hall, leading his little sister, as if he had brought her to bear witness to the boastful tale which he told his father, of his having manfully ridden Black Hastings to the stable yard, alone in the saddle, and that Saunders, though he walked by the horse's head, did not once put his hand upon the rein, and Brewer, though he many beside him, scarce held him by the knee Lady father kissed the boy heartily, and the ... by calling him to her so soon as Sir Geoffrey set him down, kissed his forehead also ...

surveyed all his features with a keen and penetrating eye.

'He is a true Peveril,' said she, 'mixed as he should be with some touch of the Stanley. Cousin, you must grant me my boon, and when I am safely established, and have my present affair arranged, you must let me have this little Julian of yours some time hence, to be nurtured in my house, held as my page, and the playfellow of the little Derby. I trust in Heaven they will be such friends as their fathers have been, and may God send them more fortunate times!'*

'Marry, and I thank you for the proposal with all my heart, madam,' said the knight. 'There are so many noble houses decayed, and so many more in which the exercise and discipline for the training of noble youths is given up and neglected, that I have often feared I must have kept Gil to be young master at home, and I have had too little nurture myself to teach him much, and so he would have been a mere hunting, hawking knight of Derbyshire. But in your ladyship's household, and with the noble young Earl, he will have all, and more than all, the education which I could desire.'

'There shall be no distinction betwixt them, cousin,' said the countess; 'Margaret Stanley's son shall be as much the object of care to me as my own, since you are kindly disposed to entrust him to my charge. You look pale, Margaret,' she continued, 'and the tear stands in your eye! Do not be so foolish, my love: what I ask is better than you can desire for your boy; for the house of my father, the Duke de la Tremouille, was the most famous school of chivalry in France; nor have I degenerated from him, or suffered any relaxation in that noble discipline which trained young gentlemen to do honour to their race. You can promise your Julian no such advantages, if you train him up a mere home-bred youth.'

'I acknowledge the importance of the favour, madam,' said Lady Peveril, 'and must acquiesce in what your ladyship honours us by proposing, and Sir Geoffrey approves of; but Julian is an only child, and'——

'An only son,' said the countess, 'but surely not an only child. You pay too high deference to our masters, the male sex, if you allow Julian to engross all your affection, and spare none for this beautiful girl.'

So saying, she set down Julian, and, taking Alice Bridgenorth on her lap, began to caress her; and there was, notwithstanding her masculine character, something so sweet in the tone of her voice and in the cast of her features that the child immediately smiled, and replied to her marks of fondness. This mistake embarrassed Lady Peveril exceedingly. Knowing the blunt impetuosity of her husband's character, his devotion to the memory of the deceased Earl of Derby, and his corresponding veneration for his widow, she was alarmed for the consequences of his hearing the conduct of Bridgenorth that morning, and was particularly desirous that he should not learn it save from herself in private, beuuu... ...e preparation. But the countess's ... more precipitate disclosure.

—— ...etty girl, madam,' answered Sir

* The Earl ...
at Bolton-on-t...
having been ...
Wiggan Lane.

* Note E. Pages.

Geoffrey, 'is none of ours—I wish she were. She belongs to a neighbour hard by—a good man, and, to say truth, a good neighbour—though he was carried off from his allegiance in the late times by a d—d Presbyterian scoundrel, who calls himself a parson, and whom I hope to fetch down from his perch presently, with a wannion to him! He has been cock of the roost long enough.—There are rods in pickle to switch the Geneva cloak with, I can tell the sour-faced rogues that much. But this child is the daughter of Bridgenorth—neighbour Bridgenorth, of Moultrassie Hall.'

'Bridgenorth!' said the countess; 'I thought I had known all the honourable names in Derbyshire—I remember nothing of Bridgenorth.—But stay—was there not a sequestrator and committee man of that name? Sure, it cannot be h...'

Peveril took some shame to himself, as he replied, 'It is the very man whom your ladyship means, and you may conceive the reluctance with which I submitted to receive good offices from one of his kidney; but, had I not done so, I should have scarce known how to find a roof to cover Dame Margaret's head.'

The countess, as he spoke, raised the child gently from her lap, and placed it upon the carpet, though little Alice showed a disinclination to the change of place, which the Lady of Derby and Man would certainly have indulged in a child of patrician descent and loyal parentage.

'I blame you not,' she said; 'no one knows what temptation will bring us down to. Yet I *did* think Peveril of the Peak would have resided in its deepest cavern, sooner than owed an obligation to a regicide.'

'Nay, madam,' answered the knight, 'my neighbour is bad enough, but not so bad as you would make him; he is but a Presbyterian—that I must confess—but not an Independent.'

'A variety of the same monster,' said the countess, 'who hallooed while the others hunted, and bound the victim whom the Independents massacred. Betwixt such sects I prefer the Independents. They are at least bold, bare-faced, merciless villains, have more of the tiger in them, and less of the crocodile. I have no doubt it was that worthy gentleman who took it upon him this morning'——

She stopped short, for she saw Lady Peveril was vexed and ...ssed.

'I am,' she said, 'the most luckless of beings. I have said something, I know not what, to distress you, Margaret. Mystery is a bad thing, and betwixt us there should be none.'

'There is none, madam,' said Lady Peveril, something impatiently; 'I waited but an opportunity to tell my husband what had happened.—Sir Geoffrey, Master Bridgenorth was unfortunately here when the Lady Derby and I met; and he thought it part of his duty to speak of'——

'To speak of what?' said the knight, bending his brows. 'You were ever something too fond, dame, of giving way to the usurpation of such people.'

'I only mean,' said Lady Peveril, 'that as the person—he to whom Lady Derby's story related—was the brother of his late lady, h...

threatened—but I cannot think that he was serious.'

'Threaten!—threaten the Lady of Derby and Man in my house!—the widow of my friend—the noble Charlotte of Latham House!—by Heaven, the prick-eared slave shall answer it! How comes it that my knaves threw him not out of the window?'

'Alas! Sir Geoffrey, you forget how much we owe him,' said the lady.

'Owe him!' said the knight, still more indignant; for in his singleness of apprehension he conceived that his wife alluded to pecuniary obligations,—'if I do owe him some money, hath he not security for it? and must he have the right, over and above, to domineer and play the magistrate in Martindale Castle?—Where is he?—what have you made of him? I will—I must speak with him.'

'Be patient, Sir Geoffrey,' said the countess, who now discerned the cause of her kinswoman's apprehension; 'and be assured I did not need your chivalry to defend me against this discourteous faitour, as *Morte d'Arthur* would have called him. I promise you my kinswoman hath fully righted my wrong; and I am so pleased to owe my deliverance entirely to her gallantry, that I charge and command you, as a true knight, not to mingle in the adventure of another.'

Lady Peveril, who knew her husband's blunt and impatient temper, and perceived that he was becoming angry, now took up the story, and plainly and simply pointed out the cause of Master Bridgenorth's interference.

'I am sorry for it,' said the knight; 'I thought he had more sense, and that this happy change might have done some good upon him. But you should have told me this instantly—It consists not with my honour that he should be kept prisoner in this house, as if I feared anything he could do to annoy the noble Countess, while she is under my roof, or within twenty miles of this castle.'

So saying, and bowing to the coun[illegible] went straight to the gilded cha[mber] ment?' Lady Peveril in great anxiety for[illegible] an angry meeting between a temper hasty as that of her husband, and stubborn like that of Bridgenorth. Her apprehensions were, however, unnecessary; for the meeting was not fated to take place.

When Sir Geoffrey Peveril, having dismissed Whitaker and his sentin[illegible] [ent]ered the gilded chamber, in which he expected to find his captive, the prisoner had escaped, and it was easy to see in what manner. The sliding panel had, in the hurry of the moment, escaped the memory of Lady Peveril and of Whitaker, the only persons who knew anything of it. It was probable that a chink had remained open, sufficient to indicate its existence to Bridgenorth; who, withdrawing it altogether, had found his way into the secret apartment with which it communicated, and from thence to the postern of the castle by another secret passage, which had been formed in the thickness of the wall, as is not uncommon in ancient mansions; the lords of which were li[able] to so many mutations of fortune, that they usually contrived to secure some lurking-place and secret mode of retreat from their fortresses. That Bridgenorth had discovered and availed himself of this secret mode of retreat, was evident; because the private doors communicating with the postern and the sliding panel in the gilded chamber were both left open.

Sir Geoffrey returned to the ladies with looks of perplexity. While he deemed Bridgenorth within his reach, he was apprehensive of nothing he could do; for he felt himself his superior in personal strength, and in that species of courage which induces a man to rush, without hesitation, upon personal danger. But when at a distance, he had been for many years accustomed to consider Bridgenorth's power and influence as something formidable; and, notwithstanding the late change of affairs, his ideas so naturally reverted to his neighbour as a powerful friend or dangerous enemy, that he felt more apprehension on the countess's score than he was willing to acknowledge even to himself. The countess observed his downcast and anxious brow, and requested to know if her stay there was likely to involve him in any trouble or in any danger.

'The trouble should be welcome,' said Sir Geoffrey, 'and more welcome the danger, which should come on such an account. My plan was, that your ladyship should have honoured Martindale with a few days' residence, which might have been kept private until the search after you was ended. Had I seen this fellow Bridgenorth, I have no doubt I could have compelled him to act discreetly; but he is now at liberty, and will keep out of my reach; and, what is worse, he has the secret of the priest's chamber.'

Here the knight paused, and seemed much embarrassed.

'You can, then, neither conceal nor protect me?' said the countess.

'Pardon, my honoured lady,' answered the knight, 'and let me say [illegible] The plain truth is, that this [illegible]ast; and [fri]ends among [illegible]scent from [illegible] numerous [co]nqueror [illegible] your ladyship's falls in with boasting it in your presence—wo[illegible] the w[illegible] pledge of become a higher rank or title we will [illegible] Lady [illegible] pedigree of some who have been [illegible] ecute it. ladyship with [illegible] the witty Duke [illegible]ds can [illegible] appro doubt whether any of ou[illegible]nt to resi[illegible] moned together in haste, s[illegible] together,' said the a power as they are like to [illegible]ls to take. You [illegible]

'Nor would I wish any [illegible]'s warrant, [illegible] in my name against the [illegible] Geoffrey,' said the countess.

'Nay, for that matter,' [illegible]ed the knight, 'an his Majesty will grant [illegible]nts against his best friends, he must look to [illegible] them resisted. But the best I can think of [illegible]s emergence is—though the proposal be som[illegible]g inhospitable—that your ladyship should [illegible] presently to horse, if your fatigue will per[mit] [illegible] I will mount also, with some brisk fellow[s] [illegible] will lodge you safe at Vale-Royal, though [the sh]eriff stopped the way with a whole *pos*[se].'

The Countess of Derby [illegible]quiesced in this proposal. She had en[illegible]ght's sound repose in the private chambe[r] [illegible] had guided her on the pre[illegible] was quite ready to resume h[illegible] 'she scarce knew,' she said, [illegible] she should term it.'

[illegible] too high [illegible] countess, 'but surely [illegible] Julian is an [illegible] proposing,

Lady Peveril wept at the necessity which seemed to hurry her earliest friend and protectress from under her roof, at the instant when the clouds of adversity were gathering around her; but she saw no alternative equally safe. Nay, however strong her attachment to Lady Derby, she could not but be more readily reconciled to her hasty departure, when she considered the inconvenience, and even danger, in which her presence, at such a time, and in such circumstances, was likely to involve a man so bold and hot tempered as her husband Sir Geoffrey.

While Lady Peveril, therefore, made every arrangement which time permitted and circumstances required, for the countess prosecuting her journey, her husband, whose spirits always rose with the prospect of action, issued his orders to Whitaker to get together a few stout fellows, with back and breast pieces, and steel caps. 'There are the two lackeys, and Outram and Saunders, besides the other groom fellow, and Roger Raine and his son; but bid Roger not come drunk again;—thyself, young Dick of the Dale and his servant, and a tale or two of the tenants,—we shall be enough for any force they can make. All these are fellows that will strike hard, and ask no question why; their hands are ever readier than their tongues, and their mouths are more made for drinking than speaking.'

Whitaker, apprised of the necessity of the case, asked if he should not warn Sir Jasper Cranbourne.

'Not a word to him, as you live,' said the knight; 'this may be an outlawry, as they call it, for what I know; and therefore I will bring no lands or tenements into peril, saving mine own. Sir Jasper hath had a troublesome time of it for many a year. By my will, he shall sit quiet for the rest of his days.'

CHAPTER VII.

Fang. A rescue! a rescue!
Mrs Quickly. Good people, bring a rescue or two.
HENRY IV. *Part I.*

THE followers of Peveril were so well accustomed to the sound of 'boot and saddle,' that they were soon mounted and in order; and in all the form, and with some of the dignity of danger, proceeded to escort the Countess of Derby through the hilly and desert tract of country which connects the frontier of the shire with the neighbouring county of Cheshire. The cavalcade moved with considerable precaution, which they had been taught by the discipline of the Civil Wars. One wary and well mounted trooper rode about two hundred yards in advance, followed, at about half that distance, by two more, with their carabines advanced, as if ready for action. About one hundred yards behind the advance came the main body, where the Countess of Derby, mounted on Lady Peveril's ambling palfrey (for her own had been exhausted [illegible] from London to Martindale Castle), [illegible] more [illegible] groom, of approved fidelity, [illegible], was attended and guarded [illegible] Peak, and three files of [illegible]men. In the rear came Whitaker, with Lance Outram, as men of especial trust, to whom the covering the retreat was confided. They rode, as the Spanish proverb expresses it, 'with the beard on the shoulder,' looking around, that is, from time to time, and using every precaution to have the speediest knowledge of any pursuit which might take place.

But, however wise in discipline, Peveril and his followers were somewhat remiss in civil policy. The knight had communicated to Whitaker, though without any apparent necessity, the precise nature of their present expedition; and Whitaker was equally communicative to his comrade Lance, the keeper. 'It is strange enough, Master Whitaker,' said the latter, when he had heard the case, 'and I wish you, being a wise man, would expound it;—why, when we have been wishing for the King—and praying for the King—and fighting for the King—and dying for the King for these twenty years, the first thing we find to do on his return, is to get into harness to resist his warrant?'

'Pooh, you silly fellow!' said Whitaker, 'that is all you know of the true bottom of our quarrel! Why, man, we fought for the King's person against his warrant, all along from the very beginning; for I remember the rogues' proclamations and so forth always ran in the name of the King and Parliament.'

'Ay! was it even so?' replied Lance. 'Nay, then, if they begin the old game so soon again, and send out warrants in the King's name against his loyal subjects, well fare our stout knight, say I, who is ready to take them down in their stocking soles. And if Bridgenorth takes the chase after us, I shall not be sorry to have a knock at him for one.'

'Why, the man, bating he is a pestilent Roundhead and Puritan,' said Whitaker, 'is no bad neighbour. What has he done to thee, man?'

'He has poached on the manor,' answered the keeper.

'The devil he has!' replied Whitaker. 'Thou must be jesting, Lance. Bridgenorth is neither hunter nor hawker, he hath not so much of honesty in him.'

'Ay, but he runs after game you little think of, with his sour melancholy face, that would scare babes and curdle milk,' answered Lance.

'Thou canst not mean the wenches?' said Whitaker; 'why, he hath been melancholy mad with moping for the death of his wife. Thou knowest our lady took the child, for fear he should strangle it for putting him in mind of its mother, in some of his tantrums. Under her favour, and among friends, there are many poor Cavaliers' children that care would be better bestowed upon.—But to thy tale.'

'Why, thus it runs,' said Lance. 'I think you may have noticed, Master Whitaker, that a certain Mistress Deborah hath manifested a certain favour for a certain person in a certain household.'

'For thyself, to wit,' answered Whitaker; 'Lance Outram, thou art the vainest coxcomb'——

'Coxcomb?' said Lance; 'why, 'twas but last night the whole family saw her, as one say, fling herself at my head.'

* The Earl [illegible] at Bolton-on-t[illegible] having been, [illegible] Wigan Lane.
* Note [illegible]

'I would she had been a brick bat, then, to have broken it, for thy impertinence and conceit,' said the steward.

'Well, but do but hearken. The next morning—that is, this very blessed morning—I thought of going to lodge a buck in the park, judging a bit of venison might be wanted in the larder, after yesterday's wassail; and, as I passed under the nursery window, I did but just look up to see what madam governante was about; and so I saw her, through the casement, whip on her hood and scarf as soon as she had a glimpse of me. Immediately after, I saw the still-room door open and made sure she was coming through the garden, and so over the breach and down to the park; and so, thought I, Aha, Mistress Deb, if you are so ready to dance after my pipe and tabor, I will give you a couranto before you shall come up with me. And so I went down Ivy-tod Dingle, where the copse is tangled, and the ground swampy, and round by Haxley Bottom, thinking all the while she was following, and laughing in my sleeve at the round I was giving her.'

'You deserved to be ducked for it,' said Whitaker, 'for a weather-headed puppy; but what is all this Jack-a-lantern story to Bridgenorth?'

'Why, it was all along of he, man,' continued Lance, 'that is, of Bridgenorth, that she did not follow me. Gad, I first walked slow, and then stopped, and then turned back a little, and then began to wonder what she had made of herself, and to think I had borne myself something like a jackass in the matter.'

'That I deny,' said Whitaker; 'never jackass but would have borne him better—but go on.'

'Why, turning my face towards the castle, I went back as if I had my nose bleeding, when, just by the Copely thorn, which stands, you know, a flight-shot from the postern-gate, I saw Madam Deb in close conference with the enemy.'

'What enemy?' said the steward.

'What enemy! why, who but Bridgenorth? They kept out of sight and among the copse; but, thought I, it is hard if I cannot stalk you, that have stalked so many bucks. If so, I had better give my shafts to be pudding-pins. So I cast round the thicket, to watch their waters; and may I never bend crossbow again, if I did not see him give her gold, and squeeze her by the hand!'

'And was that all you saw pass between them?' said the steward.

'Faith, and it was enough to dismount me from my hobby,' said Lance. 'What! when I thought I had the prettiest girl in the Castle dancing after my whistle, to find that she gave me the bag to hold, and was smuggling in a corner with a rich old Puritan!'

'Credit me, Lance, it is not as thou thinkest,' said Whitaker. 'Bridgenorth cares not for these amorous toys, and thou thinkest of nothing else. But it is fitting our knight should know that he has met with Deborah in secret, and given her gold; for never Puritan gave gold yet, but it was earnest for some devil's work, done, or to be done.'

'Nay, but,' said Lance, 'I would not be such a dog-bolt as to go and betray the girl to our master. She hath a right to follow her fancy, as the dame said who kissed her cow—only I do not much approve her choice, that is all. He cannot be six years short of fifty; and a verjuice countenance, under the penthouse of a slouched beaver, and a bag of meagre dried bones, swaddled up in a black cloak, is no such temptation, methinks.'

'I tell you once more,' said Whitaker, 'you are mistaken, and that there neither is, nor can be, any matter of love between them, but only some intrigue, concerning, perhaps, this same noble Countess of Derby. I tell thee, it behoves my master to know it, and I will presently tell it to him.'

So saying, and in spite of all the remonstrances which Lance continued to make on behalf of Mistress Deborah, the steward rode up to the main body of their little party, and mentioned to the knight, and the Countess of Derby, what he had just heard from the keeper, adding at the same time his own suspicions, that Master Bridgenorth of Moultrassie Hall was desirous to keep up some system of espial in the Castle of Martindale, either in order to secure his menaced vengeance on the Countess of Derby, as authoress of his brother-in-law's death, or for some unknown, but probably sinister purpose.

The Knight of the Peak was filled with high resentment at Whitaker's communication. According to his prejudices, those of the opposite faction were supposed to make up by wit and intrigue what they wanted in open force; and he now hastily conceived that his neighbour, whose prudence he always respected, and sometimes even dreaded, was maintaining, for his private purposes, a clandestine correspondence with a member of his family. If this was for the betrayal of his noble guest, it argued at once treachery and presumption; or, viewing the whole as Lance had done, a criminal intrigue with a woman so near the person of Lady Peveril was in itself, he deemed, a piece of sovereign impertinence and disrespect on the part of such a person as Bridgenorth, against whom Sir Geoffrey's anger was kindled accordingly.

Whitaker had scarce regained his post in the rear, when he again quitted it, and galloped to the main body with more speed than before, with the unpleasing tidings that they were pursued by half a score of horsemen, and better.

'Ride on briskly to Hartley-nick,' said the knight, 'and there, with God to help, we will bide the knaves.—Countess of Derby—one word and a short one—Farewell!—you must ride forward with Whitaker and another careful fellow, and let me alone to see that no one treads on your skirts.'

'I will abide with you and stand them,' said the countess; 'you know of old, I fear not to look on man's work.'

'You *must* ride on, madam,' said the knight, 'for the sake of the young Earl, and the rest of my noble friend's family. There is no manly work which can be worth your looking upon; it is but child's play that these fellows bring with them.'

As she yielded a reluctant consent to continue her flight, they reached the bottom of Hartley-nick, a pass very steep and craggy, and where the road, or rather path, which had hitherto passed over more open ground, became pent up and confined betwixt copsewood on the one side,

and, on the other, the precipitous bank of a mountain stream.

The Countess of Derby, after an affectionate adieu to Sir Geoffrey, and having requested him to convey her kind commendations to her little page elect and his mother, proceeded up the pass at a round pace, and with her attendants and escort was soon out of sight. Immediately after she had disappeared, the pursuers came up with Sir Geoffrey Peveril, who had divided and drawn up his party so as completely to occupy the road at three different points.

The opposite party was led, as Sir Geoffrey had expected, by Major Bridgenorth. At his side was a person in black, with a silver greyhound on his arm; and he was followed by about eight or ten inhabitants of the village of Martindale Moultrassie, two or three of whom were officers of the peace, and others were personally known to Sir Geoffrey as favourers of the subverted government.

As the party rode briskly up, Sir Geoffrey called to them to halt; and as they continued advancing, he ordered his own people to present their pistols and carabines; and, after assuming that menacing attitude, he repeated, with a voice of thunder, 'Halt, or we fire!'

The other party halted accordingly, and Major Bridgenorth advanced as if to parley.

'Why, how now, neighbour,' said Sir Geoffrey, as if he had at that moment recognised him for the first time—'what makes you ride so sharp this morning? Are you not afraid to harm your horse, or spoil your spurs?'

'Sir Geoffrey,' said the major, 'I have no time for jesting—I am on the king's affairs.'

'Are you sure it is not upon Old Noll's, neighbour? You used to hold his the better errand,' said the knight, with a smile which gave occasion to a horse-laugh among his followers.

'Show him your warrant,' said Bridgenorth to the man in black formerly mentioned, who was a pursuivant. Then, taking the warrant from the officer, he gave it to Sir Geoffrey—'To this, at least, you will pay regard.'

'The same regard which you would have paid to it a month back or so,' said the knight, tearing the warrant to shreds.—'What a plague do you stare at? Do you think you have a monopoly of rebellion, and that we have not a right to show a trick of disobedience in our turn?'

'Make way, Sir Geoffrey Peveril,' said Bridgenorth, 'or you will compel me to do that I may be sorry for. I am in this matter the avenger of the blood of one of the Lord's saints, and I will follow the chase while Heaven grants me an arm to make my way.'

'You shall make no way here but at your peril,' said Sir Geoffrey; 'this is my ground—I have been harassed enough for these twenty years by saints, as you call yourselves. I tell you, master, you shall neither violate the security of my house, nor pursue my friends over the grounds, nor tamper, as you have done, amongst my servants, with impunity. I have had you in respect for certain kind doings, which I will not either forget or deny, and you will find it difficult to make me draw a sword or bend a pistol against you; but offer any hostile movement, or presume to advance a foot, and I will make sure of you presently. And for these rascals, who come hither to annoy a noble lady on my bounds, unless you draw them off, I will presently send some of them to the devil before their time.'

'Make room at your proper peril,' said Major Bridgenorth; and he put his right hand on his holster-pistol. Sir Geoffrey closed with him instantly, seized him by the collar, and spurred Black Hastings, checking him at the same time, so that the horse made a courbette, and brought the full weight of his chest against the counter of the other. A ready soldier might, in Bridgenorth's situation, have rid himself of his adversary with a bullet. But Bridgenorth's courage, notwithstanding his having served some time with the Parliament army, was rather of a civil than a military character; and he was inferior to his adversary, not only in strength and horsemanship, but also, and especially, in the daring and decisive resolution which made Sir Geoffrey thrust himself readily into personal contest.

While, therefore, they tugged and grappled together upon terms which bore such little accordance with their long acquaintance and close neighbourhood, it was no wonder that Bridgenorth should be unhorsed with much violence. While Sir Geoffrey sprung from the saddle, the party of Bridgenorth advanced to rescue their leader, and that of the knight to oppose them. Swords were unsheathed, and pistols presented; but Sir Geoffrey, with the voice of a herald, commanded both parties to stand back, and to keep the peace.

The pursuivant took the hint, and easily found a reason for not prosecuting a dangerous duty. 'The warrant,' he said, 'was destroyed. They that did it must be answerable to the council; for his part, he could proceed no further without his commission.'

'Well said, and like a peaceable fellow!' said Sir Geoffrey.—'Let him have refreshment at the castle—his nag is sorely out of condition.—Come, neighbour Bridgenorth, get up, man—I trust you have had no hurt in this mad affray? I was loath to lay hand on you, man, till you plucked out your petronel.'

As he spoke thus, he aided the major to rise. The pursuivant, meanwhile, drew aside; and with him the constable and head-borough, who were not without some tacit suspicion that, though Peveril was interrupting the direct course of law in this matter, yet he was likely to have his offence considered by favourable judges; and therefore it might be as much for their interest and safety to give way as to oppose him. But the rest of the party, friends of Bridgenorth and of his principles, kept their ground notwithstanding this defection, and seemed, from their looks, sternly determined to rule their conduct by that of their leader, whatever it might be.

But it was evident that Bridgenorth did not intend to renew the struggle. He shook himself rather roughly free from the hands of Sir Geoffrey Peveril; but it was not to draw his sword. On the contrary, he mounted his horse with a sullen and dejected air; and, making a sign to his followers, turned back the same

which he had come. Sir Geoffrey looked after him for some minutes. 'Now, there goes a man,' said he, 'who would have been a right honest fellow had he not been a Presbyterian. But there is no heartiness about them—they can never forgive a fair fall upon the sod—they bear malice, and that I hate as I do a black cloak, or a Geneva skull-cap, and a pair of long ears rising on each side on't, like two chimneys at the gable ends of a thatched cottage. They are as sly as the devil to boot; and therefore, Lance Outram, take two with you, and keep after them, that they may not turn our flank, and get on the track of the Countess again after all.'

'I had as soon they should course my lady's white tame doe,' answered Lance, in the spirit of his calling. He proceeded to execute his master's orders by dogging Major Bridgenorth at a distance, and observing his course from such heights as commanded the country. But it was soon evident that no manœuvre was intended, and that the major was taking the direct road homeward. When this was ascertained, Sir Geoffrey dismissed most of his followers; and, retaining only his own domestics, rode hastily forward to overtake the countess.

It is only necessary to say further, that he completed his purpose of escorting the Countess of Derby to Vale-Royal, without meeting any further hindrance by the way. The lord of the mansion readily undertook to conduct the high-minded lady to Liverpool, and the task of seeing her safely embarked for her son's hereditary dominions, where there was no doubt of her remaining in personal safety until the accusation against her for breach of the royal indemnity, by the execution of Christian, could be brought to some compromise.

For a length of time this was no easy matter. Clarendon, then at the head of Charles's administration, considered her rash action, though dictated by motives which the human breast must, in some respects, sympathise with, as calculated to shake the restored tranquillity of England, by exciting the doubts and jealousies of those who had to apprehend the consequences of what is called, in our own time, a *reaction*. At the same time, the high services of this distinguished family—the merits of the countess herself—the memory of her gallant husband—and the very peculiar circumstances of jurisdiction which took the case out of all common rules, pleaded strongly in her favour; and the death of Christian was at length only punished by the imposition of a heavy fine, amounting, we believe, to many thousand pounds; which was levied with great difficulty out of the shattered estates of the young Earl of Derby.

CHAPTER VIII.

My native land, good-night!

BYRON.

LADY PEVERIL remained in no small anxiety for several hours after her husband and the [illegible] had departed from Martindale Castle; more especially when she learned that Major Bridgenorth, concerning whose motions she made private inquiry, had taken horse with a party, and was gone to the westward in the same direction with Sir Geoffrey.

At length her immediate uneasiness in regard to the safety of her husband and the countess was removed, by the arrival of Whitaker, with her husband's commendations, and an account of the scuffle betwixt himself and Major Bridgenorth.

Lady Peveril shuddered to see how nearly they had approached to renewal of the scenes of civil discord; and while she was thankful to Heaven for her husband's immediate preservation, she could not help feeling both regret and apprehension for the consequences of his quarrel with Major Bridgenorth. They had now lost an old friend, who had showed himself such under those circumstances of adversity by which friendship is most severely tried; and she could not disguise from herself, that Bridgenorth, thus irritated, might be a troublesome, if not a dangerous enemy. His rights as a creditor he had hitherto used with gentleness; but if he should employ rigour, Lady Peveril, whose attention to domestic economy had made her much better acquainted with her husband's affairs than he was himself, foresaw considerable inconvenience from the measures which the law put in his power. She comforted herself with the recollection, however, that she had still a strong hold on Bridgenorth, through his paternal affection, and from the fixed opinion which he had hitherto manifested, that his daughter's health could only flourish while under her charge. But any expectations of reconciliation which Lady Peveril might probably have founded on this circumstance, were frustrated by an incident which took place in the course of the following morning.

The governante, Mistress Deborah, who has been already mentioned, went forth, as usual, with the children, to take their morning exercise in the park, attended by Rachael, a girl who acted occasionally as her assistant in attending upon them. But not as usual did she return. It was near the hour of breakfast, when Ellesmere, with an unwonted degree of primness in her mouth and manner, came to acquaint her lady that Mistress Deborah had not thought proper to come back from the park, though the breakfast hour approached so near.

'She will come, then, presently,' said Lady Peveril, with indifference.

Ellesmere gave a short and doubtful cough, and then proceeded to say, that Rachael had been sent home with little Master Julian, and that Mistress Deborah had been pleased to say, she would walk on with Miss Bridgenorth as far as Moultrassie Holt; which was a point at which the property of the major, as matters now stood, bounded that of Sir Geoffrey Peveril.

'Is the wench turned silly,' exclaimed the lady, something angrily, 'that she does not obey my orders, and return at regular hours?'

'She may be turning silly,' said Ellesmere mysteriously; 'or she may be turning too sly; and I think it were as well your ladyship looked to it.'

'Looked to what, Ellesmere?' said the lady impatiently. 'You are strangely oracular this morning. If you know anything to the prejudice of this young woman, I pray you speak it out.'

'I prejudice!' said Ellesmere, 'I scorn to prejudice man, woman, or child, in the way of a fellow servant; only I wish your ladyship to look about you, and use your own eyes—that is all.'

'You bid me use my own eyes, Ellesmere; but I suspect,' answered the lady, 'you would be better pleased were I contented to see through your spectacles. I charge you—and you know I will be obeyed—I charge you to tell me what you know or suspect about this girl, Deborah Debbitch.'

'I see through spectacles!' exclaimed the indignant Abigail; 'your ladyship will pardon me in that, for I never use them, unless a pair that belonged to my poor mother, which I put on when your ladyship wants your pinners curiously wrought. No woman above sixteen ever did white-seam without barnacles. And then as to suspecting, I suspect nothing; for, as your ladyship hath taken Mistress Deborah Debbitch from under my hand, to be sure it is neither bread nor butter of mine. Only' (here she began to speak with her lips shut so as scarce to permit a sound to issue, and mincing her words as if she pinched off the ends of them before she suffered them to escape)—'only, madam, if Mistress Deborah goes so often of a morning to Moultrassie Holt, why I should not be surprised if she should never find the way back again.'

'Once more, what do you mean, Ellesmere? You were wont to have some sense—let me know distinctly what the matter is.'

'Only, madam,' pursued the Abigail, 'that since Bridgenorth came back from Chesterfield and saw you at the Castle hall, Mistress Deborah has been pleased to carry the children every morning to that place; and it has so happened that she has often met the Major, as they call him, there in his walks—for he can walk about now like other folks—and I warrant you she hath not been the worse of the meeting one way at least, for she hath bought a new hood might serve yourself, madam; but whether she had anything in hand besides a piece of money, no doubt your ladyship is best judge.'

Lady Peveril, who readily adopted the more good-natured construction of the governante's motives, could not help laughing at the idea of a man of Bridgenorth's precise appearance, strict principles, and reserved habits being suspected of a design of gallantry; and readily concluded, that Mistress Deborah had found her advantage in gratifying his parental affection by a frequent sight of his daughter during the few days which intervened betwixt his first seeing little Alice at the Castle, and the events which had followed. But she was somewhat surprised, when, an hour after the usual breakfast hour, during which neither the child nor Mistress Deborah appeared, Major Bridgenorth's only man-servant arrived at the Castle on horseback, dressed as for a journey, and, having delivered a letter addressed to herself, and another to Mistress Ellesmere, rode away without waiting any answer.

There would have been nothing remarkable in this, had any other person been concerned; but Major Bridgenorth was so very quiet and orderly in all his proceedings—so little liable to act hastily or by impulse, that the least appearance of bustle where he was concerned excited surprise and curiosity.

Lady Peveril broke her letter hastily open, and found that it contained the following lines:—

'For the hands of the Honourable and Honoured Lady Peveril—These.

'MADAM,—Please it your ladyship, I write more to excuse myself to your ladyship, than to accuse either you or others, in respect that I am sensible it becomes our frail nature better to confess our own imperfections, than to complain of those of others. Neither do I mean to speak of past times, particularly in respect of your worthy ladyship, being sensible that, if I have served you in that period when our Israel might be called triumphant, you have more than requited me, in giving to my arms a child, redeemed, as it were, from the vale of the shadow of death. And therefore, as I heartily forgive to your ladyship the unkind and violent measure which you dealt to me at our last meeting (seeing that the woman who was the cause of strife is accounted one of your kindred people), I do entreat you in like manner to pardon my enticing away from your service the young woman called Deborah Debbitch, whose nurture, instructed as she hath been under your ladyship's direction, is, it may be, indispensable to the health of my dearest child. I had purposed, madam, with your gracious permission, that Alice should have remained at Martindale Castle, under your kind charge, until she could so far discern betwixt good and evil, that it should be matter of conscience to teach her the way in which she should go. For it is not unknown to your ladyship, and in no way do I speak it reproachfully, but rather sorrowfully, that a person so excellently gifted as yourself—I mean touching natural qualities—has not yet received that true light, which is a lamp to the paths, but are contented to stumble in darkness, and among the graves of dead men. It has been my prayer in the watches of the night that your ladyship should cease from the doctrine which causeth to err; but I grieve to say that our candlestick being about to be removed, the land will most likely be involved in deeper darkness than ever; and the return of the King, to which I and many looked forward as a manifestation of divine favour, seems to prove little else than a permitted triumph of the Prince of the Air, who setteth about to restore his Vanity Fair of bishops, deans, and such like, extruding the peaceful ministers of the word, whose labours have proved faithful to many hungry souls. So, hearing from a sure hand that commission has gone forth to restore these dumb dogs, the followers of Laud and of Williams, who were cast forth by the late Parliament, and that an Act of Conformity, or rather of deformity, of worship, is to be expected, it is my purpose to flee from the wrath to come, and to seek some corner where I may dwell in peace, and enjoy liberty of conscience. For wh

would abide in the sanctuary, after the carved work thereof is broken down, and when it hath been made a place for owls and satyrs of the wilderness?—And herein I blame myself, madam, that I went in the singleness of my heart too readily into that carousing in the house of feasting, wherein my love of union, and my desire to show respect to your ladyship, were made a snare to me. But I trust it will be an atonement, that I am now about to absent myself from the place of my birth and the house of my fathers, as well as from the place which holdeth the dust of those pledges of my affection. I have also to remember, that in this land my honour (after the worldly estimation) hath been abated, and my utility circumscribed, by your husband Sir Geoffrey Peveril, and that without any chance of my obtaining reparation at his hand, whereby I may say the hand of a kinsman was lifted up against my credit and my life. These things are bitter to the taste of the old Adam; wherefore, to prevent further bickerings, and, it may be, bloodshed, it is better that I leave this land for a time. The affairs which remain to be settled between Sir Geoffrey and myself, I shall place in the hand of the righteous Master Joachim Win-the-Fight, an attorney in Chester, who will arrange them with such attention to Sir Geoffrey's convenience, as justice and the due exercise of the law will permit; for as I trust I shall have grace to resist the temptation to make the weapons of carnal warfare the instruments of my revenge, so I scorn to effect it through the means of Mammon. Wishing, madam, that the Lord may grant you every blessing, and, in especial, that which is over all others, namely, the true knowledge of His way,—I remain your devoted servant to command,

'RALPH BRIDGENORTH.

'Written at Moultrassie Hall, this tenth day of July 1660.'

So soon as Lady Peveril had perused this long and singular homily, in which it seemed to her that her neighbour showed more spirit of religious fanaticism than she could have supposed him possessed of, she looked up and beheld Ellesmere,—with a countenance in which mortification, and an affected air of contempt, seemed to struggle together,—who, tired with watching the expression of her mistress's countenance, applied for confirmation of her suspicions in plain terms.

'I suppose, madam,' said the waiting woman, 'the fanatic fool intends to marry the wench? They say he goes to shift the country. Truly it's time, indeed; for, besides that the whole neighbourhood would laugh him to scorn, I should not be surprised if Lance Outram, the keeper, gave him a buck's head to bear; for that is all in the way of his office.'

'There is no great occasion for your spite at present, Ellesmere,' replied her lady. 'My letter says nothing of marriage; but it would appear that Master Bridgenorth, being to leave this country, has engaged Deborah to take care of his child; and I am sure I am heartily glad of it for the infant's sake.'

'And I am glad of it for my own,' said Ellesmere; 'and indeed, for the sake of the whole house.—And your ladyship thinks she is not like to be married to him? Troth, I could never see how he should be such an idiot; but perhaps she is going to do worse; for she speaks here of coming to high preferment, and that scarce comes by honest servitude now-a-days; then she writes me about sending her things, as if I were mistress of the wardrobe to her ladyship—ay, and recommends Master Julian to the care of my age and experience, forsooth, as if she needed to recommend the dear little jewel to me; and then, to speak of my age—But I will bundle away her rags to the Hall with a witness!'

'Do it with all civility,' said the lady; 'and let Whitaker send her the wages for which she has served, and a broad piece over and above; for though a light-headed young woman, she was kind to the children.'

'I know who is kind to their servants, madam, and would spoil the best ever pinned a gown.'

'I spoiled a good one, Ellesmere, when I spoiled thee,' said the lady; 'but tell Mistress Deborah to kiss the little Alice for me, and to offer my good wishes to Major Bridgenorth, for his temporal and future happiness.'

She permitted no observation or reply, but dismissed her attendant, without entering into further particulars.

When Ellesmere had withdrawn, Lady Peveril began to reflect, with much feeling of compassion, on the letter of Major Bridgenorth; a person in whom there were certainly many excellent qualities, but whom a series of domestic misfortunes and the increasing gloom of a sincere, yet stern feeling of devotion, rendered lonely and unhappy; and she had more than one anxious thought for the happiness of the little Alice, brought up as she was likely to be, under such a father. Still the removal of Bridgenorth was on the whole a desirable event; for, while he remained at the Hall, it was but too likely that some accidental collision with Sir Geoffrey might give rise to a rencontre betwixt them, more fatal than the last had been.

In the meanwhile she could not help expressing to Doctor Dummerar her surprise and sorrow, that all which she had done and attempted, to establish peace and unanimity betwixt the contending factions, had been perversely fated to turn out the very reverse of what she had aimed at.

'But for my unhappy invitation,' she said, 'Bridgenorth would not have been at the Castle on the morning which succeeded the feast, would not have seen the Countess, and would not have incurred the resentment and opposition of my husband. And but for the King's return, an event which was so anxiously expected as the termination of all our calamities, neither the noble lady nor ourselves had been engaged in this new path of difficulty and danger.'

'Honoured madam,' said Doctor Dummerar, 'were the affairs of this world to be guided implicitly by human wisdom, or were they uniformly to fall out according to the conjectures of human foresight, events would no longer be under the domination of that time and chance, which happen unto all men, since we should, in the one case, work out our own purposes to a

ity, by our own skill, and in the other, regulate our conduct according to the views of unerring prescience. But man is, while in this vale of tears, like an uninstructed bowler, so to speak, who thinks to attain the jack by delivering his bowl straight forward upon it, being ignorant that there is a concealed bias within the spheroid; which will make it, in all probability, swerve away and lose the cast

Having spoken this with a sententious air, the doctor took his shovel shaped hat, and went down to the Castle green to conclude a match of bowls with Whitaker, which had probably suggested this notable illustration of the uncertain course of human events

Two days afterwards, Sir Geoffrey arrived He had waited at Vale Royal till he heard of the countess's being safely embarked for Man, and then had posted homeward to his Castle and Dame Margaret On his way, he learned from some of his attendants the mode in which his lady had conducted the entertainment which she had given to the neighbourhood at his order, and, notwithstanding the great deference he usually showed in cases where Lady Peveril was concerned, he heard of her liberality towards the Presbyterian party with great indignation

'I could have admitted Bridgenorth, he said 'for he always bore him in neighbourly and kindly fashion till this last career — I could have endured him so he would have drunk the King's health, like a true man—but to bring that snuffling scoundrel Solsgrace, with all his beggarly, long eared congregation, to hold a conventicle in my father's house to let them domineer it as they listed why, I would not have permitted them such liberty, when they held their head the highest! They never, in the worst of times found any way into Martindale Castle but what Noll's cannon made for them, and that they should come and cant there, when good King Charles is returned —By my hand, Dame Margaret shall hear of it!

But, notwithstanding these ireful resolutions resentment altogether subsided in the honest knight's breast, when he saw the fair features of his lady lightened with affectionate joy at his return in safety As he took her in his arms and kissed her, he forgave her ere he mentioned her offence.

'Thou hast played the knave with me, Meg,' he said, shaking his head, and smiling at the same time, 'and thou knowest in what manner, but I think thou art true Churchwoman, and didst only act from some silly womanish fancy of keeping fair with these roguish Roundheads But let me have no more of this I had rather Martindale Castle were again rent by their bullets, than receive any of the knaves in the way of friendship — I always except Ralph Bridgenorth of the Hall, if he should come to his senses again.'

Lady Peveril was here under the necessity of explaining what she had heard of Master Bridgenorth—the disappearance of the governante with his daughter, and placed Bridgenorth's letter in his hand. Sir Geoffrey shook his head at first, and then laughed extremely, at the idea that there was some little love intrigue between Bridgenorth and Mistress Deborah.

'It is the true end of a dissenter,' he said, 'to marry his own maid servant, or some other person's Deborah is a good likely wench, and on the merrier side of thirty, as I should think.'

'Nay, nay,' said the Lady Peveril, 'you are as uncharitable as Ellesmere—I believe it but to be affection to his child'

'Pshaw! pshaw!' answered the knight, 'women are eternally thinking of children; but among men, dame, many one caresses the infant that he may kiss the child's maid, and where's the wonder, or the harm either, if Bridgenorth should marry the wench? Her father is a substantial yeoman, his family has had the same farm since Bosworth field—as good a pedigree as that of the great grandson of a Chesterfield brewer, I trow But let us hear what he says for himself—I shall spell it out if there is any roguery in the letter about love and liking, though it might escape your innocence, Dame Margaret'

The Knight of the Peak began to peruse the letter accordingly, but was much embarrassed by the peculiar language in which it was couched 'What he means by moving of candlesticks, and breaking down of carved work in the church, I cannot guess, unless he means to bring back the large silver candlesticks which my grandsire gave to be placed on the altar at Martindale-Moultrassie, and which his crop eared friends, like sacrilegious villains as they are, stole and melted down And in like manner, the only breaking I know of, was when they pulled down the rails of the communion table (for which some of their fingers are hot enough by this time), and when the brass ornaments were torn down from the Peveril monuments, and that was breaking and removing with a vengeance However, dame, the upshot is, that poor Bridgenorth is going to leave the neighbourhood I am truly sorry for it though I never saw him oftener than once a day and never spoke to him above two words But I see how it is that little shake by the shoulder sticks in his stomach, and yet, Meg, I did but lift him out of the saddle as I might have lifted thee into it, Margaret—I was careful not to hurt him, and I did not think him so tender in point of honour as to mind such a thing much, but I see plainly where his sore lies; and I warrant you I will manage that he stays at the Hall, and that you get back Julian's little companion. Faith, I am sorry myself at the thought of losing the baby, and of having to choose another ride when it is not hunting weather, than round by the Hall, with a word at the window'

'I should be very glad, Sir Geoffrey,' said Lady Peveril, 'that you could come to a reconciliation with this worthy man, for such I must hold Master Bridgenorth to be'

'But for his dissenting principles, as good a neighbour as ever lived,' said Sir Geoffrey.

'But I scarce see,' continued the lady, 'any possibility of bringing about a conclusion so desirable.'

'Tush, dame!' answered the knight, 'thou knowest little of such matters I know the foot he halts upon, and you shall see him go as sound as ever.'

Lady Peveril had, from her sincere affect

and sound sense, as good a right to claim the full confidence of her husband as any woman in Derbyshire; and upon this occasion, to confess the truth, she had more anxiety to know his purpose than her sense of their mutual and separate duties permitted her in general to entertain. She could not imagine what mode of reconciliation with his neighbour Sir Geoffrey (no very acute judge of mankind or their peculiarities) could have devised, which might not be disclosed to her; and she felt some secret anxiety lest the means resorted to might be so ill chosen as to render the breach rather wider. But Sir Geoffrey would give no opening for further inquiry. He had been long enough colonel of a regiment abroad, to value himself on the right of absolute command at home; and to all the hints which his lady's ingenuity could devise and throw out, he only answered, 'Patience, Dame Margaret, patience. This is no case for thy handling. Thou shalt know enough on't by and by, dame.—Go, look to Julian. Will the boy never have done crying for lack of that little sprout of a Roundhead? But we will have little Alice back with us in two or three days, and all will be well again.'

As the good knight spoke these words, a post winded his horn in the court, and a large packet was brought in, addressed to the worshipful Sir Geoffrey Peveril, Justice of the Peace, and so forth; for he had been placed in authority as soon as the king's restoration was put upon a settled basis. Upon opening the packet, which he did with no small feeling of importance, he found that it contained the warrant which he had solicited for replacing Doctor Dummerar in the parish from which he had been forcibly ejected during the usurpation.*

Few incidents could have given more delight to Sir Geoffrey. He could forgive a stout able-bodied sectary or nonconformist, who enforced his doctrines in the field by downright blows on the casques and cuirasses of himself and other Cavaliers. But he remembered with most vindictive accuracy the triumphant entrance of Hugh Peters through the breach of his Castle; and for his sake, without nicely distinguishing betwixt sects or their teachers, he held all who mounted a pulpit without warrant from the Church of England—perhaps he might also in private except that of Rome—to be disturbers of the public tranquillity—seducers of the congregation from their lawful preachers—instigators of the late civil war—and men well disposed to risk the fate of a new one.

Then, on the other hand, besides gratifying his dislike to Solsgrace, he saw much satisfaction in the task of replacing his old friend and associate in sport and in danger, the worthy Doctor Dummerar, in his legitimate rights, and in the ease and comforts of his vicarage. He communicated the contents of the packet, with great triumph, to the lady, who now perceived the sense of the mysterious paragraph in Major Bridgenorth's letter, concerning the removal of the candlestick, and the extinction of light and doctrine in the land. She pointed this out to Sir Geoffrey, and endeavoured to persuade him that a door was now opened to reconciliation with his neighbour, by executing the commission which he had received in an easy and moderate manner, after due delay, and with all respect to the feelings both of Solsgrace and his congregation, which circumstances admitted of. This, the lady argued, would be doing no injury whatever to Doctor Dummerar;—nay, might be the means of reconciling many to his ministry, who might otherwise be disgusted with it for ever, by the premature expulsion of a favourite preacher.

There was much wisdom, as well as moderation, in this advice; and, at another time, Sir Geoffrey would have had sense enough to have adopted it. But who can act composedly or prudently in the hour of triumph? The ejection of Master Solsgrace was so hastily executed as to give it some appearance of persecution; though, more justly considered, it was the restoring of his predecessor to his legal rights. Solsgrace himself seemed to be desirous to make his sufferings as manifest as possible. He held out to the last; and, on the Sabbath after he had received intimation of his ejection, attempted to make his way to the pulpit, as usual, supported by Master Bridgenorth's attorney, Win-the-Fight, and a few zealous followers.

Just as their party came into the churchyard on the one side, Doctor Dummerar, dressed in full pontificals, in a sort of triumphal procession, accompanied by Peveril of the Peak, Sir Jasper Cranbourne, and other Cavaliers of distinction, entered at the other.

To prevent an actual struggle in the church, the parish officers were sent to prevent the further approach of the Presbyterian minister; which was effected without further damage than a broken head, inflicted by Roger Raine, the drunken innkeeper of the Peveril Arms, upon the Presbyterian attorney of Chesterfield.

Unsubdued in spirit, though compelled to retreat by superior force, the undaunted Master Solsgrace retired to the vicarage; where, under some legal pretext which had been started by Master Win-the-Fight (in that day unaptly named), he attempted to maintain himself—bolted gates barred windows—and, as report said (though falsely), made provision of firearms to resist the officers. A scene of clamour and scandal accordingly took place, which being reported to Sir Geoffrey, he came in person, with some of his attendants carrying arms—forced the outer gate and inner doors of the house; and, proceeding to the study, found no other garrison save the Presbyterian parson, with the attorney, who gave up possession of the premises, after making protestation against the violence that had been used.

The rabble of the village being by this time all in motion, Sir Geoffrey, both in prudence and good-nature, saw the propriety of escorting his prisoners, for so they might be termed, safely through the tumult; and accordingly conveyed them in person, through much noise and clamour, as far as the avenue of Moultrassie Hall, which they chose for the place of their retreat.

But the absence of Sir Geoffrey gave the rein to some disorders, which, if present, he would assuredly have restrained. Some of the minister's

* Note F. Ejection of Presbyterian Clergy.

books were torn and flung about as treasonable and seditious trash by the zealous parish officers or their assistants. A quantity of his ale was drunk up in healths to the King and Peveril of the Peak. And finally, the boys, who bore the ex parson no good will for his tyrannical interference with their games at skittles, foot ball, and so forth, and, moreover, remembered the unmerciful length of his sermons, dressed up an effigy with his Geneva gown and band, and his steeple crowned hat, which they paraded through the village, and burned on the spot whilom occupied by a stately Maypole which Solsgrace had formerly hewed down with his own reverend hands.

Sir Geoffrey was vexed at all this, and sent to Master Solsgrace offering satisfaction for the goods which he had lost, but the Calvinistic divine replied, 'From a thread to a shoe latchet, I will not take anything that is thine. Let the shame of the work of thy hands abide with thee.'

Considerable scandal, indeed, arose against Sir Geoffrey Peveril as having proceeded with indecent severity and haste upon this occasion, and rumour took care to make the usual additions to the reality. It was currently reported that the desperate Cavalier, Peveril of the Peak, had fallen on a Presbyterian congregation, while engaged in the peaceable exercise of religion with a band of armed men—had slain some, desperately wounded many more, and finally pursued the preacher to his vicarage which he burned to the ground. Some alleged the clergyman had perished in the flames, and the most mitigated report bore, that he had only been able to escape by disposing his gown, cap and band near a window in such a manner as to deceive them with the idea of his person being still surrounded by flames while he himself fled by the back part of the house. And although few people believed in the extent of the atrocities thus imputed to our honest Cavalier, yet still enough of obloquy attached to him to infer very serious consequences, as the reader will learn at a future period of our history.

CHAPTER IV

Bessus. 'Tis a challenge sir, is it not?
Gentleman. 'Tis an inviting to the field.
KING AND NO KING.

FOR a day or two after this forcible expulsion from the vicarage, Master Solsgrace continued his residence at Moultrassie Hall, where the natural melancholy attendant on his situation added to the gloom of the owner of the mansion. In the morning, the ejected divine made excursions to different families in the neighbourhood, to whom his ministry had been acceptable in the days of his prosperity, and from whose grateful recollections of that period he now found sympathy and consolation. He did not require to be condoled with, because he was deprived of an easy and competent maintenance, and thrust out upon the common of life, after he had reason to suppose he would be no longer liable to such mutations of fortune. The piety of Master Solsgrace was sincere, and if he had many of the uncharitable prejudices against other sects, which polemical controversy had generated, and the Civil War brought to a head, he had also that deep sense of duty, by which enthusiasm is so often dignified, and held his very life little, if called upon to lay it down in attestation of the doctrines in which he believed. But he was soon to prepare for leaving the district, which Heaven, he conceived, had assigned to him as his corner of the vineyard, he was to abandon his flock to the wolf—was to forsake those with whom he had held sweet counsel in religious communion—was to leave the recently converted to relapse into false doctrines, and forsake the wavering, whom his continued cares might have directed into the right path,—these were of themselves deep causes of sorrow, and were aggravated, doubtless, by those natural feelings with which all men, especially those whose duties or habits have confined them to a limited circle, regard the separation from wonted scenes, and their accustomed haunts of solitary musing, or social intercourse.

There was, indeed, a plan of placing Mr. Solsgrace at the head of a nonconforming congregation in his present parish, which his followers would have readily consented to endow with a sufficient revenue. But although the act for universal conformity was not yet passed, such a measure was understood to be impending and there existed a general opinion among the Presbyterians that in no hands was it likely to be more strictly enforced than in those of Peveril of the Peak. Solsgrace himself considered not only his personal danger as being considerable,—for, assuming perhaps more consequence than was actually attached to him or his productions, he conceived the honest knight to be his mortal and determined enemy, but he also conceived that he should serve the cause of his Church by absenting himself from Derbyshire.

'Less known pastors,' he said, 'though perhaps more worthy of the name, may be permitted to assemble the scattered flocks in caverns or in secret wilds, and to them shall the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim be better than the vintage of Abiezer. But I, that have so often carried the banner forth against the mighty—I, whose tongue hath testified, morning and evening, like the watchman upon the tower, against Popery, Prelacy and the tyrant of the Peak—for me to abide here were but to bring the sword of bloody vengeance amongst you, that the shepherd might be smitten, and the sheep scattered. The shedders of blood have already assailed me, even within that ground which they themselves call consecrated, and yourselves have seen the scalp of the righteous broken, as he defended my cause. Therefore, I will put on my sandals and gird my loins, and depart to a far country, and there do as my duty shall call upon me, whether it be to act or to suffer—to bear testimony at the stake or in the pulpit.'

Such were the sentiments which Mr. Solsgrace expressed to his desponding friends, and which he expatiated upon at more length with Major Bridgenorth; not failing, with friendly zeal, to rebuke the haste which the latter had shown to thrust out the hand of fellowship to the Amalekite

woman, whereby he reminded him, 'He had been rendered her slave and bondsman for a season, like Samson, betrayed by Delilah, and might have remained longer in the house of Dagon, had not Heaven pointed to him a way out of the snare. Also, it sprung originally from the major's going up to the feast in the high place of Baal, that he who was the champion of the truth was stricken down, and put to shame by the enemy, even in the presence of the host.'

These objurgations seeming to give some offence to Major Bridgenorth, who liked, no better than any other man, to hear of his own mishaps, and at the same time to have them imputed to his own misconduct, the worthy divine proceeded to take shame to himself for his own sinful compliance in that matter; for to the vengeance justly due for that unhappy dinner at Martindale Castle (which was, he said, a crying of peace when there was no peace, and a dwelling in the tents of sin) he imputed his ejection from his living, with the destruction of some of his most pithy and highly prized volumes of divinity, with the loss of his cap, gown, and band, and a double hogshead of choice Derby ale.

The mind of Major Bridgenorth was strongly tinged with devotional feeling, which his late misfortunes had rendered more deep and solemn; and it is therefore no wonder that, when he heard these arguments urged again and again by a pastor whom he so much respected, and who was now a confessor in the cause of their joint faith, he began to look back with disapproval on his own conduct, and to suspect that he had permitted himself to be led by gratitude towards Lady Peveril, and by her special arguments in favour of a mutual and tolerating liberality of sentiments, into an action which had a tendency to compromise his religious and political principles.

One morning, as Major Bridgenorth had wearied himself with several details respecting the arrangement of his affairs, he was reposing in the leathern easy-chair beside the latticed window, a posture which by natural association recalled to him the memory of former times, and the feelings with which he was wont to expect the recurring visit of Sir Geoffrey, who brought him news of his child's welfare. 'Surely,' he said, thinking as it were, aloud, 'there was no sin in the kindness with which I then regarded that man.'

Solsgrace, who was in the apartment, and guessed what passed through his friend's mind, acquainted as he was with every point of his history, replied—'When God caused Elijah to be fed by ravens, while hiding at the brook Cherith, we hear not of his fondling the unclean birds, whom, contrary to their ravening nature, a miracle compelled to minister to him.'

'It may be so,' answered Bridgenorth, 'yet the flap of their wings must have been gracious in the ear of the famished prophet, like the tread of his horse in mine. The ravens, doubtless, resumed their nature when the season was past, and even so it has fared with him.—Hark!' he exclaimed, starting, 'I hear his horse's hoof tramp even now.'

It was seldom that the echoes of that silent house and court-yard were awakened by the trampling of horses, but such was now the case.

Both Bridgenorth and Solsgrace were surprised at the sound, and even disposed to anticipate some further oppression on the part of government, when the major's old servant introduced with little ceremony (for his manners were nearly as plain as his master's) a tall gentleman, on the farther side of middle life, whose vest and cloak, long hair, slouched hat, and drooping feather, announced him as a Cavalier. He bowed formally but courteously to both gentlemen, and said that he was 'Sir Jasper Cranbourne, charged with an especial message to Master Ralph Bridgenorth of Moultrassie Hall, by his honourable friend Sir Geoffrey Peveril of the Peak, and that he requested to know whether Master Bridgenorth would be pleased to receive his acquittal of commission here or elsewhere.'

'Anything which Sir Geoffrey Peveril can have to say to me,' said Major Bridgenorth, 'may be told instantly and before my friend, from whom I have no secrets.'

'The presence of any other friend were, instead of being objectionable, the thing in the world most to be desired,' said Sir Jasper, after a moment's hesitation, and looking at Mr. Solsgrace; 'but this gentleman seems to be a sort of clergyman.'

'I am not conscious of any secrets,' answered Bridgenorth, 'nor do I desire to have any, in which a clergyman is an unfitting confidant.'

'At your pleasure,' replied Sir Jasper. 'The confidence, for aught I know, may be well enough chosen, for your divines (always under your favour) have proved no enemies to such matters as I am to treat with you upon.'

'Proceed, sir,' answered Master Bridgenorth gravely; 'and I pray you to be seated, unless it is rather your pleasure to stand.'

'I must, in the first place, deliver myself of my small commission,' answered Sir Jasper, drawing himself up; 'and it will be after I have seen the reception thereof, that I shall know whether I am or am not to sit down at Moultrassie Hall.—Sir Geoffrey Peveril, Master Bridgenorth, hath carefully considered with himself the unhappy circumstances which at present separate you as neighbours. And he remembers many passages in former times—I speak his very words—which incline him to do all that can possibly consist with his honour to wipe out unkindness between you; and for this desirable object, he is willing to condescend in a degree which, as you could not have expected, it will no doubt give you great pleasure to learn.'

'Allow me to say, Sir Jasper,' said Bridgenorth, 'that this is unnecessary. I have made no complaints of Sir Geoffrey—I have required no submission from him—I am about to leave this country; and what affairs we may have together can be as well settled by others as by ourselves.'

'In a word,' said the divine, 'the worthy Major Bridgenorth hath had enough of trafficking with the ungodly, and will no longer, on any terms, consort with them.'

'Gentlemen both,' said Sir Jasper, with imperturbable politeness, bowing, 'you greatly mistake the tenor of my commission, which you will do as well to hear out, before making any

reply to it.—I think, Master Bridgenorth, you cannot but remember your letter to the Lady Peveril, of which I have here a rough copy, in which you complain of the hard measure which you have received at Sir Geoffrey's hand, and, in particular, when he pulled you from your horse at or near Hartley nick Now, Sir Geoffrey thinks so well of you, as to believe that, were it not for the wide difference betwixt his descent and rank and your own, you would have sought to bring this matter to a gentleman-like arbitrament, as the only mode whereby your stain may be honourably wiped away Wherefore, in this slight note, he gives you, in his generosity, the offer of what you, in your modesty (for to no thing else does he impute your acquiescence), have declined to demand of him And withal I bring you the measure of his weapon and when you have accepted the cartel which I now offer you, I shall be ready to settle the time, place, and other circumstances of your meeting'

'And I,' said Solsgrace with a solemn voice, 'should the Author of Evil tempt my friend to accept of so bloodthirsty a proposal would be the first to pronounce against him sentence of the greater excommunication

'It is not you whom I address, reverend sir, replied the envoy, 'your interest n t unnatur ally, may determine you to be more anxious about your patron's life than about his honour I must know from himself to which *he* is disposed to give the preference

So saying, and with a graceful bow he again tendered the challenge to Major Bridgenorth There was obviously a struggle in that gentle man's bosom, between the suggestions of human honour and those of religious principle but the latter prevailed He calmly waved receiving the paper which Sir Jasper offered to him and spoke to the following purpose 'It may not be known to you Sir Jasper, that, since the general pouring out of Christian light upon this kingdom, many solid men have been led to doubt whether the shedding human blood by the hand of a fellow creature be in *any* respect justifiable And although this rule appears to me to be scarcely applicable to our state in this stage of trial, seeing that such non resistance, if general, would surrend r our civil and religious rights into the hands of whatsoever daring tyrants might usurp the same, yet I am and have been inclined to limit the use of carnal arms to the case of necessary self defence, whether such regards our own person or the protection of our country against invasion, or of our rights of property, and the freedom of our laws and of our conscience, against usurping power And as I have never shown myself unwilling to draw my sword in any of the latter causes, so you shall excuse my suffering it now to remain in the scabbard, when, having sustained a grievous injury, the man who inflicted it summons me to combat, either upon an idle punctilio, or, as is more likely, in mere bravado'

'I have heard you with patience,' said Sir Jasper, 'and now, Master Bridgenorth, take it not amiss if I beseech you to bethink yourself better on this matter I vow to Heaven, sir, that your honour lies a bleeding, and that in condescending to afford you this fair meeting, and thereby giving you some chance to stop its wounds, Sir Geoffrey has been moved by a tender sense of your condition, and an earnest wish to redeem your dishonour And it will be but the crossing of your blade with his honoured sword for the space of some few minutes, and you will either live or die a noble and honoured gentleman Besides, that the knight's exquisite skill of fence may enable him, as his good nature will incline him, to disarm you with some flesh wound, little to th damage of your person, and greatly to the benefit of your reputation

'The tender mercies of the wicked,' said Master Solsgrace emphatically, by way of commenting on this speech, which Sir Jasper had uttered very pathetically 'are cruel'

'I pray to have no further interruption from your reverence said Sir Jasper, 'especially as I think this affair very little concerns you, and I entreat that you permit me to discharge my self regularly of my commission from my worthy friend

So saying he took his sheathed rapier from his belt and passing the point through the silk thread which secured the letter, he once more, and literally at sword point gracefully tendered it to Major Bridgenorth, who again waved it aside though colouring deeply at the same time as if he was putting a marked constraint upon himself drew back, and made Sir Jasper Cranbourne a deep bow

'Since it is to be thus said Sir Jasper, 'I must my self violate the seal of Sir Geoffrey's letter and read it to you, that I may fully acquit myself of the charge entrusted to me, and make you, Master Bridgenorth equally aware of the generous intentions of Sir Geoffrey on your behalf

'If, said Major Bridgenorth, 'the contents of the letter be to no other purpose than you have intimated, methinks further ceremony is unnecessary on this occasion, as I have already taken my course

'Nevertheless, said Sir Jasper, breaking open the letter, 'it is fitting that I read to you the letter of my worshipful friend.' And he read accordingly as follows –

'*To the worshipful Master Ralph Bridgenorth, Esquire of Moultrassie Hall—These*

'By the honoured conveyance of the worshipful Sir Jasper Cranbourne, Knight, of Long Mallington

'MASTER BRIDGENORTH,—We have been given to understand, by your letter to our loving wife, Dame Margaret Peveril, that you hold hard construction of certain passages betwixt you and I, of a late date, as if your honour should have been, in some sort, prejudiced by what then took place And although you have not thought it fit to have direct recourse to me, to request such satisfaction as is due from one gentleman of condition to another, yet I am fully minded that this proceeds only from modesty, arising out of the distinction of our degree, and from no lack of that courage which you have heretofore displayed, I would I could say in a good cause. Wherefore I am purposed to give you, friend Sir Jasper Cranbourne, a meeting

sake of doing that which doubtless you entirely long for. Sir Jasper will deliver you the length of my weapon, and appoint circumstances and an hour for our meeting; which, whether early or late—on foot or horseback—with rapier or backsword—I refer to yourself, with all the other privileges of a challenged person; only desiring that, if you decline to match my weapon, you will send me forthwith the length and breadth of your own. And nothing doubting that the issue of this meeting must needs be to end, in one way or other, all unkindness betwixt two near neighbours,—I remain, your humble servant to command,

'GEOFFREY PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

'Given from my poor house of Martindale Castle, this same —— of ——, sixteen hundred and sixty.'

'Bear back my respects to Sir Geoffrey Peveril,' said Major Bridgenorth. 'According to his light, his meaning may be fair towards me; but tell him that our quarrel had its rise in his own wilful aggression towards me: and that, though I wish to be in charity with all mankind, I am not so wedded to his friendship as to break the laws of God, and run the risk of suffering or committing murder, in order to regain it. And for you, sir, methinks your advanced years and past misfortunes might teach you the folly of coming on such idle errands.'

'I shall do your message, Master Ralph Bridgenorth,' said Sir Jasper; 'and shall then endeavour to forget your name, as a sound unfit to be pronounced, or even remembered, by a man of honour. In the meanwhile, in return for your uncivil advice, be pleased to accept of mine; namely, that as your religion prevents your giving a gentleman satisfaction, it ought to make you very cautious of offering him provocation.'

So saying, and with a look of haughty scorn, first at the major, and then at the divine, the envoy of Sir Geoffrey put his hat on his head, replaced his rapier in his belt, and left the apartment. In a few minutes afterwards, the tread of his horse died away at a considerable distance.

Bridgenorth had held his hand upon his brow ever since his departure, and a tear of anger and shame was on his face as he raised it when the sound was heard no more. 'He carries this answer to Martindale Castle,' he said. 'Men will hereafter think of me as a whipped, beaten, dishonourable fellow, whom every one may baffle and insult at their pleasure. It is well I am leaving the house of my father.'

Master Solsgrace approached his friend with much sympathy, and grasped him by the hand. 'Noble brother,' he said, with unwonted kindness of manner, 'though a man of peace, I can judge what this sacrifice hath cost to thy manly spirit. But God will not have from us an imperfect obedience. We must not, like Ananias and Sapphira, reserve behind some darling lust, some favourite sin, while we pretend to make sacrifice of our worldly affections. What avails it that we have but secreted a little the slightest remnant of the accursed sin hidden in our tent? Would it be a defence in thy prayers to say, I have not murdered this man for the lucre of gain, like a robber,—nor for the acquisition of power, like a tyrant,—nor for the gratification of revenge, like a darkened savage; but because the imperious voice of worldly honour said, "Go forth—kill or be killed—is it not I that have sent thee?" Bethink thee, my worthy friend, how thou couldst frame such a vindication in thy prayers; and if thou art forced to tremble at the blasphemy of such an excuse, remember in thy prayers the thanks due to Heaven, which enabled thee to resist the strong temptation.'

'Reverend and dear friend,' answered Bridgenorth, 'I feel that you speak the truth. Bitterer, indeed, and harder, to the old Adam, is the text which ordains him to suffer shame, than that which bids him to do valiantly for the truth. But happy am I that my path through the wilderness of this world will, for some space at least, be along with one, whose zeal and friendship are so active to support me when I am fainting in the way.'

While the inhabitants of Moultrassie Hall thus communicated together upon the purport of Sir Jasper Cranbourne's visit, that worthy knight greatly excited the surprise of Sir Geoffrey Peveril, by reporting the manner in which his embassy had been received.

'I took him for a man of other metal,' said Sir Geoffrey; 'nay, I would have sworn it, had any one asked my testimony. But there is no making a silken purse out of a sow's ear. I have done a folly for him that I will never do for another; and that is, to think a Presbyterian would fight without his preacher's permission. Give them a two hours' sermon, and let them howl a psalm to a tune that is worse than the cries of a flogged hound, and the villains will lay on like threshers; but for a calm, cool, gentleman-like turn upon the sod, hand to hand, in a neighbourly way, they have not honour enough to undertake it. But enough of our crop-eared cur of a neighbour.—Sir Jasper, you will tarry with us to dine, and see how Dame Margaret's kitchen smokes; and after dinner I will show you a long-winged falcon fly. She is not mine, but the Countess's, who brought her from London on her fist almost the whole way, for all the haste she was in, and left her with me to keep the perch for a season.'

This match was soon arranged, and Dame Margaret overheard the good knight's resentment mutter itself off, with those feelings with which we listen to the last growling of the thunder-storm; which, as the black cloud sinks beneath the hill, at once assures us that there has been danger, and that the peril is over. She could not, indeed, but marvel in her own mind at the singular path of reconciliation with his neighbour which her husband had, with so much confidence, and in the actual sincerity of his good-will to Master Bridgenorth, attempted to open; and she blessed God internally that it had not terminated in bloodshed. But these reflections she locked carefully within her own bosom, well knowing that they referred to subjects in which the Knight of the Peak would neither permit his sagacity to be called in question, nor his will to be controlled.

The progress of the history hath hitherto been slow; but after this period so little matter worthy of mark occurred at Martindale, that we must hurry over hastily the transactions of several years.

CHAPTER X.

Cleopatra. Give me to drink mandragora,
That I may sleep away this gap of time.
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

THERE passed, as we hinted at the conclusion of the last chapter, four or five years after the period we have dilated upon; the events of which scarcely require to be discussed, so far as our present purpose is concerned, in as many lines. The knight and his lady continued to reside at their castle—she, with prudence and with patience, endeavouring to repair the damages which the Civil Wars had inflicted upon their fortune; and murmuring a little when her plans of economy were interrupted by the liberal hospitality which was her husband's principal expense, and to which he was attached, not only from his own English heartiness of disposition, but from ideas of maintaining the dignity of his ancestry—no less remarkable, according to the tradition of their buttery, kitchen, and cellar, for the fat beeves which they roasted, and the mighty ale which they brewed, than for their extensive estates, and the number of their retainers.

The world, however, upon the whole, went happily and easily with the worthy couple. Sir Geoffrey's debt to his neighbour Bridgenorth continued, it is true, unabated; but he was the only creditor upon the Martindale estate—all others being paid off. It would have been most desirable that this encumbrance also should be cleared, and it was the great object of Dame Margaret's economy to effect the discharge; for, although interest was regularly settled with Master Win-the-Fight, the Chesterfield attorney, yet the principal sum, which was a large one, might be called for at an inconvenient time. The man, too, was gloomy, important, and mysterious, and always seemed as if he was thinking upon his broken head in the churchyard of Martindale *cum* Moultrassie.

Dame Margaret sometimes transacted the necessary business with him in person; and when he came to the Castle on these occasions, she thought she saw a malicious and disobliging expression in his manner and countenance. Yet his actual conduct was not only fair, but liberal; for indulgence was given, in the way of delay of payment, whenever circumstances rendered it necessary to the debtor to require it. It seemed to Lady Peveril that the agent, in such cases, was acting under the strict orders of his absent employer, concerning whose welfare she could not help feeling a certain anxiety.

Shortly after the failure of the singular negotiation for attaining peace by combat, which Peveril had attempted to open with Major Bridgenorth, that gentleman left his seat of Moultrassie Hall in the care of his old house-keeper, and departed, no one knew whither, having in company with him his daughter Alice and Mistress Deborah Debbitch, now formally installed in all the duties of a governante; to these was added the Reverend Master Solsgrace. For some time public rumour persisted in asserting that Major Bridgenorth had only retreated to a distant part of the country for a season, to achieve his supposed purpose of marrying Mistress Deborah, and of letting the news be cold, and the laugh of the neighbourhood be ended, ere he brought her down as mistress of Moultrassie Hall. This rumour died away; and it was then affirmed that he had removed to foreign parts, to insure the continuance of health in so delicate a constitution as that of little Alice. But when the major's dread of Popery was remembered, together with the still deeper antipathies of worthy Master Nehemiah Solsgrace, it was resolved unanimously that nothing less than what they might deem a fair chance of converting the Pope would have induced the parties to trust themselves within Catholic dominions. The most prevailing opinion was that they had gone to New England, the refuge then of many whom too intimate concern with the affairs of the late times, or the desire of enjoying uncontrolled freedom of conscience, had induced to emigrate from Britain.

Lady Peveril could not help entertaining a vague idea that Bridgenorth was not so distant. The extreme order in which everything was maintained at Moultrassie Hall seemed — no disparagement to the care of Dame Dickens the housekeeper, and the other persons engaged—to argue that the master's eye was not so very far off, but that its occasional inspection might be apprehended. It is true that neither the domestics nor the attorney answered any questions respecting the residence of Master Bridgenorth; but there was an air of mystery about them when interrogated, that seemed to argue more than met the ear.

About five years after Master Bridgenorth had left the country, a singular incident took place. Sir Geoffrey was absent at the Chesterfield races, and Lady Peveril, who was in the habit of walking around every part of the neighbourhood unattended, or only accompanied by Ellesmere, or her little boy, had gone down one evening upon a charitable errand to a solitary hut, whose inhabitant lay sick of a fever, which was supposed to be infectious. Lady Peveril never allowed apprehensions of this kind to stop 'devoted charitable deeds;' but she did not choose to expose either her son or her attendant to the risk which she herself, in some confidence that she knew precautions for escaping the danger, did not hesitate to incur.

Lady Peveril had set out at a late hour in the evening, and the way proved longer than she expected—several circumstances also occurred to detain her at the hut of her patient. It was a broad autumn moonlight, when she prepared to return homeward through the broken glades and upland which divided her from the Castle. This she considered as a matter of very little importance, in so quiet and sequestered a country, where the road lay chiefly through her

domains, especially as she had a lad about fifteen years old, the son of her patient, to escort her on the way The distance was better than two miles, but might be considerably abridged by passing through an avenue belonging to the estate of Moultrassie Hall, which she had avoided as she came, not from the ridiculous rumours which pronounced it to be haunted, but because her husband was much displeased when any attempt was made to render the walks of the Castle and Hall common to the inhabitants of both The good lady, in consideration, perhaps, of extensive latitude allowed to her in the more important concerns of the family, made a point of never interfering with her husband's whims or prejudices; and it is a compromise which we would heartily recommend to all managing matrons of our acquaintance; for it is surprising how much real power will be cheerfully resigned to the fair sex for the pleasure of being allowed to ride one's hobby in peace and quiet

Upon the present occasion, however, although the Dobby's Walk * was within the inhibited domains of the Hall, the Lady Peveril determined to avail herself of it, for the purpose of shortening her road home, and she directed her steps accordingly But when the peasant boy her companion, who had hitherto followed her, whistling cheerily, with a hedge bill in his hand, and his hat on one side, perceived that she turned to the stile which entered to the Dobby's Walk, he showed symptoms of great fear, and at length, coming to the lady's side, petitioned her in a whimpering tone, 'Don't ye now—don't ye now, my lady, don't ye go yonder'

Lady Peveril, observing that his teeth chattered in his head, and that his whole person exhibited great signs of terror, began to recollect the report that the first squire of Moultrassie, the brewer of Chesterfield, who had bought the estate, and then died of melancholy for lack of something to do (and, as was said, not without suspicions of suicide), was supposed to walk in this sequestered avenue, accompanied by a large headless mastiff, which, when he was alive, was a particular favourite of the ex-brewer To have expected any protection from her escort, in the condition to which superstitious fear had reduced him, would have been truly a hopeless trust; and Lady Peveril, who was not apprehensive of any danger, thought there would be great cruelty in dragging the cowardly boy into a scene which he regarded with so much apprehension She gave him, therefore a silver piece, and permitted him to return. The latter boon seemed even more acceptable than the first; for, ere she could return the purse into her pocket, she heard the wooden clogs of her bold convoy in full retreat, by the way from whence they came.

Smiling within herself at the fear she esteemed so ludicrous, Lady Peveril ascended the stile, and was soon hidden from the broad light of the moonbeams, by the numerous and entangled boughs of the huge elms, which, meeting from either side, totally overarched the old avenue.

* Dobby, an old English name for goblin.

The scene was calculated to excite solemn thoughts; and the distant glimmer of a light from one of the numerous casements in the front of Moultrassie Hall, which lay at some distance, was calculated to make them even melancholy. She thought of the fate of that family—of the deceased Mrs Bridgenorth, with whom she had often walked in this very avenue, and who, though a woman of no high parts or accomplishments, had always testified the deepest respect, and the most earnest gratitude, for such notice as she had shown to her. She thought of her blighted hopes—her premature death—the despair of her self banished husband—the uncertain fate of their orphan child, for whom she felt, even at this distance of time, some touch of a mother's affection

Upon such sad subjects her thoughts were turned, when, just as she attained the middle of the avenue, the imperfect and checkered light which found its way through the sylvan archway, showed her something which resembled the figure of a man Lady Peveril paused a moment, but instantly advanced,—her bosom, perhaps, gave one startled throb, as a debt to the superstitious belief of the times, but she instantly repelled the thought of supernatural appearances From those that were merely mortal she had nothing to fear A marauder on the game was the worst character whom she was likely to encounter, and he would be sure to hide himself from her observation. She advanced, accordingly, steadily, and, as she did so had the satisfaction to observe that the figure, as she expected gave place to her, and glided away amongst the trees on the left-hand side of the avenue As she passed the spot on which the form had been so lately visible, and bethought herself that this wanderer of the night might, nay, must, be in her vicinity, her resolution could not prevent her mending her pace, and that with so little precaution, that, stumbling over the limb of a tree, which, twisted off by a late tempest, still lay in the avenue, she fell, and, as she fell, screamed aloud A strong hand in a moment afterwards added to her fears by assisting her to rise, and a voice, to whose accents she was not a stranger, though they had been long unheard, said, 'Is it not you, Lady Peveril?'

'It is I,' said she, commanding her astonishment and fear, 'and if my ear deceive me not, I speak to Master Bridgenorth'

'I was that man,' said he, 'while oppression left me a name'

He spoke nothing more, but continued to walk beside her for a minute or two in silence. She felt her situation embarrassing; and to divest it of that feeling, as well as out of real interest in the question, she asked him, 'How her god daughter Alice now was?'

'Of god daughter, madam,' answered Major Bridgenorth, 'I know nothing; that being one of the names which have been introduced, to the corruption and pollution of God's ordinances. The infant who owed to your ladyship (so called) her escape from disease and death, is a healthy and thriving girl, as I am given to understand by those in whose charge she is lodged, for I have not lately seen her. And it is even the

recollection of these passages which in a manner impelled me, alarmed also by your fall, to offer myself to you at this time and mode, which in other respects is no way consistent with my present safety.'

'With your safety, Master Bridgenorth?' said the Lady Peveril; 'surely I could never have thought that it was in danger!'

'You have some news, then, yet to learn, madam,' said Major Bridgenorth; 'but you will hear, in the course of to-morrow, reasons why I dare not appear openly in the neighbourhood of my own property, and wherefore there is small judgment in committing the knowledge of my present residence to any one connected with Martindale Castle.'

'Master Bridgenorth,' said the lady, 'you were in former times prudent and cautious—I hope you have been misled by no hasty impression—by no rash scheme—I hope ——'

'Pardon my interrupting you, madam,' said Bridgenorth. 'I have indeed been changed—ay, my very heart within me hath been changed. In the times to which your ladyship (so called) thinks proper to refer, I was a man of this world—bestowing on it all my thoughts—all my actions, save formal observances—little deeming what was the duty of a Christian man, and how far his self-denial ought to extend—even unto his giving all as if he gave nothing. Hence I thought chiefly on carnal things—on the adding of field to field, and wealth to wealth—of balancing between party and party—securing a friend here, without losing a friend there. But Heaven smote me for my apostasy, the rather that I abused the name of religion, as a self-seeker, and a most blinded and carnal will-worshipper.—But I thank Him who hath at length brought me out of Egypt.'

In our day—although we have many instances of enthusiasm among us—we might still suspect one who avowed it thus suddenly and broadly, of hypocrisy, or of insanity; but according to the fashion of the times, such opinions as those which Bridgenorth expressed were openly pleaded as the ruling motives of men's actions. The sagacious Vane—the brave and skilful Harrison—were men who acted avowedly under the influence of such. Lady Peveril, therefore, was more grieved than surprised at the language she heard Major Bridgenorth use, and reasonably concluded that the society and circumstances in which he might lately have been engaged had blown into a flame the spark of eccentricity which always smouldered in his bosom. This was the more probable, considering that he was melancholy by constitution and descent—that he had been unfortunate in several particulars—and that no passion is more easily nursed by indulgence than the species of enthusiasm of which he now showed tokens. She therefore answered him by calmly hoping 'that the expression of his sentiments had not involved him in suspicion or in danger.'

'In suspicion, madam?' answered the major;—'for I cannot forbear giving to you, such is the strength of habit, one of those idle titles by which we poor potsherds are wont, in our pride, to denominate each other—I walk not only in suspicion, but in that degree of danger, that, were your husband to meet me at this instant,—me, a native Englishman, treading on my own lands,—I have no doubt he would do his best to offer me to the Moloch of Roman superstition, who now rages abroad for victims among God's people.'

'You surprise me by your language, Major Bridgenorth,' said the lady, who now felt rather anxious to be relieved from his company, and with that purpose walked on somewhat hastily. He mended his pace, however, and kept close by her side.

'Know you not,' said he, 'that Satan hath come down upon earth with great wrath, because his time is short? The next heir to the crown is an avowed Papist; and who dare assert, save sycophants and time-servers, that he who wears it is not equally ready to stoop to Rome, were he not kept in awe by a few noble spirits in the Commons House? You believe not this—yet in my solitary and midnight walks, when I thought on your kindness to the dead and to the living, it was my prayer that I might have the means granted to warn you—and lo! Heaven hath heard me.'

'Major Bridgenorth,' said Lady Peveril, 'you were wont to be moderate in these sentiments—comparatively moderate, at least, and to love your own religion without hating that of others.'

'What I was while in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, it signifies not to recall,' answered he. 'I was then like to Gallio, who cared for none of these things. I doted on creature-comforts—I clung to worldly honour and repute—my thoughts were earthward—or those I turned to Heaven were cold, formal, pharisaical meditations. I brought nothing to the altar save straw and stubble. Heaven saw need to chastise me in love—I was stripped of all that I clung to on earth—my worldly honour was torn from me—I went forth an exile from the home of my fathers, a deprived and desolate man—a baffled, and beaten, and dishonoured man. But who shall find out the ways of Providence? Such were the means by which I was chosen forth as a champion for the truth—holding my life as nothing, if thereby that may be advanced. But this was not what I wished to speak of. Thou hast saved the earthly life of my child—let me save the eternal welfare of yours.'

Lady Peveril was silent. They were now approaching the point where the avenue terminated in a communication with a public road, or rather pathway, running through an enclosed common field; this the lady had to prosecute for a little way, until a turn of the path gave her admittance into the park of Martindale. She now felt sincerely anxious to be in the open moonshine, and avoided reply to Bridgenorth that she might make the more haste. But as they reached the junction of the avenue and the public road, he laid his hand on her arm, and commanded rather than requested her to stop. She obeyed. He pointed to a huge oak, of the largest size, which grew on the summit of a knoll in the open ground which terminated the avenue, and was exactly so placed as to serve for a termination to the vista. The moonshine without the avenue was so strong, that, amidst the flood of light

which it poured on the venerable tree, they could easily discover, from the shattered state of the boughs on one side, that it had suffered damage from lightning. 'Remember you,' he said, 'when we last looked together on that tree? I had ridden from London, and brought with me a protection from the Committee for your husband; and as I passed the spot—here on this spot where we now stand, you stood with my lost Alice—two—the last two of my beloved infants gambolled before you. I leaped from my horse—to her I was a husband—to those a father—to you a welcome and revered protector—What am I now to any one?' He pressed his hand on his brow, and groaned in agony of spirit.

It was not in the Lady Peveril's nature to hear sorrow without an attempt at consolation. 'Master Bridgenorth,' she said, 'I blame no man's creed, while I believe and follow my own; and I rejoice that in yours you have sought consolation for temporal afflictions. But does not every Christian creed teach us alike, that affliction should soften our heart?'

'Ay, woman,' said Bridgenorth sternly, 'as the lightning which shattered yonder oak hath softened its trunk. No; the seared wood is the fitter for the use of the workmen—the hardened and the dried-up heart is that which can best bear the task imposed by these dismal times. God and man will no longer endure the unbridled profligacy of the dissolute—the scoffing of the profane—the contempt of the divine laws—the infraction of human rights. The times demand righters and avengers, and there will be no want of them.'

'I deny not the existence of much evil,' said Lady Peveril, compelling herself to answer, and beginning at the same time to walk forward; 'and from hearsay, though not, I thank Heaven, from observation, I am convinced of the wild debauchery of the times. But let us trust it may be corrected without such violent remedies as you hint at. Surely the ruin of a second civil war—though I trust your thoughts go not that dreadful length—were at best a desperate alternative.'

'Sharp, but sure,' replied Bridgenorth. 'The blood of the Paschal lamb chased away the destroying angel—the sacrifices offered on the threshing-floor of Araunah stayed the pestilence. Fire and sword are severe remedies, but they purge and purify.'

'Alas, Major Bridgenorth!' said the lady, 'wise and moderate in your youth, can you have adopted in your advanced life the thoughts and language of those whom you yourself beheld drive themselves and the nation to the brink of ruin?'

'I know not what I then was—you know not what I now am,' he replied, and suddenly broke off; for they even then came forth into the open light, and it seemed as if, feeling himself under the lady's eye, he was disposed to soften his tone and his language.

At the first distinct view which she had of his person, she was aware that he was armed with a short sword, a poniard, and pistols at his belt—precautions very unusual for a man who formerly had seldom, and only on days of ceremony, carried a walking rapier, though such was the habitual and constant practice of gentlemen of his station in life. There seemed also something of more stern determination than usual in his air, which indeed had always been rather sullen than affable; and, ere she could repress the sentiment, she could not help saying, 'Master Bridgenorth, you are indeed changed.'

'You see but the outward man,' he replied; 'the change within is yet deeper. But it was not of myself that I desired to talk—I have already said that, as you have preserved my child from the darkness of the grave, I would willingly preserve yours from that more utter darkness which, I fear, hath involved the path and walks of his father.'

'I must not hear this of Sir Geoffrey,' said the Lady Peveril. 'I must bid you farewell for the present; and when we again meet at a more suitable time, I will at least listen to your advice concerning Julian, although I should not perhaps incline to it.'

'That more suitable time may never come,' replied Bridgenorth. 'Time wanes, eternity draws nigh. Hearken! it is said to be your purpose to send the young Julian to be bred up in yonder bloody island, under the hand of your kinswoman, that cruel murderess, by whom was done to death a man more worthy of vital existence than any that she can boast among her vaunted ancestry. These are current tidings—are they true?'

'I do not blame you, Master Bridgenorth, for thinking harshly of my cousin of Derby,' said Lady Peveril; 'nor do I altogether vindicate the rash action of which she hath been guilty. Nevertheless, in her habitation, it is my husband's opinion and my own, that Julian may be trained in the studies and accomplishments becoming his rank, along with the young Earl of Derby.'

'Under the curse of God, and the blessing of the Pope of Rome,' said Bridgenorth. 'You, lady, so quick-sighted in matters of earthly prudence, are you blind to the gigantic pace at which Rome is moving to regain this country, once the richest gem in her usurped tiara? The old are seduced by gold—the youth by pleasure—the weak by flattery—cowards by fear—and the courageous by ambition. A thousand baits for each taste, and each bait concealing the same deadly hook.'

'I am well aware, Master Bridgenorth,' said Lady Peveril, 'that my kinswoman is a Catholic;* but her son is educated in the Church of England's principles, agreeably to the command of her deceased husband.'

'Is it likely,' answered Bridgenorth, 'that she who fears not shedding the blood of the righteous, whether on the field or scaffold, will regard the sanction of her promise when her religion bids her break it? Or, if she does, what shall your son be the better, if he remain in the mire of his father? What are your Episcopal tenets but mere Popery? save that ye have chosen a temporal tyrant for your pope, and substitute a mangled mass in English for that which your predecessors pronounced in Latin.—But why

* I have elsewhere (p. 732) noticed that this is a deviation from the truth—Charlotte, Countess of Derby, was a Huguenot.

speak I of these things to one who hath ears, indeed, and eyes, yet cannot see, listen to, or understand what is alone worthy to be heard, seen, and known? Pity that what hath been wrought so fair and exquisite in form and disposition, should be yet blind, deaf, and ignorant, like the things which perish!'

'We shall not agree on these subjects, Master Bridgenorth,' said the lady, anxious still to escape from this strange conference, though scarce knowing what to apprehend; 'once more, I must bid you farewell.'

'Stay yet an instant,' he said again, laying his hand on her arm; 'I would stop you if I saw you rushing on the brink of an actual precipice—let me prevent you from a danger still greater. How shall I work upon your unbelieving mind? Shall I tell you that the debt of bloodshed yet remains a debt to be paid by the bloody House of Derby? And wilt thou send thy son to be among those from whom it shall be exacted?'

'You wish to alarm me in vain, Master Bridgenorth,' answered the lady; 'what penalty can be exacted from the Countess, for an action which I have already called a rash one, has been long since levied.'

'You deceive yourself,' retorted he sternly. 'Think you a paltry sum of money, given to be wasted on the debaucheries of Charles, can atone for the death of such a man as Christian—a man precious alike to heaven and to earth? Not on such terms is the blood of the righteous to be poured forth! Every hour's delay is numbered down as adding interest to the grievous debt, which will one day be required from that bloodthirsty woman.'

At this moment the distant tread of horses was heard on the road on which they held this singular dialogue. Bridgenorth listened a moment, and then said, 'Forget that you have seen me—name not my name to your nearest or dearest—lock my counsel in your breast—profit by it, and it shall be well with you.'

So saying, he turned from her, and plunging through a gap in the fence, regained the cover of his own wood, along which the path still led.

The noise of horses advancing at full trot now came nearer; and Lady Peveril was aware of several riders, whose forms rose indistinctly on the summit of the rising ground behind her. She became also visible to them; and one or two of the foremost made towards her at increased speed, challenging her as they advanced with the cry of 'Stand! Who goes there?' The foremost who came up, however, exclaimed, 'Mercy on us, if it be not my lady!' and Lady Peveril, at the same moment, recognised one of her own servants. Her husband rode up immediately afterwards, with, 'How now, Dame Margaret? What makes you abroad so far from home and at an hour so late?'

Lady Peveril mentioned her visit at the cottage, but did not think it necessary to say aught of having seen Major Bridgenorth; afraid, it may be, that her husband might be displeased with that incident.

'Charity is a fine thing and a fair,' answered Sir Geoffrey; 'but I must tell you, you do ill, dame, to wander about the country like a quack-salver, at the call of every old woman who has a colic fit; and at this time of night especially, and when the land is so unsettled, besides.'

'I am sorry to hear that it is so,' said the lady. 'I had heard no such news.'

'News!' repeated Sir Geoffrey; 'why, here has a new plot broken out among the Roundheads, worse than Venner's by a butt's length;* and who should be so deep in it as our old neighbour Bridgenorth? There is search for him everywhere; and I promise you if he is found he is like to pay old scores.'

'Then I am sure I trust he will not be found,' said Lady Peveril.

'Do you so?' replied Sir Geoffrey. 'Now I, on my part, hope that he will; and it shall not be my fault if he be not; for which effect I will presently ride down to Moultrassie, and make strict search, according to my duty; there shall neither rebel nor traitor earth so near Martindale Castle that I will assure. And you, my lady, be pleased for once to dispense with a pillion, and get up as you have done before, behind Saunders, who shall convey you safe home.'

The lady obeyed in silence; indeed, she did not dare to trust her voice in an attempt to reply, so much was she disconcerted with the intelligence she had just heard.

She rode behind the groom to the Castle, where she awaited in great anxiety the return of her husband. He came back at length; but, to her great relief, without any prisoner. He then explained more fully than his haste had before permitted, that an express had come down to Chesterfield, with news from court of a proposed insurrection amongst the old Commonwealth men, especially those who had served in the army; and that Bridgenorth, said to be lurking in Derbyshire, was one of the principal conspirators.

After some time this report of a conspiracy seemed to die away like many others of that period. The warrants were recalled, but nothing more was seen or heard of Major Bridgenorth; although it is probable he might safely enough have shown himself as openly as many did who lay under the same circumstances of suspicion.†

About this time, also, Lady Peveril, with many tears, took a temporary leave of her son Julian, who was sent, as had long been intended, for the purpose of sharing the education of the young Earl of Derby. Although the boding words of Bridgenorth sometimes occurred to Lady Peveril's mind, she did not suffer them to weigh with her in opposition to the advantages which the patronage of the Countess of Derby secured to her son.

The plan seemed to be in every respect successful; and when, from time to time, Julian visited the house of his father, Lady Peveril had the satisfaction to see him, on every occasion, improved in person and in manner, as well as ardent in the pursuit of more solid acquirements. In process of time he became a gallant and accomplished youth, and travelled for some time upon the Continent with the young earl.

* The celebrated insurrection of the Anabaptists and Fifth Monarchy men in London, in the year 1661. [See note, p 926.]

† Note G, Persecution of the Puritans.

This was the more especially necessary for the enlarging of their acquaintance with the world; because the countess had never appeared in London, or at the court of King Charles, since her flight to the Isle of Man in 1660; but had resided in solitary and aristocratic state, alternately on her estates in England and in that island.

This had given to the education of both the young men, otherwise as excellent as the best teachers could render it, something of a narrow and restricted character; but though the disposition of the young earl was lighter and more volatile than that of Julian, both the one and the other had profited, in a considerable degree, by the opportunities afforded them. It was Lady Derby's strict injunction to her son, now returning from the Continent, that he should not appear at the court of Charles. But, having been for some time of age, he did not think it absolutely necessary to obey her in this particular; and had remained for some time in London, partaking the pleasures of the gay court there, with all the ardour of a young man bred up in comparative seclusion.

In order to reconcile the countess to this transgression of her authority (for he continued to entertain for her the profound respect in which he had been educated), Lord Derby agreed to make a long sojourn with her in her favourite island, which he abandoned almost entirely to her management.

Julian Peveril had spent at Martindale Castle a good deal of the time which his friend had bestowed in London; and at the period to which, passing over many years, our story has arrived, as it were, *per saltum*, they were both living, as the countess's guests, in the Castle of Rushin, in the venerable kingdom of Man.

CHAPTER XI.

Mona—long hid from those who roam the main
COLLINS.

THE Isle of Man, in the middle of the seventeenth century, was very different as a place of residence from what it is now. Men had not then discovered its merit as a place of occasional refuge from the storms of life, and the society to be there met with was of a very uniform tenor. There were no smart fellows, whom fortune had tumbled from the seat of their barouches no plucked pigeons or winged rooks—no disappointed speculators—no ruined miners—in short, no one worth talking to. The society of the island was limited to the natives themselves, and a few merchants who lived by contraband trade. The amusements were rare and monotonous, and the mercurial young earl was soon heartily tired of his dominions. The islanders, also, become too wise for happiness, had lost relish for the harmless and somewhat childish sports in which their simple ancestors had indulged themselves. May was no longer ushered in by the imaginary contest between the queen of returning winter and advancing spring; the listeners no longer sympathized with the lively music of the followers of the one, or the discordant sounds with which the other asserted a more noisy claim to attention. Christmas, too, closed, and the steeples no longer jangled forth a dissonant peal. The wren, to seek for which used to be the sport dedicated to the holytide, was left unpursued and unslain. Party spirit had come among these simple people, and destroyed their good-humour, while it left them their ignorance. Even the races, a sport generally interesting to people of all ranks, were no longer performed, because they were no longer interesting. The gentlemen were divided by feuds hitherto unknown, and each seemed to hold it scorn to be pleased with the same diversions that amused those of the opposite faction The hearts of both parties revolted from the recollection of former days, when all was peace among them, when the Earl of Derby, now slaughtered, used to bestow the prize, and Christian, since so vindictively executed, started horses to add to the amusement.*

Julian was seated in the deep recess which led to a latticed window of the old castle; and, with his arms crossed, and an air of profound contemplation, was surveying the long perspective of ocean, which rolled its successive waves up to the foot of the rock on which the ancient pile is founded. The earl was suffering under the infliction of ennui—now looking into a volume of Homer—now whistling—now swinging on his chair—now traversing the room—till, at length, his attention became swallowed up in admiration of the tranquillity of his companion.

'King of Men!' he said, repeating the favourite epithet by which Homer describes Agamemnon,—'I trust, for the old Greek's sake, he had a merrier office than being King of Man—Most philosophical Julian, will nothing rouse thee—not even a bad pun on my own royal dignity?'

'I wish you would be a little more the King in Man,' said Julian, starting from his reverie, 'and then you would find more amusement in your dominions.'

'What! dethrone that royal Semiramis my mother,' said the young lord, 'who has as much pleasure in playing queen as if she were a real sovereign?—I wonder you can give me such counsel.'

'Your mother, as you well know, my dear Derby, would be delighted, did you take any interest in the affairs of the island.'

'Ay, truly, she would permit me to be king; but she would choose to remain viceroy over me. Why, she would only gain a subject the more, by my converting my spare time, which is so very valuable to me, to the cares of royalty. No, no, Julian, she thinks it power, to direct all the affairs of these poor Manxmen; and, thinking it power, she finds it pleasure. I shall not interfere, unless she hold a high court of justice again. I cannot afford to pay another fine to my brother, King Charles—But I forget—this is a sore point with you.'

'With the Countess, at least,' replied Julian; 'and I wonder you will speak of it.'

'Why, I bear no malice against the poor man's memory, any more than yourself, though I have

* Note H, Manx Festivities.

not the same reasons for holding it in veneration,' replied the Earl of Derby; 'and yet I have some respect for it too I remember their bringing him out to die—It was the first holiday I ever had in my life, and I heartily wish it had been on some other account'

'I would rather hear you speak of anything else, my lord,' said Julian

'Why, there it goes,' answered the earl, 'whenever I talk of anything that puts you on your mettle, and warms your blood, that runs as cold as a merman's—to use a simile of this happy island—hey pass! you press me to change the subject.—Well, what shall we talk of? —O, Julian, if you had not gone down to earth yourself among the castles and caverns of Derbyshire, we should have had enough of delicious topics—the play houses, Julian—both the King's house and the Duke's— Louis's establishment is a jest to them —and the Ring in the Park, which beats the Corso at Naples—and the beauties who beat the whole world!'

'I am very willing to hear you speak on the subject, my lord,' answered Julian, 'the less I have seen of the London world myself, the more I am likely to be amused by your account of it

'Ay, my friend but where to begin!—with the wit of Buckingham and Sedley and Etherege, or with the grace of Harry Jermyn—the courtesy of the Duke of Monmouth or with the loveliness of La Belle Hamilton—of the Duchess of Richmond—of Lady ——, the person of Roxalana, the smart humour of Mistress Nelly —

'Or what say you to the bewitching sorceries of Lady Cynthia?' demanded his companion

'Faith, I would have kept th to myself, said the earl, 'to follow your prudent example But, since you ask me, I fairly own I cannot tell what to say of them only I think of them twenty times as often as all the beauties I have spoken of And yet she is neither the twentieth part so beautiful as the plainest of these court beauties nor so witty as the dullest I have named nor so modish—that is the great matter—as the most obscure. I cannot tell what makes me dote on her, except that she is capricious as her whole sex put together'

'That I should think a small recommendation, answered his companion

'Small, do you term it' replied the earl, 'and write yourself a brother of the angle? Why, which like you best—to pull a dead strain on a miserable gudgeon, which you draw ashore by main force, as the fellows here tow in their fishing boats—or a lively salmon, that makes your rod crack, and your line whistle plays you ten thousand mischievous pranks—wearies your heart out with hopes and fears and is only laid panting on the bank, after you have shown the most unmatchable display of skill, patience, and dexterity? But I see you have a mind to go on angling after your own old fashion Off laced coat, and on brown jerkin,—lively colours scare fish in the sober waters of the Isle of Man,—faith, in London you will catch few, unless the bait glistens a little But you are going? well, good luck to you I will take to the barge,—the sea and wind are less inconstant than the tide you have embarked on.'

'You have learned to say all these smart things in London, my lord,' answered Julian; 'but we shall have you a penitent for them, if Lady Cynthia be of my mind. Adieu, and pleasure till we meet'

The young men parted accordingly; and while the earl betook him to his pleasure voyage, Julian, as his friend had prophesied, assumed the dress of one who means to amuse himself with angling. The hat and feather were exchanged for a cap of grey cloth, the deeply laced cloak and doublet for a simple jacket of the same colour, with hose conforming and finally, with rod in hand, and pannier at his back, mounted upon a handsome Manx pony young Peveril rode briskly over the country which divided him from one of those beautiful streams that descend to the sea from the Kirk Merlagh mountains

Having reached the spot where he meant to commence his day's sport, Julian let his little steed graze, which, accustomed to the situation, followed him like a dog and now and then, when tired of picking herbage in the valley through which the stream winded, came near her master's side, and, as if she had been a curious amateur of the sport gazed on the trouts as Julian brought them struggling to the shore But Fairy's master showed, on that day, little of the patience of a real angler, and took no heed to old Isaac Walton's recommendation, to fish the streams inch by inch He chose, indeed, with an angler's eye the most promising casts, where the stream broke sparkling over a stone, affording the wonted shelter to a trout, or where, gliding away from a rippling current to a still eddy, it streamed under the projecting bank, or dashed from the pool of some low cascade By this judicious selection of spots whereon to employ his art the sportsman's basket was soon sufficiently heavy to show that his occupation was not a mere pretext, and so soon as this was the case, he walked briskly up the glen, only making a cast from time to time, in case of his being observed from any of the neighbouring heights

It was a little green and rocky valley through which the brook strayed, very lonely, although the slight track of an unformed road showed that it was occasionally traversed, and that it was not altogether void of inhabitants As Peveril advanced still farther, the right bank reached to some distance from the stream, leaving a piece of meadow ground, the lower part of which, being close to the brook, was entirely covered with rich

singula

structure, with a terraced garden and a cultivated field or two beside it In former times, a Danish or Norwegian fastness had stood here, called the Black Fort, from the colour of a huge heathy hill, which, rising behind the building, appeared to be the boundary of the valley, and to afford the source of the brook. But the original structure had been long demolished, as, indeed, it probably only consisted of dry stones, and its materials had been applied to the construction of the present mansion—the work of some churchman during the sixteenth century, as was evident from the huge stonework of its windows, which scarce left room for light to pass through, as well as from two or three heavy but tresses, which ro

jected from the front of the house, and exhibited on their surface little niches for images. These had been carefully destroyed, and pots of flowers were placed in the niches in their stead, besides their being ornamented by creeping plants of various kinds, fancifully twined around them. The garden was also in good order; and though the spot was extremely solitary, there was about it altogether an air of comfort, accommodation, and even elegance, by no means generally characteristic of the habitants of the island at the time.

With much circumspection, Julian Peveril approached the low Gothic porch, which defended the entrance of the mansion from the tempests incident to its situation, and was, like the buttresses, overrun with ivy and other creeping plants. An iron ring, contrived so as when drawn up and down to rattle against the bar of notched iron through which it was suspended, served the purpose of a knocker; and to this he applied himself, though with the greatest precaution.

He received no answer for some time, and indeed it seemed as if the house was totally uninhabited; when, at length, his impatience getting the upper hand, he tried to open the door, and, as it was only upon the latch, very easily succeeded. He passed through a little low-arched hall, the upper end of which was occupied by a staircase, and, turning to the left, opened the door of a summer parlour, wainscoted with black oak, and very simply furnished with chairs and tables of the same materials; the former cushioned with leather. The apartment was gloomy—one of those stone-shafted windows which we have mentioned, with its small latticed panes, and thick garland of foliage, admitting but an imperfect light.

Over the chimneypiece (which was of the same massive materials with the panelling of the apartment) was the only ornament of the room; a painting, namely, representing an officer in the military dress of the Civil Wars. It was a green jerkin, then the national and peculiar wear of the Manxmen; his short band which hung down on the cuirass, the orange-coloured scarf, but, above all, the shortness of his close-cut hair, showing evidently to which of the great parties he had belonged. His right hand rested on the hilt of his sword; and in the left he held a small Bible, bearing the inscription, '*In hoc signo.*' The countenance was of a light complexion, with fair and almost effeminate blue eyes, and an oval form of face—one of those physiognomies to which, though not otherwise unpleasing, we naturally attach the idea of melancholy and of misfortune.* Apparently it was well known to Julian Peveril; for, after having looked at it for a long time, he could not forbear muttering aloud, 'What would I give that that man had never been born, or that he still lived!'

'How now—how is this?' said a female, who entered the room as he uttered this reflection. '*You* here, Master Peveril, in spite of all the warnings you have had! You here in the possession of folk's house when they are abroad, and talking to yourself, as I shall warrant!'

'Yes, Mistress Deborah,' said Peveril, 'I am here once more, as you see, against every prohibition, and in defiance of all danger.—Where is Alice?'

'Where you will never see her, Master Julian - you may satisfy yourself of that,' answered Mistress Deborah, for it was that respectable governante; and, sinking down at the same time upon one of the large leathern chairs, she began to fan herself with her handkerchief, and complain of the heat in a most ladylike fashion.

In fact, Mistress Debbitch, while her exterior intimated a considerable change of condition for the better, and her countenance showed the less favourable effects of the twenty years which had passed over her head, was in mind and manners very much what she had been when she battled the opinions of Madam Ellesmere at Martindale Castle. In a word, she was self-willed, obstinate, and coquettish as ever, otherwise no ill-disposed person. Her present appearance was that of a woman of the better rank. From the sobriety of the fashion of her dress, and the uniformity of its colours, it was plain she belonged to some sect which condemned superfluous gaiety in attire; but no rules, not those of a nunnery or of a quaker's society, can prevent a little coquetry in that particular, where a woman is desirous of being supposed to retain some claim to personal attention. All Mistress Deborah's garments were so arranged as might best set off a good-looking woman, whose countenance indicated ease and good cheer—who called herself five-and-thirty, and was well entitled, if she had a mind, to call herself twelve or fifteen years older.

Julian was under the necessity of enduring all her tiresome and fantastic airs, and awaiting with patience till she had 'prinked herself and pinned herself'—flung her hoods back, and drawn them forward—snuffed at a little bottle of essences - closed her eyes like a dying fowl—turned them up like a duck in a thunderstorm; when at length, having exhausted her round of *minauderies*, she condescended to open the conversation.

'These walks will be the death of me,' she said, 'and all on your account, Master Julian Peveril; for if Dame Christian should learn that you have chosen to make your visits to her niece, I promise you Mistress Alice would soon be obliged to find other quarters, as. I

'Come now, Mistress Deb part of justice humoured,' said Julian; 'consi other fine to this intimacy of ours of your own rget—this is you not make yourself known t first time I strolled up this glen w lied Julian; rod, and tell me that you we keeper, and that Alice had been a poor man's fellow? And what could there be ough I have than that I should come back and agreeable persons as often as I co

* Pam told that a portrait of the unfortunate William Christian is still preserved in the family of Waterson of Ballnahow of Kirk Church, Rushin. William Dhône is dressed in a green coat without collar or cape, after the fashion of those puritanic times, with the head in a close-cropped wig, resembling the bishop's peruke of the present day. The countenance is youthful and well-looking, very unlike the expression of foreboding melancholy. I have so far taken advantage of this criticism, as to bring my ideal portrait, in the present edition, nearer to the complexion at least of the fair-haired William Dhône.

'Yes,' said Dame Deborah, 'but I did not bid you fall in love with us, though, or propose such a matter as marriage either to Alice or myself.'

'To do you justice, you never did, Deborah,' answered the youth; 'but what of that? Such things will come out before one is aware. I am sure you must have heard such proposals fifty times when you least expected them.'

'Fie, fie, fie, Master Julian Peveril!' said the governante; 'I would have you to know that I have always so behaved myself, that the best of the land would have thought twice of it, and have very well considered both what he was going to say, and how he was going to say it, before he came out with such proposals to me.'

'True, true, Mistress Deborah,' continued Julian; 'but all the world hath not your discretion. Then Alice Bridgenorth is a child—a mere child—and one always asks a baby to be one's little wife, you know. Come, I know you will forgive me. Thou wert ever the best natured, kindest woman in the world; and you know you have said twenty times we were made for each other.'

'Oh no, Master Julian Peveril, no, no, no!' ejaculated Deborah. 'I may indeed have said your estates were born to be united; and to be sure it is natural for me, that come of the old stock of the yeomanry of Peveril of the Peak's estate, to wish that it was all within the ring fence again, which sure enough it might be, were you to marry Alice Bridgenorth. But then there is the knight your father, and my lady your mother; and there is her father, that is half crazy with his religion; and her aunt, that wears eternal black grogram for that unlucky Colonel Christian; and there is the Countess of Derby, that would serve us all with the same sauce if we were thinking of anything that would displease her. And besides all that, you have broke your word with Mistress Alice, and everything is over between you; and I am of opinion it is quite right it should be all over. And perhaps it may be, Master Julian, that I should have thought so a long time ago, before a child like Alice put it into my head; but I am so good natured.'

No flatterer like a lover, who wishes to carry his point.

'You are the best natured, kindest creature in the world, Deborah.—But you have never seen the ring I bought for you at Paris. Nay, I will put it on your finger myself. What! your foster son, whom you loved so well, and took such care of?'

He easily succeeded in putting a pretty ring of gold, with a humorous affectation of gallantry, on the fat finger of Mistress Deborah Debbitch. Hers was ——— a kind often to be met with,
most unmatchab[...]ver and higher vulgar, who,
dexterity? But [...]a broad scale, accessible to
angling after y[...]tion, are nevertheless much
coat, and on br[...]nities, and considerably biassed
fish in the so[...]uty, though perhaps insensibly,
faith, in Londc[...]tty observances, petty presents,
bait glistens a[...]pliments. Mistress Debbitch
good luck to y[...]round, and round and round,
the sea and [...]aid, in a whisper, 'Well, Master'
tide you have [...]t signifies nothing denying any-
'You have k[...] young gentleman as you, for young gentlemen are always so obstinate! and so I may as well tell you that Mistress Alice walked back from Kirk Truagh along with me just now, and entered the house at the same time with myself.'

'Why did you not tell me so before?' said Julian, starting up; 'where—where is she?'

'You had better ask why I tell you so *now*, Master Julian,' said Dame Deborah; 'for, I promise you, it is against her express commands; and I would not have told you, had you not looked so pitiful; but as for seeing you, that she will not; and she is in her own bedroom, with a good oak door shut and bolted upon her; that is one comfort.—And so, as for any breach of trust on my part,—I promise you the little saucy minx gives it no less name,—it is quite impossible.'

'Do not say so, Deborah—only go—only try—tell her to hear me—tell her I have a hundred excuses for disobeying her commands—tell her I have no doubt to get over all obstacles at Martindale Castle.'

'Nay, I tell you it is all in vain,' replied the dame. 'When I saw your cap and rod lying in the hall, I did but say, "There he is again," and she ran up the stairs like a young deer; and I heard key turned, and bolt shot, ere I could say a single word to stop her. I marvel you heard her not.'

'It was because I am, as I ever was, an owl—a dreaming fool, who let all these golden minutes pass which my luckless life holds out to me so rarely. Well—tell her I go—go for ever—go where she will hear no more of me—where no one shall hear more of me!'

'O, the Father!' said the dame, 'hear how he talks! What will become of Sir Geoffrey, and your mother, and of me, and of the Countess, if you were to go so far as you talk of? And what would become of poor Alice too? for I will be sworn she likes you better than she says, and I know she used to sit and look the way that you used to come up the stream, and now and then ask me if the morning were good for fishing. And all the while you were on the Continent, as they call it, she scarcely smiled once, unless it was when she got two beautiful long letters about foreign parts.'

'Friendship, Dame Deborah—only friendship—cold and calm remembrance of one who, by your kind permission, stole in on your solitude now and then, with news from the living world without.—Once, indeed, I thought—but it is all over. Farewell.'

So saying, he covered his face with one hand, and extended the other, in the act of bidding adieu to Dame Debbitch, whose kind heart became unable to withstand the sight of his affliction.

'Now, do not be in such haste,' she said; 'I will go up again and tell her how it stands with you, and bring her down, if it is in woman's power to do it.'

And, so saying, she left the apartment, and ran up stairs.

Julian Peveril, meanwhile, paced the apartment in great agitation, waiting the success of Deborah's intercession; and she remained long enough absent to give us time to explain, in a short retrospect, the circumstances which had led to his present situation.

CHAPTER XII.

Ah me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth!
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

THE celebrated passage which we have prefixed to this chapter has, like most observations of the same author, its foundation in real experience. The period at which love is formed for the first time and felt most strongly, is seldom that at which there is much prospect of its being brought to a happy issue. The state of artificial society opposes many complicated obstructions to early marriages; and the chance is very great that such obstacles prove insurmountable. In fine, there are few men who do not look back in secret to some period of their youth at which a sincere and early affection was repulsed or betrayed, or became abortive from opposing circumstances. It is these little passages of secret history which leave a tinge of romance in every bosom, scarce permitting us, even in the most busy or the most advanced period of life, to listen with total indifference to a tale of true love.

Julian Peveril had so fixed his affections as to insure the fullest share of that opposition which early attachments are so apt to encounter. Yet nothing so natural as that he should have done so. In early youth Dame Debbitch had accidentally met with the son of her first patroness, and who had himself been her earliest charge, fishing in the little brook already noticed, which watered the valley in which she resided with Alice Bridgenorth. The dame's curiosity easily discovered who he was; and besides the interest which persons in her condition usually take in the young people who have been under their charge, she was delighted with the opportunity to talk about former times—about Martindale Castle, and friends there—about Sir Geoffrey and his good lady—and, now and then, about Lance Outram the park-keeper.

The mere pleasure of gratifying her inquiries would scarce have had power enough to induce Julian to repeat his visits to the lonely glen; but Deborah had a companion—a lovely girl—bred in solitude, and in the quiet and unpretending tastes which solitude encourages—spirited also, and inquisitive, and listening with laughing cheek and an eager eye, to every tale which the young angler brought from the town and castle.

The visits of Julian to the Black Fort were only occasional—so far Dame Deborah showed common sense—which was, perhaps, inspired by the apprehension of losing her place, in case of discovery. She had, indeed, great confidence in the strong and rooted belief—amounting almost to superstition—which Major Bridgenorth entertained, that his daughter's continued health could only be insured by her continuing under the charge of one who had acquired Lady Peveril's supposed skill in treating those subject to such ailments. This belief Dame Deborah had improved to the utmost of her simple cunning—always speaking in something of an oracular tone upon the subject of her charge's health, and hinting at certain mysterious rules necessary to maintain it in the present favourable state. She had availed herself of this artifice to procure for herself and Alice a separate establishment at the Black Fort; for it was originally Major Bridgenorth's resolution that his daughter and her governante should remain under the same roof with the sister-in-law of his deceased wife, the widow of the unfortunate Colonel Christian. But this lady was broken down by premature age, brought on by sorrow; and, in a short visit which Major Bridgenorth made to the island, he was easily prevailed on to consider her house at Kirk Truagh as a very cheerless residence for his daughter. Dame Deborah, who longed for domestic independence, was careful to increase this impression by alarming her patron's fears on account of Alice's health. The mansion of Kirk Truagh stood, she said, much exposed to the Scottish winds, which could not but be cold, as they came from a country where, as she was assured, there was ice and snow at midsummer. In short, she prevailed, and was put into full possession of the Black Fort, a house which, as well as Kirk Truagh, belonged formerly to Christian, and now to his widow.

Still, however, it was enjoined on the governante and her charge to visit Kirk Truagh from time to time, and to consider themselves as under the management and guardianship of Mrs. Christian—a state of subjection, the sense of which Deborah endeavoured to lessen, by assuming as much freedom of conduct as she possibly dared, under the influence, doubtless, of the same feelings of independence which induced her at Martindale Castle to spurn the advice of Mistress Ellesmere.

It was this generous disposition to defy control which induced her to procure for Alice, secretly, some means of education which the stern genius of Puritanism would have proscribed. She ventured to have her charge taught music—nay, even dancing; and the picture of the stern Colonel Christian trembled on the wainscot where it was suspended, while the sylph-like form of Alice, and the substantial person of Dame Deborah, executed French *chassées* and *borées* to the sound of a small kit, which screamed under the bow of Monsieur de Pigal, half smuggler, half dancing-master. This abomination reached the ears of the colonel's widow, and by her was communicated to Bridgenorth, whose sudden appearance in the island showed the importance he attached to the communication. Had she been faithless to her own cause, that had been the latest hour of Mistress Deborah's administration. But she retreated into her stronghold.

'Dancing,' she said, 'was exercise, regulated and timed by music; and it stood to reason, that it must be the best of all exercise for a delicate person, especially as it could be taken within doors, and in all states of the weather.'

Bridgenorth listened with a clouded and thoughtful brow, when, in exemplification of her doctrine, Mistress Deborah, who was no contemptible performer on the viol, began to jangle Sellenger's Round, and desired Alice to dance an old English measure to the tune. As the half-bashful half-smiling girl, about fourteen,—for such was her age,—moved gracefully to the music, the father's eye unavoidably followed the light spring of her step, and marked with joy the

rising colour in her cheek. When the dance was over, he folded her in his arms, smoothed her somewhat disordered locks with a father's affectionate hand, smiled, kissed her brow, and took his leave, without one single word further interdicting the exercise of dancing. He did not himself communicate the result of his visit at the Black Fort to Mrs Christian, but she was not long of learning it, by the triumph of Dame Deborah on her next visit.

'It is well,' said the stern old lady, 'my brother Bridgenorth hath permitted you to make a Herodias of Alice, and teach her dancing. You have only now to find her a partner for life—I shall neither meddle nor make more in their affairs.'

In fact, the triumph of Dame Deborah, or rather of Dame Nature, on this occasion had more important effects than the former had ventured to anticipate, for Mrs Christian, though she received with all formality the formal visits of the governante and her charge, seemed thenceforth so pettish with the issue of her remonstrance upon the enormity of her niece dancing to a little fiddle, that she appeared to give up interference in her affairs, and left Dame Debbitch and Alice to manage both education and housekeeping—in which she had hitherto greatly concerned herself—much after their own pleasure.

It was in this independent state that they lived when Julian first visited their habitation, and he was the rather encouraged to do so by Dame Deborah, that she believed him to be one of the last persons in the world with whom Mrs Christian would have desired her niece to be acquainted—the happy spirit of contradiction superseding, with Dame Deborah on this as on other occasions, all consideration of the fitness of things. She did not act altogether without precaution neither. She was aware she had to guard not only against any reviving interest or curiosity on the part of Mrs Christian, but against the sudden arrival of Major Bridgenorth, who never failed once in the year to make his appearance at the Black Fort when least expected, and to remain there for a few days. Dame Debbitch therefore, exacted of Julian, that his visits should be few and far between; that he should condescend to pass for a relation of her own in the eyes of two ignorant Manx girls and a lad, who formed her establishment; and that he should always appear in his angler's dress, made of the simple *Loughtan*, or buff-coloured wool of the island, which is not subjected to dyeing. By these cautions she thought his intimacy at the Black Fort would be entirely unnoticed, or considered as immaterial, while, in the meantime, it furnished much amusement to her charge and herself.

This was accordingly the case during the earlier part of their intercourse, while Julian was a lad, and Alice a girl two or three years younger. But as the lad shot up to youth, and the girl to womanhood, even Dame Deborah Debbitch's judgment saw danger in their continued intimacy. She took an opportunity to communicate to Julian who Miss Bridgenorth actually was, and the peculiar circumstances which placed discord between their fathers. He heard the story of their quarrel with interest and surprise, for he had only resided occasionally at Martindale Castle, and the subject of Bridgenorth's quarrel with his father had never been mentioned in his presence. His imagination caught fire at the sparks afforded by this singular story; and, far from complying with the prudent remonstrance of Dame Deborah, and gradually estranging himself from the Black Fort and its fair inmate, he frankly declared, he considered his intimacy there, so casually commenced, as intimating the will of Heaven, that Alice and he were designed for each other, in spite of every obstacle which passion or prejudice could raise up betwixt them. They had been companions in infancy, and a little exertion of memory enabled him to recall his childish grief for the unexpected and sudden disappearance of his little companion, whom he was destined again to meet with in the early bloom of opening beauty, in a country which was foreign to them both.

Dame Deborah was confounded at the consequences of her communication which had thus blown into a flame the passion which she hoped it would have either prevented or extinguished. She had not the sort of head which resists the masculine and energetic remonstrances of passion ate attachment, whether addressed to her on her own account or on behalf of another. She lamented and wondered and ended her feeble opposition by weeping and sympathising, and consenting to allow the continuance of Julian's visits provided he should only address himself to Alice as a friend, to gain the world, she would consent to nothing more. She was not, however, so simple but that she also had her forebodings of the designs of Providence on this youthful couple; for certainly they could not be more formed to be united than the good estates of Martindale and Moultrassie.

Then came a long sequence of reflections. Martindale Castle wanted but some repairs to be almost equal to Chatsworth. The Hall might be allowed to go to ruin, or what would be better, when Sir Geoffrey's time came (for the good knight had seen service, and must be breaking now) the Hall would be a good dowery house, to which my lady and Ellesmere might retreat, while (empress of the still room, and queen of the pantry) Mistress Deborah Debbitch should reign housekeeper at the Castle, and extend, perhaps, the crown matrimonial to Lance Outram, provided he was not become too old, too fat, or too fond of ale.

Such were the soothing visions under the influence of which the dame connived at an attachment, which lulled also to pleasing dreams, though of a character so different, her charge and her visitant.

The visits of the young angler became more and more frequent; and the embarrassed Deborah, though foreseeing all the dangers of discovery, and the additional risk of an explanation betwixt Alice and Julian, which must necessarily render their relative situation so much more delicate, felt completely overborne by the enthusiasm of the young lover, and was compelled to let matters take their course.

The departure of Julian for the Continent interrupted the course of his intimacy at the Black Fort, and, while it relieved the elder of its inmates from much internal apprehension, spread an air of languor and dejection over the countenance of the younger, which, at Bridgenorth's next visit to the Isle of Man, renewed all his terrors for his daughter's constitutional malady.

Deborah promised faithfully she should look better the next morning, and she kept her word. She had retained in her possession for some time a letter which Julian had, by some private conveyance, sent to her charge, for his youthful friend. Deborah had dreaded the consequences of delivering it as a billet-doux, but, as in the case of the dance, she thought there could be no harm in administering it as a remedy.

It had complete effect; and next day the cheeks of the maiden had a tinge of the rose, which so much delighted her father, that, as he mounted his horse, he flung his purse into Deborah's hand, with the desire she should spare nothing that could make herself and his daughter happy, and the assurance that she had his full confidence.

This expression of liberality and confidence from a man of Major Bridgenorth's reserved and cautious disposition, gave full plumage to Mistress Deborah's hopes; and emboldened her not only to deliver another letter of Julian's to the young lady, but to encourage more boldly and freely than formerly the intercourse of the lovers when Peveril returned from abroad.

At length, in spite of all Julian's precaution, the young earl became suspicious of his frequent solitary fishing parties; and he himself, now better acquainted with the world than formerly, became aware that his repeated visits and solitary walks with a person so young and beautiful as Alice, might not only betray prematurely the secret of his attachment, but be of essential prejudice to her who was his object.

Under the influence of this conviction, he abstained, for an unusual period, from visiting the Black Fort. But when he next indulged himself with spending an hour in the place where he would gladly have abode for ever, the altered manner of Alice, the tone in which she seemed to upbraid his neglect, penetrated his heart, and deprived him of that power of self-command which he had hitherto exercised in their interviews. It required but a few energetic words to explain to Alice at once his feelings, and to make her sensible of the real nature of her own. She wept plentifully, but her tears were not all of bitterness. She sat passively still, and without reply, while he explained to her, with many an interjection, the circumstances which had placed discord between their families; for hitherto, all that she had known was, that Master Peveril, belonging to the household of the great Countess or Lady of Man, must observe some precautions in visiting a relative of the unhappy Colonel Christian. But when Julian concluded his tale with the warmest protestations of eternal love, 'My poor father!' she burst forth, 'and was this to be the end of all thy precautions?—This, that the son of him that disgraced and banished thee should hold such language to your daughter?'

'You err, Alice, you err,' cried Julian eagerly. 'That I hold this language—that the son of Peveril addresses thus the daughter of your father—that he thus kneels to you for forgiveness of injuries which passed when we were both infants, shows the will of Heaven, that in our affection should be quenched the discord of our parents. What else could lead those who parted infants on the hills of Derbyshire, to meet thus in the valleys of Man?'

Alice—however new such a scene, and, above all, her own emotions, might be—was highly endowed with that exquisite delicacy which is imprinted in the female heart, to give warning of the slightest approach to impropriety in a situation like hers.

'Rise, rise, Master Peveril,' she said; 'do not do yourself and me this injustice—we have done both wrong—very wrong; but my fault was done in ignorance. O God! my poor father, who needs comfort so much—is it for me to add to his misfortunes? Rise!' she added more firmly; 'if you retain this unbecoming posture any longer, I will leave the room, and you shall never see me more.'

The commanding tone of Alice overawed the impetuosity of her lover, who took in silence a seat removed to some distance from hers, and was again about to speak. 'Julian,' said she in a milder tone, 'you have spoken enough, and more than enough. Would you had left me in the pleasing dream in which I could have listened to you for ever! but the hour of wakening is arrived.' Peveril waited the prosecution of her speech as a criminal while he waits his doom; for he was sufficiently sensible that an answer, delivered not certainly without emotion, but with firmness and resolution, was not to be interrupted. 'We have done wrong,' she repeated, 'very wrong; and if we now separate for ever, the pain we may feel will be but a just penalty for our error. We should never have met: meeting, we should part as soon as possible. Our further intercourse can but double our pain at parting. Farewell, Julian; and forget we ever have seen each other!'

'Forget!' said Julian; 'never, never. To *you*, it is easy to speak the word—to think the thought. To *me*, an approach to either can only be by utter destruction. Why should you doubt that the feud of our fathers, like so many of which we have heard, might be appeased by our friendship? You are my only friend. I am the only one whom Heaven has assigned to you. Why should we separate for the fault of others, which befel when we were but children?'

'You speak in vain, Julian,' said Alice; 'I pity you—perhaps I pity myself—indeed, I should pity myself, perhaps, the most of the two; for you will go forth to new scenes and new faces, and will soon forget me; but I, remaining in this solitude, how shall *I* forget? —That, however, is not now the question —I can bear my lot, and it commands us to part.'

'Hear me yet a moment,' said Peveril; 'this evil is not, cannot be, remediless. I will go to

my father—I will use the intercession of my mother, to whom he can refuse nothing—I will gain their consent—they have no other child—and they must consent or lose him for ever. Say, Alice, if I come to you with my parents' consent to my suit, will you again say, with that tone so touching and so sad, yet so incredibly determined—Julian, we must part?' Alice was silent. 'Cruel girl, will you not even deign to answer me?' said her lover.

'We answer not those who speak in their dreams,' said Alice. 'You ask me what I would do were impossibilities performed. What right have you to make such suppositions, and ask such a question?'

'Hope, Alice, Hope,' answered Julian, 'the last support of the wretched, which even you surely would not be cruel enough to deprive me of. In every difficulty, in every doubt, in every danger, Hope will fight even if he cannot conquer. Tell me once more: if I come to you in the name of my father, in the name of that mother to whom you partly owe your life, what would you answer to me?'

'I would refer you to my own father,' said Alice, blushing and casting her eyes down; but instantly raising them again she repeated in a firmer and a sadder tone, 'Yes, Julian, I would refer you to my father; and you would find that your pilot Hope had deceived you, and that you had but escaped the quicksands to fall upon the rocks.'

'I would that could be tried!' said Julian. 'Methinks I could persuade your father that in ordinary eyes our alliance is not undesirable. My family have fortune, rank, long descent—all that fathers look for when they bestow a daughter's hand.'

'All this would avail you nothing,' said Alice. 'The spirit of my father is bent upon the things of another world; and if he listened to hear you out, it would be but to tell you that he spurned your offers.'

'You know not—you know not, Alice,' said Julian. 'Fire can soften iron—thy father's heart cannot be so hard, or his prejudices so strong, but I shall find some means to melt him. Forbid me not—O, forbid me not at least the experiment!'

'I can but advise,' said Alice; 'I can forbid you nothing; for to forbid implies power to command obedience; but if you will be wise, and listen to me—Here, and on this spot, we part for ever!'

'Not so, by Heaven!' said Julian, whose bold and sanguine temper scarce saw difficulty in attaining aught which he desired. 'We now part indeed, but it is that I may return armed [illegible]

[illegible] at Martindale Castle, with the view of communicating his purpose. But the task which seems easy at a distance, proves as difficult, upon a nearer approach, as the fording of a river, which from afar appeared only a brook. There lacked not opportunities of entering upon the subject; for, in the first ride which he took with his father, the knight resumed the subject of his son's marriage, and liberally left the lady to his choice; but under the strict proviso, that she was of a loyal and an honourable family;—if she had fortune, it was good and well, or rather, it was better than well; but if she was poor, why, 'there is still some picking,' said Sir Geoffrey, 'on the bones of the old estate; and Dame Margaret and I will be content with the less, that you young folks may have your share of it. I am turned frugal already, Julian. You see what a north country shambling bit of a Galloway nag I ride upon—a different beast, I wot, from my own old Black Hastings, who had but one fault, and that was his wish to turn down Moultrassie avenue.'

'Was that so great a fault?' said Julian, affecting indifference, while his heart was trembling as it seemed to him, almost in his very throat.

'It used to remind me of that base dishonourable Presbyterian fellow Bridgenorth,' said Sir Geoffrey; 'and I would as lief think of a toad;—they say he has turned Independent, to accomplish the full degree of rascality.—I tell you, Gill, I turned off the cowboy for gathering nuts in his woods. I would hang a dog that would so much as kill a hare there. But what is the matter with you? You look pale.'

Julian made some indifferent answer, but too well understood, from the language and tone which his father used, that his prejudices against Alice's father were both deep and envenomed, as those of country gentlemen often become, who, having little to do or think of, are but too apt to spend their time in nursing and cherishing petty causes of wrath against their next neighbours.

In the course of the same day he mentioned the Bridgenorths to his mother, as if in a casual manner. But the Lady Peveril instantly conjured him never to mention the name, especially in his father's presence.

'Was that Major Bridgenorth, of whom I have heard the name mentioned,' said Julian, 'so very bad a neighbour?'

'I do not say so,' said Lady Peveril; 'nay, we were more than once obliged to him in the former unhappy times; but your father and he took some passages so ill at each other's hands, that the least allusion to him disturbs Sir Geoffrey's temper in a manner quite unusual, and which, now that his health is somewhat impaired, is sometimes alarming to me. For Heaven's sake, then, my dear Julian, avoid upon all occasions the slightest allusion to Moultrassie or any of its inhabitants.'

This warning was so seriously given, that Julian himself saw that mentioning his secret purpose would be the sure way to render it abortive, and therefore he returned disconsolate to the isle.

Peveril had the boldness, however, to make the best he could of what had happened, by requesting an interview with Alice, in order to

inform her what had passed betwixt his parents and him on her account. It was with great difficulty that this boon was obtained; and Alice Bridgenorth showed no slight degree of displeasure, when she discovered, after much circumlocution, and many efforts to give an air of importance to what he had to communicate, that all amounted but to this, that Lady Peveril continued to return a favourable opinion of her father, Major Bridgenorth, which Julian would fain have represented as an omen of their future more perfect reconciliation.

'I did not think you would thus have trifled with me, Master Peveril,' said Alice, assuming an air of dignity; 'but I will take care to avoid such intrusion in future. I request you will not again visit the Black Fort; and I entreat of you, good Mistress Debbitch, that you will no longer either encourage or permit this gentleman's visits, as the result of such persecution will be to compel me to appeal to my aunt and father for another place of residence, and perhaps also for another and more prudent companion.'

This last hint struck Mistress Deborah with so much terror, that she joined her wishes in requiring and demanding Julian's instant absence, and he was obliged to comply with their request. But the courage of a youthful lover is not easily subdued; and Julian, after having gone through the usual round of trying to forget his ungrateful mistress, and again entertaining his passion with augmented violence, ended by the visit to the Black Fort, the beginning of which we narrated in the last chapter.

We then left him anxious for, yet almost fearful of, an interview with Alice, which he had prevailed upon Deborah to solicit; and such was the tumult of his mind, that, while he traversed the parlour, it seemed to him that the dark melancholy eyes of the slaughtered Christian's portrait followed him wherever he went, with the fixed, chill, and ominous glance which announced to the enemy of his race mishap and misfortune.

The door of the apartment opened at length, and these visions were dissipated.

CHAPTER XIII

Parents have flinty hearts! No tears can move them.
OTWAY

WHEN Alice Bridgenorth at length entered the parlour where her anxious lover had so long expected her, it was with a slow step and a composed manner. Her dress was arranged with an accurate attention to form, which at once enhanced the appearance of its puritanic simplicity, and struck Julian as a bad omen; for although the time bestowed upon the toilet may, in many cases, intimate the wish to appear advantageously at such an interview, yet a ceremonious arrangement of attire is very much allied with formality, and a preconceived determination to treat a lover with cold politeness.

The sad-coloured gown—the pinched and plaited cap, which carefully obscured the profusion of long dark brown hair—the small ruff, and the long sleeves, would have appeared to great disadvantage on a shape less graceful than Alice Bridgenorth's; but an exquisite form, though not, as yet, sufficiently rounded in the outlines to produce the perfection of female beauty, was able to sustain and give grace even to this unbecoming dress. Her countenance, fair and delicate, with eyes of hazel, and a brow of alabaster, had, notwithstanding, less regular beauty than her form, and might have been justly subjected to criticism. There was, however, a life and spirit in her gaiety, and a depth of sentiment in her gravity, which made Alice, in conversation with the very few persons with whom she associated, so fascinating in her manners and expression, whether of language or countenance—so touching also in her simplicity and purity of thought—that brighter beauties might have been overlooked in her company. It was no wonder, therefore, that an ardent character like Julian, influenced by these charms, as well as by the secrecy and mystery attending his intercourse with Alice, should prefer the recluse of the Black Fort to all others with whom he had become acquainted in general society.

His heart beat high as she came into the apartment, and it was almost without an attempt to speak that his profound obeisance acknowledged her entrance.

'This is a mockery, Master Peveril,' said Alice, with an effort to speak firmly, which yet was disconcerted by a slightly tremulous inflection of voice—'a mockery, and a cruel one. You come to this lone place, inhabited only by two women too simple to command your absence—too weak to enforce it—you come, in spite of my earnest request—to the neglect of your own time—to the prejudice, I may fear, of my character—you abuse the influence you possess over the simple person to whom I am entrusted—All this you do, and think to make it up by low reverences and constrained courtesy! Is this honourable, or is it fair?—Is it,' she added, after a moment's hesitation—'is it kind?'

The tremulous accent fell especially on the last word she uttered, and it was spoken in a low tone of gentle reproach, which went to Julian's heart.

'If,' said he, 'there was a mode by which, at the peril of my life, Alice, I could show my regard—my respect—my devoted tenderness—the danger would be dearer to me than ever was pleasure.'

'You have said such things often,' said Alice, 'and they are such as I ought not to hear, and do not desire to hear. I have no tasks to impose on you—no enemies to be destroyed—no need or desire of protection—no wish, Heaven knows, to expose you to danger—It is your visits here alone to which danger attaches. You have but to rule your own wilful temper—to turn your thoughts and your cares elsewhere, and I can have nothing to ask—nothing to wish for. Use your own reason—consider the injury you do yourself—the injustice you do us—and let me, once more, in fair terms, entreat you to absent yourself from this place—till—till'——

She paused, and Julian eagerly interrupted her—'Till when, Alice?—till when?—impose on me any length of absence which your severity

can inflict, short of a final separation—Say, Begone for years, but return when these years are over, and, slow and wearily as they must pass away, still the thought that they must at length have their period will enable me to live through them. Let me, then, conjure thee, Alice, to name a date—to fix a term—to say till *when*!'

'Till you can bear to think of me only as a friend and sister.'

'That is a sentence of eternal banishment, indeed!' said Julian; 'it is seeming, no doubt, to fix a term of exile, but attaching to it an impossible condition.'

'And why impossible, Julian?' said Alice in a tone of persuasion; 'were we not happier ere you threw the mask from your own countenance, and tore the veil from my foolish eyes? Did we not meet with joy, spend our time happily, and part cheerily, because we transgressed no duty and incurred no self-reproach? Bring back that state of happy ignorance, and you shall have no reason to call me unkind. But while you form schemes which I know to be visionary, and use language of such violence and passion, you shall excuse me if I now, and once for all, declare that, since Deborah shows herself unfit for the trust reposed in her, and must needs expose me to persecutions of this nature, I will write to my father, that he may fix me another place of residence; and in the meanwhile I will take shelter with my aunt at Kirk Truagh.'

'Hear me, unpitying girl,' said Peveril, 'hear me, and you shall see how devoted I am to obedience, in all that I can do to oblige you. You say you were happy when we spoke not on such topics—well—at all expense of my own suppressed feelings, that happy period shall return. I will meet you—walk with you—read with you—but only as a brother would with his sister, or a friend with his friend; the thoughts I may nourish, be they of hope or of despair, my tongue shall not give birth to, and therefore I cannot offend; Deborah shall be ever by your side, and her presence shall prevent my even hinting at what might displease you—only do not make a crime to me of those thoughts which are the dearest part of my existence, for believe me it were better and kinder to rob me of existence itself.'

'This is the mere ecstasy of passion, Julian,' answered Alice Bridgenorth; 'that which is unpleasant, our selfish and stubborn will represents as impossible. I have no confidence in the plan you propose—no confidence in your resolution, and less than none in the protection of Deborah. Till you can renounce honestly and explicitly, the wishes you have lately expressed, we must be strangers;—and could you renounce them even at this moment, it were better that we should part for a long time; and, for Heaven's sake, let it be as soon as possible—perhaps it is even now too late to prevent some unpleasant accident—I thought I heard a noise.'

'It was Deborah,' answered Julian. 'Be not afraid, Alice; we are secure against surprise.'

'I know not,' said Alice, 'what you mean by such security—I have nothing to hide. I sought not this interview; on the contrary, averted it as long as I could—and am now most desirous to break it off.'

'And wherefore, Alice, since you say it must be our last? Why should you shake the sand which is passing so fast? the very executioner hurries not the prayers of the wretches upon the scaffold.—And see you not—I will argue as coldly as you can desire—see you not that you are breaking your own word, and recalling the hope which yourself held out to me?'

'What hope have I suggested? What word have I given, Julian?' answered Alice. 'You yourself build wild hopes in the air, and accuse me of destroying what had never any earthly foundation. Spare yourself, Julian—spare me—and in mercy to us both depart, and return not again till you can be more reasonable.'

'Reasonable!' replied Julian; 'it is you, Alice, who will deprive me altogether of reason. Did you not say that if our parents could be brought to consent to our union, you would no longer oppose my suit?'

'No—no—no,' said Alice eagerly, and blushing deeply; 'I did not say so, Julian—it was your own wild imagination which put construction on my silence and my confusion.'

'You do *not* say so, then?' answered Julian; 'and if all other obstacles were removed, I should find one in the cold, flinty bosom of her who repays the most devoted and sincere affection with contempt and dislike? Is *that*,' he added, in a deep tone of feeling—'is that what Alice Bridgenorth says to Julian Peveril?'

'Indeed—indeed, Julian,' said the almost weeping girl, 'I do not say so—I say nothing, and I ought not to say anything concerning what I might do, in a state of things which can never take place. Indeed, Julian, you ought not thus to press me. Unprotected as I am—wishing you well—very well—why should you urge me to say or do what would lessen me in my own eyes? to own affection for one from whom fate has separated me for ever? It is ungenerous—it is cruel—it is seeking a momentary and selfish gratification to yourself, at the expense of every feeling which I ought to entertain.'

'You have said enough, Alice,' said Julian, with sparkling eyes; 'you have said enough in deprecating my urgency, and I will press you no further. But you overrate the impediments which lie betwixt us—they must and shall give way.'

'So you said before,' answered Alice, 'and with what probability, your own account may show. You dared not to mention the subject to your own father—how should you venture to mention it to mine?'

'That I will soon enable you to decide upon. Major Bridgenorth, by my mother's account, is a worthy and an estimable man. I will remind him, that to my mother's care he owes the dearest treasure and comfort of his life; and I will ask him if it is a just retribution to make that mother childless. Let me but know where to find him, Alice, and you shall soon hear if I have feared to plead my cause with him.'

'Alas!' answered Alice, 'you well know my uncertainty as to my dear father's residence. How often has it been my earnest request to

him that he would let me share his solitary abode, or his obscure wanderings! But the short and infrequent visits which he makes to this house are all that he permits me of his society. Something I might surely do, however little, to alleviate the melancholy by which he is oppressed.'

'Something we might both do,' said Peveril. 'How willingly would I aid you in so pleasing a task! All old griefs should be forgotten—all old friendships revived. My father's prejudices are those of an Englishman—strong, indeed, but not insurmountable by reason. Tell me, then, where Major Bridgenorth is, and leave the rest to me; or let me but know by what address your letters reach him, and I will forthwith essay to discover his dwelling.'

'Do not attempt it, I charge you,' said Alice. 'He is already a man of sorrows; and what would he think were I capable of entertaining a suit so likely to add to them? Besides, I could not tell you, if I would, where he is now to be found. My letters reach him from time to time, by means of my aunt Christian; but of his address I am entirely ignorant.'

'Then, by Heaven!' answered Julian, 'I will watch his arrival in this island, and in this house; and ere he has locked thee in his arms, he shall answer to me on the subject of my suit.'

'Then demand that answer now,' said a voice from without the door, which was at the same time slowly opened. 'Demand that answer now, for here stands Ralph Bridgenorth.'

As he spoke, he entered the apartment with his usual slow and sedate step—raised his flapped and steeple-crowned hat from his brows, and, standing in the midst of the room, eyed alternately his daughter and Julian Peveril with a fixed and penetrating glance.

'Father!' said Alice, utterly astonished, and terrified besides, by his sudden appearance at such a conjuncture, 'Father, I am not to blame.'

'Of that anon, Alice,' said Bridgenorth; 'meantime retire to your apartment - I have that to say to this youth which will not endure your presence.'

'Indeed—indeed, father,' said Alice, alarmed at what she supposed these words indicated, 'Julian is as little to be blamed as I! It was chance, it was fortune, which caused our meeting together.' Then, suddenly rushing forward, she threw her arms around her father, saying, 'O, do him no injury—he meant no wrong! Father, you were wont to be a man of reason and of religious peace.'

'And wherefore should I not be so now, Alice?' said Bridgenorth, raising his daughter from the ground, on which she had almost sunk in the earnestness of her supplication. 'Dost thou know aught, maiden, which should inflame my anger against this young man, more than reason or religion may bridle? Go—go to thy chamber. Compose thine own passions—learn to rule these—and leave it to me to deal with this stubborn young man.'

Alice arose, and, with her eyes fixed on the ground, retired slowly from the apartment. Julian followed her steps with his eyes till the wave of her garment was visible at the closing door; then turned his looks to Major Bridgenorth, and then sunk them on the ground.

The major continued to regard him in profound silence; his looks were melancholy and even austere; but there was nothing which indicated either agitation or keen resentment. He motioned to Julian to take a seat, and assumed one himself. After which, he opened the conversation in the following manner:—

'You seemed but now, young gentleman, anxious to learn where I was to be found. Such I at least conjectured, from the few expressions which I chanced to overhear; for I made bold, though it may be contrary to the code of modern courtesy, to listen a moment or two, in order to gather upon what subject so young a man as you entertained so young a woman as Alice in a private interview.'

'I trust, sir,' said Julian, rallying spirits in what he felt to be a case of extremity, 'you have heard nothing on my part which has given offence to a gentleman, whom, though unknown, I am bound to respect so highly.'

'On the contrary,' said Bridgenorth, with the same formal gravity, 'I am pleased to find that your business is, or appears to be, with me, rather than with my daughter. I only think you had done better to have entrusted it to me in the first instance, as my sole concern.'

The utmost sharpness of attention which Julian applied could not discover if Bridgenorth spoke seriously or ironically to the above purpose. He was, however, quick-witted beyond his experience, and was internally determined to endeavour to discover something of the character and the temper of him with whom he spoke. For that purpose, regulating his reply in the same tone with Bridgenorth's observation, he said, that, not having the advantage to know his place of residence, he had applied for information to his daughter.

'Who is now known to you for the first time?' said Bridgenorth. 'Am I so to understand you?'

'By no means,' answered Julian, looking down; 'I have been known to your daughter for many years; and what I wished to say respects both her happiness and my own.'

'I must understand you,' said Bridgenorth, 'even as carnal men understand each other on the matters of this world. You are attached to my daughter by the cords of love; I have long known this.'

'You, Master Bridgenorth?' exclaimed Peveril—'*You* have long known it?'

'Yes, young man. Think you that, as the father of an only child, I could have suffered Alice Bridgenorth—the only living pledge of her who is now an angel in heaven—to have remained in this seclusion without the surest knowledge of all her material actions? I have, in person, seen more, both of her and of you, than you could be aware of; and when absent in the body, I had the means of maintaining the same superintendence. Young man, they say that such love as you entertain for my daughter teaches much subtilty; but believe not that it can overreach the affection which a widowed father bears to an only child.'

'If,' said Julian, his heart beating thick and joyfully, 'if you have known this intercourse so

long, may I not hope that it has not met your disapprobation?'

The major paused for an instant, and then answered, 'In some respects, certainly not. Had it done so—had there seemed aught on your side, or on my daughter's, to have rendered your visits here dangerous to her, or displeasing to me, she had not been long the inhabitant of this solitude, or of this island. But be not so hasty as to presume that all which you may desire in this matter can be either easily or speedily accomplished.'

'I foresee, indeed, difficulties,' answered Julian; 'but, with your kind acquiescence, they are such as I trust to remove. My father is generous—my mother is candid and liberal. They loved you once; I trust they will love you again. I will be the mediator betwixt you—peace and harmony shall once more inhabit our neighbourhood, and ——'

Bridgenorth interrupted him with a grim smile; for such it seemed, as it passed over a face of deep melancholy. 'My daughter well said, but short while past, that you were a dreamer of dreams—an architect of plans and hopes fantastic as the visions of the night. It is a great thing you ask of me,—the hand of my only child—the sum of my worldly substance, though that is but dross in comparison. You ask the key of the only fountain from which I may yet hope to drink one pleasant draught; you ask to be the sole and absolute keeper of my earthly happiness—and what have you offered, or what have you to offer, in return for the surrender you require of me?'

'I am but too sensible,' said Peveril, abashed at his own hasty conclusions, 'how difficult it may be.'

'Nay, but interrupt me not,' replied Bridgenorth, 'till I show you the amount of what you offer me in exchange for a boon, which, whatever may be its intrinsic value, is earnestly desired by you, and comprehends all that is valuable on earth which I have it in my power to bestow. You may have heard that in the late times I was the antagonist of your father's principles and his profane faction, but not the enemy of his person.'

'I have ever heard,' replied Julian, 'much the contrary; and it was but now that I reminded you that you had been his friend.'

Ay. When he was in affliction and I in prosperity, I was neither unwilling nor altogether unable to show myself such. Well, the tables are turned—the times are changed. A peaceful and unoffending man might have expected from a neighbour, now powerful in his turn, such protection, when walking in the paths of the law, as all men, subjects of the same realm, have a right to expect even from perfect strangers. What chances? I pursue, with the warrant of the King and law, a murderess, bearing on her hand the blood of my near connection, and I had, in such a case, a right to call on every liege subject to render assistance to the execution. My late friendly neighbour, bound, as a man and a magistrate, to give ready assistance to a legal action—bound, as a grateful and obliged friend, to respect my rights and my person—thrusts himself betwixt me—me, the avenger of blood—and my lawful captive; beats me to the earth, at once endangering my life and, in mere human eyes, sullying mine honour; and under his protection the Midianitish woman reaches, like a sea eagle, the nest which she hath made in the wave surrounded rocks, and remains there till gold, duly administered at court, wipes out all memory of her crime, and baffles the vengeance due to the memory of the best and bravest of men.—But,' he added, apostrophising the portrait of Christian, 'thou art not yet forgotten, my fair haired William! The vengeance which dogs thy murderess is slow—but it is sure!'

There was a pause of some moments, which Julian Peveril, willing to hear to what conclusion Major Bridgenorth was finally to arrive, did not care to interrupt. Accordingly, in a few minutes, the latter proceeded. 'These things,' he said, 'I recall not in bitterness, so far as they are personal to me—I recall them not in spite of heart, though they have been the means of banishing me from my place of residence, where my fathers dwelt, and where my earthly comforts lie interred. But the public cause sets further strife betwixt your father and me. Who so active as he to execute the fatal edict of black Saint Bartholomew's Day, when so many hundreds of gospel preachers were expelled from house and home—from hearth and altar—from church and parish, to make room for belly gods and thieves? Who, when a devoted few of the Lord's people were united to lift the fallen standard, and once more advance the good cause, was the readiest to break their purpose—to search for, persecute, and apprehend them? Whose breath did I feel warm on my neck—whose naked sword was thrust within a foot of my body, whilst I lurked darkling, like a thief in concealment, in the house of my fathers?—It was Geoffrey Peveril's—it was your father's!—What can you answer to all this, or how can you reconcile it with your present wishes?'

Julian, in reply, could only remark, 'That these injuries had been of long standing—that they had been things done in heat of times and heat of temper, and that Master Bridgenorth, in Christian kindness, should not entertain a keen resentment of them when a door was opened for reconciliation.'

'Peace, young man,' said Bridgenorth; 'thou speakest of thou knowest not what. To forgive our human wrongs is Christian like and commendable; but we have no commission to forgive those which have been done to the cause of religion and of liberty; we have no right to grant immunity, or to shake hands with those who have poured forth the blood of our brethren.' He looked at the picture of Christian, and was silent for a few minutes, as if he feared to give too violent way to his own impetuosity, and resumed the discourse in a milder tone.

'These things I point out to you, Julian, that I may show you how impossible, in the eyes of a merely worldly man, would be the union which you are desirous of. But Heaven hath at times opened a door where man beholds no means of issue. Julian, your mother, for one to w— the truth is unknown, is, after the fash— the world, one of the best, and one of the

of women, and Providence, which gave her so fair a form, and tenanted that form with a mind as pure as the original frailty of our vile nature will permit, means not, I trust, that she shall continue to the end to be a vessel of wrath and perdition. Of your father I say nothing—he is what the times and example of others, and the counsels of his lordly priest, have made him; and of him, once more, I say nothing, save that I have power over him, which ere now he might have felt, but that there is one within his chambers who might have suffered in his suffering. Nor do I wish to root up your ancient family. If I prize not your boast of family honours and pedigree, I would not willingly destroy them—more than I would pull down a moss-grown tower, or hew to the ground an ancient oak, save for the straightening of the common path, and the advantage of the public. I have, therefore, no resentment against the humbled house of Peveril—nay, I have regard to it in its depression.'

He here made a second pause, as if he expected Julian to say something. But notwithstanding the ardour with which the young man had pressed his suit, he was too much trained in ideas of the importance of his family, and in the better habit of respect for his parents, to hear without displeasure some part of Bridgenorth's discourse.

'The house of Peveril,' he replied, 'was never humbled.'

'Had you said the sons of that house had never been *humble*,' answered Bridgenorth, 'you would have come nearer the truth.—Are *you* not humbled? Live you not here, the lackey of a haughty woman, the play-companion of an empty youth? If you leave this isle, and go to the court of England, see what regard will there be paid to the old pedigree that deduces your descent from kings and conquerors. A scurril or obscene jest, an impudent carriage, a laced cloak, a handful of gold, and the readiness to wager it on a card or a die, will better advance you at the court of Charles, than your father's ancient name, and slavish devotion of blood and fortune to the cause of *his* father.'

'That is, indeed, but too probable,' said Peveril; 'but the court shall be no element of mine. I will live like my fathers, among my people, care for their comforts, decide their differences——'

'Build Maypoles and dance around them,' said Bridgenorth, with another of those grim smiles which passed over his features like the light of a sexton's torch, as it glares and is reflected by the window of the church, when he comes from locking a funeral vault. 'No, Julian, these are not times in which, by the dreaming drudgery of a country magistrate, and the petty cares of a country proprietor, a man can serve his unhappy country. There are mighty designs afloat, and men are called to make their choice betwixt God and Baal. The ancient superstition—the abomination of our fathers—is raising its head, and flinging abroad its snares, under the protection of the princes of the earth; but she raises not her head unmarked or unwatched; the true English hearts are as thousands, which wait but a signal to arise as one man, and show the kings of the earth that they have combined in vain! We will cast their cords from us—the cup of their abominations we will not taste.'

'You speak in darkness, Master Bridgenorth,' said Peveril. 'Knowing so much of me, you may, perhaps, also be aware that I at least have seen too much of the delusions of Rome, to desire that they should be propagated at home.'

'Else, wherefore do I speak to thee friendly and so free?' said Bridgenorth. 'Do I not know with what readiness of early wit you baffled the wily attempts of the woman's priest to seduce thee from the Protestant faith? Do I not know how thou wast beset when abroad, and that thou didst both hold thine own faith and secure the wavering belief of thy friend? Said I not, this was done like the son of Margaret Peveril? Said I not, he holdeth as yet but the dead letter—but the seed which is sown shall one day sprout and quicken?—Enough, however, of this. For to-day this is thy habitation. I will see in thee neither the servant of that daughter of Eshbaal, nor the son of him who pursued my life and blemished my honours; but thou shalt be to me, for this day, as the child of her without whom my house had been extinct.'

So saying, he stretched out his thin, bony hand, and grasped that of Julian Peveril; but there was such a look of mourning in his welcome, that whatever delight the youth anticipated, spending so long a time in the neighbourhood of Alice Bridgenorth, perhaps in her society, or however strongly he felt the prudence of conciliating her father's good will, he could not help feeling as if his heart was chilled in his company.

CHAPTER XIV

This day at least is friendship's—on the morrow
Let strife come an she will.
OTWAY.

DEBORAH DEBBITCH, summoned by her master, now made her appearance, with her handkerchief at her eyes, and an appearance of great mental trouble. 'It was not my fault, Major Bridgenorth,' she said; 'how could I help it? like will to like—the boy would come—the girl would see him.'

'Peace, foolish woman,' said Bridgenorth, 'and hear what I have got to say.'

'I know what your honour has to say well enough,' said Deborah. 'Service, I wot, is no inheritance now-a-days—some are wiser than other some—if I had not been wheedled away from Martindale, I might have had a house of mine own by this time.'

'Peace, idiot!' said Bridgenorth; but so intent was Deborah on her vindication, that he could but thrust the interjection, as it were edgewise, between her exclamations, which followed as thick as is usual in cases, where folks endeavour to avert deserved censure by a clamorous justification ere the charge be brought.

'No wonder she was cheated,' she said, 'out of sight of her own interest, when it was to wait

on pretty Miss Alice. 'All your honour's gold should never have tempted me, but that I knew she was but a dead castaway, poor innocent, if she were taken away from my lady or me—And so this is the end on't!—up early, and down late—and this is all my thanks!—But your honour had better take care what you do—she has the short cough yet sometimes, and should take physic, spring and fall.'

'Peace, chattering fool!' said her master, so soon as her failing breath gave him an opportunity to strike in, 'thinkest thou I knew not of this young gentleman's visits to the Black Fort, and that, if they had displeased me, would not have known how to stop them?'

'Did I know that your honour knew of his visits!' exclaimed Deborah, in a triumphant tone,—for, like most of her condition, she never sought farther for her defence than a lie, however inconsistent and improbable,—'*Did* I know that your honour knew of it!—Why, how should I have permitted his visits else? I wonder what your honour takes me for! Had I not been sure it was the thing in this world that your honour most desired, would I have presumed to lend it a hand forward? I trust I know my duty better. Hear if I ever asked another youngster into the house, save himself—for I knew your honour was wise, and quarrels cannot last for ever, and love begins where hatred ends; and, to be sure, they look as if they were born one for the other—and then the estates of Moultrassie and Martindale suit each other like sheath and knife.'

'Parrot of a woman, hold your tongue!' said Bridgenorth, his patience almost completely exhausted; 'or, if you will prate, let it be to your playfellows in the kitchen, and bid them get ready some dinner presently, for Master Peveril is far from home.'

'That I will, and with all my heart,' said Deborah; 'and if there are a pair of fatter fowls in Man than shall clap their wings on the table presently, your honour shall call me goose as well as parrot.' She then left the apartment.

'It is to such a woman as that,' said Bridgenorth, looking after her significantly, 'that you conceived me to have abandoned the charge of my only child! But enough of this subject—we will walk abroad, if you will, while she is engaged in a province fitter for her understanding.'

So saying, he left the house accompanied by Julian Peveril, and they were soon walking side by side, as if they had been old acquaintances.

It may have happened to many of our readers, as it has done to ourselves, to be thrown by accident into society with some individual whose claims to what is called a *serious* character stand considerably higher than our own, and with whom, therefore, we have conceived ourselves likely to spend our time in a very stiff and constrained manner; while, on the other hand, our destined companion may have apprehended some disgust from the supposed levity and thoughtless gaiety of a disposition so different from his own. Now it has frequently happened, that when we, with that urbanity and good-humour which is our principal characteristic, have accommodated ourself to our companion, by throwing as much seriousness into our conversation as our habits will admit, he, on the other hand, moved by our liberal example, hath divested his manners of a part of their austerity; and our conversation has, in consequence, been of that pleasant texture, betwixt the useful and agreeable, which best resembles 'the fairy-web of night and day,' usually called in prose the twilight. It is probable both parties may, on such occasions, have been the better for their encounter, even if it went no farther than to establish for the time a community of feeling between men, who separated more perhaps by temper than by principle, are too apt to charge each other with profane frivolity on the one hand, or fanaticism on the other.

It fared thus in Peveril's walk with Bridgenorth, and in the conversation which he held with him.

Carefully avoiding the subject on which he had already spoken, Major Bridgenorth turned his conversation chiefly on foreign travel, and on the wonders he had seen in distant countries, and which he appeared to have marked with a curious and observant eye. This discourse made the time fly light away; for although the anecdotes and observations thus communicated were all tinged with the serious and almost gloomy spirit of the narrator, they yet contained traits of interest and of wonder, such as are usually interesting to a youthful ear, and were particularly so to Julian, who had, in his disposition, some cast of the romantic and adventurous.

It appeared that Bridgenorth knew the south of France, and could tell many stories of the French Huguenots, who already began to sustain those vexations which a few years afterwards were summed up by the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. He had even been in Hungary, for he spoke as from personal knowledge of the character of several of the heads of the great Protestant insurrection, which at this time had taken place under the celebrated Tekeli; and laid down solid reasons why they were entitled to make common cause with the Great Turk, rather than submit to the Pope of Rome. He talked also of Savoy, where those of the reformed religion still suffered a cruel persecution; and he mentioned, with a swelling spirit, the protection which Oliver had afforded to the oppressed Protestant churches; 'therein showing himself,' he added, 'more fit to wield the supreme power, than those who, claiming it by right of inheritance, use it only for their own vain and voluptuous pursuits.'

'I did not expect,' said Peveril modestly, 'to have heard Oliver's panegyric from you, Master Bridgenorth.'

'I do not panegyrize him,' answered Bridgenorth; 'I speak but truth of that extraordinary man, now being dead, whom, when alive, I feared not to withstand to his face. It is the fault of the present unhappy King, if he make us look back with regret to the days when the nation was respected abroad, and when devotion and sobriety were practised at home.—But I mean not to vex your spirit by controversy. You have lived amongst those who find it more easy and more pleasant to be the pensioners of France than her controllers—to spend the money

which she doles out to themselves, than to check the tyranny with which she oppresses our poor brethren of the religion. When the scales shall fall from thine eyes, all this thou shalt see; and seeing, shalt learn to detest and despise it.'

By this time they had completed their walk, and were returned to the Black Fort by a different path from that which had led them up the valley. The exercise and the general tone of conversation had removed, in some degree, the shyness and embarrassment which Peveril originally felt in Bridgenorth's presence, and which the tenor of his first remarks had rather increased than diminished. Deborah's promised banquet was soon on the board; and in simplicity, as well as neatness and good order, answered the character she had claimed for it. In one respect alone, there seemed some inconsistency, perhaps a little affectation. Most of the dishes were of silver, and the plates were of the same metal, instead of the trenchers and pewter which Peveril had usually seen employed on similar occasions at the Black Fort.

Presently, with the feeling of one who walks in a pleasant dream from which he fears to awake, and whose delight is mingled with wonder and with uncertainty, Julian Peveril found himself seated between Alice Bridgenorth and her father—the being he most loved on earth, and the person whom he had ever considered as the great obstacle to their intercourse. The confusion of his mind was such, that he could scarcely reply to the importunate civilities of Dame Deborah; who, seated with them at table in her quality of governante, now dispensed the good things which had been prepared under her own eye.

As for Alice, she seemed to have formed a resolution to play the mute; for she answered not, excepting briefly, to the questions of Dame Debbitch; nay, even when her father, which happened once or twice, attempted to bring her forward in the conversation, she made no further reply than respect for him rendered absolutely necessary.

Upon Bridgenorth himself, then, devolved the task of entertaining the company; and, contrary to his ordinary habits, he did not seem to shrink from it. His discourse was not only easy, but almost cheerful, though ever and anon crossed by some expressions indicative of natural and habitual melancholy, or prophetic of future misfortune and woe. Flashes of enthusiasm, too, shot along his conversation, gleaming like the sheet-lightning of an autumn eve, which throws a strong, though momentary illumination across the sober twilight, and all the surrounding objects, which, touched by it, assume a wilder and more striking character. In general, however, Bridgenorth's remarks were plain and sensible; and as he aimed at no graces of language, any ornament which they received arose out of the interest with which they were impressed on his hearers. For example, when Deborah, in the pride and vulgarity of her heart, called Julian's attention to the plate from which they had been eating, Bridgenorth seemed to think an apology necessary for such superfluous expense.

'It was a symptom,' he said, 'of approaching danger, when such men, as were not usually influenced by the vanities of life, employed much money in ornaments composed of the precious metals. It was a sign that the merchant could not obtain a profit for the capital, which, for the sake of security, he invested in this inert form. It was a proof that the noblemen or gentlemen feared the rapacity of power, when they put their wealth into forms the most portable and the most capable of being hidden; and it showed the uncertainty of credit, when a man of judgment preferred the actual possession of a mass of silver to the convenience of a goldsmith's or a banker's receipt. While a shadow of liberty remained,' he said, 'domestic rights were last invaded; and, therefore, men disposed upon their cupboards and tables the wealth which in these places would remain longest, though not perhaps finally, sacred from the grasp of a tyrannical government. But let there be a demand for capital to support a profitable commerce, and the mass is at once consigned to the furnace, and, ceasing to be a vain and cumbrous ornament of the banquet, becomes a potent and active agent for furthering the prosperity of the country.'

'In war, too,' said Peveril, 'plate has been found a ready resource.'

'But too much so,' answered Bridgenorth. 'In the late times, the plate of the nobles and gentry, with that of the colleges, and the sale of the crown-jewels, enabled the King to make his unhappy stand, which prevented matters returning to a state of peace and good order, until the sword had attained an undue superiority both over King and Parliament.'

He looked at Julian as he spoke, much as he who proves a horse offers some object suddenly to his eyes, then watches to see if he starts or blenches from it. But Julian's thoughts were too much bent on other topics to manifest any alarm. His answer referred to a previous part of Bridgenorth's discourse, and was not returned till after a brief pause. 'War, then,' he said, 'war, the grand impoverisher, is also a creator of the wealth which it wastes and devours?'

'Yes,' replied Bridgenorth, 'even as the sluice brings into action the sleeping waters of the lake, which it finally drains. Necessity invents arts and discovers means; and what necessity is sterner than that of civil war? Therefore, even war is not in itself unmixed evil, being the creator of impulses and energies which could not otherwise have existed in society.'

'Men should go to war, then,' said Peveril, 'that they may send their silver-plate to the mint, and eat from pewter dishes and wooden platters?'

'Not so, my son,' said Bridgenorth. Then checking himself as he observed the deep crimson in Julian's cheek and brow, he added, 'I crave your pardon for such familiarity; but I meant not to limit what I said even now to such trifling consequences, although it may be something salutary to tear men from their pomps and luxuries, and teach those to be Romans who would otherwise be Sybarites. But I would say, that times of public danger, as they call into circulation the miser's hoard and the proud man's bullion, and so add to the circulating wealth of the country, do also call into action many a brave and noble spirit, which would otherwise lie torpid, give no example to the living, and bequeath no

name to future ages Society knows not, and cannot know, the mental treasures which slumber in her bosom, till necessity and opportunity call forth the statesman and the soldier from the shades of lowly life to the parts they are designed by Providence to perform, and the stations which nature qualified them to hold So rose Oliver—so rose Milton—so rose many another name which cannot be forgotten—even as the tempest summons forth and displays the address of the mariner '

'You speak,' said Peveril, 'as if national calamity might be, in some sort, an advantage

'And if it were not so replied Bridgenorth, 'it had not existed in this state of trial, where all temporal evil is alleviated by something good in its progress or result and where all that is good is close coupled with that which is in itself evil

'It must be a noble sight,' said Julian, 'to behold the slumbering energies of a great man awakened into energy and to see it assume the authority which is its due over spirits more meanly endowed

'I once witnessed ' said Bridgenorth 'something to the same effect and, as the tale is brief, I will tell it you if you will —

'Amongst my wanderings the Transatlantic settlements have not escaped me more especially the country of New England, into which our native land has shaken from her lap, as a drunkard flings from him his treasures so much that is precious in the eyes of God and of his children There thousands of our best and most godly men—such whose righteousness might come between the Almighty and his wrath and prevent the ruin of cities are content to be the inhabitants of the desert rather encountering the unenlightened savages than stooping to extinguish, under the oppression practised in Britain, the light that is within their own minds There I remained for a time, during the wars which the colony maintained with Philip, a great Indian chief, or sachem, as they were called, who seemed a messenger sent from Satan to buffet them His cruelty was great—his dissimulation profound, and the skill and promptitude with which he maintained a destructive and desultory warfare inflicted many dreadful calamities on the settlement I was, by chance, at a small village in the woods more than thirty miles from Boston, and in its situation exceedingly lonely, and surrounded with thickets Nevertheless there was no idea of any danger from the Indians at that time, for men trusted to the protection of a considerable body of troops who had taken the field for protection of the frontiers, and who lay, or were supposed to lie, betwixt the hamlet and the enemy's country But they had to do with a foe, whom the devil himself had inspired at once with cunning and cruelty It was on a Sabbath morning, when we had assembled to take sweet counsel together in the Lord's house Our temple was but constructed of wooden logs, but when shall the chant of trained hirelings, or the sounding of tin and brass tubes amid the aisles of a minster, arise so sweetly to heaven, as did the psalm in which we united at once our voices and our hearts! An excellent worthy, who now sleeps in the Lord, Nehemiah Solsgrace, long the companion of my pilgrimage, had just begun to wrestle in prayer, when a woman, with disordered looks and dishevelled hair, entered our chapel in a distracted manner, screaming incessantly, "The Indians! The Indians!"—In that land no man dares separate himself from his means of defence, and whether in the city or in the field, in the ploughed land or the forest, men keep beside them their weapons, as did the Jews at the rebuilding of the Temple So we sallied forth with our guns and pikes, and heard the whoop of these incarnate devils, already in possession of a part of the town, and exercising their cruelty on the few whom weighty causes or indisposition had withheld from public worship, and it was remarked as a judgment, that, upon that bloody Sabbath, Adrian Hanson, a Dutchman, a man well enough disposed towards man, but whose mind was altogether given to worldly gain, was shot and scalped as he was summing his weekly gains in his warehouse In fine, there was much damage done, and although our arrival and entrance into combat did in some sort put them back, yet, being surprised and confused and having no appointed leader of our band, the devilish enemy shot hard at us and had some advantage It was pitiful to hear the screams of women and children amid the report of guns and the whistling of bullets, mixed with the ferocious yells of these savages, which they term their war whoop Several houses in the upper part of the village were soon on fire, and the roaring of the flames and crackling of the great beams as they blazed added to the horrible confusion, while the smoke which the wind drove against us gave further advantage to the enemy, who fought, as it were, invisible, and under cover, whilst we fell fast by their unerring fire In this state of confusion and while we were about to adopt the desperate project of evacuating the village, and, placing the women and children in the centre, of attempting a retreat to the nearest settlement, it pleased Heaven to send us unexpected assistance A tall man, of a reverend appearance whom no one of us had ever seen before, suddenly was in the midst of us, as we hastily agitated the resolution of retreating His garments were of the skin of the elk, and he wore sword and carried gun, I never saw anything more august than his features, overshadowed by locks of grey hair, which mingled with a long beard of the same colour "Men and brethren, he said in a voice like that which turns back the flight, "why sink your hearts? and why are you thus disquieted? Fear ye that the God we serve will give you up to yonder heathen dogs? Follow me, and you shall see this day that there is a captain in Israel!' He uttered a few brief but distinct orders, in the tone of one who was accustomed to command; and such was the influence of his appearance, his mien, his language, and his presence of mind, that he was implicitly obeyed by men who had never seen him until that moment We were hastily divided, by his orders, into two bodies, one of which maintained the defence of the village with more courage than ever, convinced that the Unknown was

sent by God to our rescue. At his command they assumed the best and most sheltered positions for exchanging their deadly fire with the Indians; while, under cover of the smoke, the stranger sallied from the town, at the head of the other division of the New England men, and, fetching a circuit, attacked the red warriors in the rear. The surprise, as is usual amongst savages, had complete effect; for they doubted not that they were assailed in their turn, and placed betwixt two hostile parties by the return of a detachment from the provincial army. The heathens fled in confusion, abandoning the half-won village, and leaving behind them such a number of their warriors, that the tribe hath never recovered its loss. Never shall I forget the figure of our venerable leader, when our men, and not they only, but the women and children of the village, rescued from the tomahawk and scalping-knife, stood crowded around him, yet scarce venturing to approach his person, and more minded, perhaps, to worship him as a descended angel, than to thank him as a fellow-mortal. "Not unto me be the glory," he said; "I am but an implement, frail as yourselves, in the hand of Him who is strong to deliver. Bring me a cup of water, that I may allay my parched throat, ere I essay the task of offering thanks where they are most due." I was nearest to him as he spoke, and I gave into his hand the water he requested. At that moment we exchanged glances, and it seemed to me that I recognised a noble friend whom I had long since deemed in glory; but he gave me no time to speak, had speech been prudent. Sinking on his knees, and signing us to obey him, he poured forth a strong and energetic thanksgiving for the turning back of the battle, which, pronounced with a voice loud and clear as a war-trumpet, thrilled through the joints and marrow of the hearers. I have heard many an act of devotion in my life, had Heaven vouchsafed me grace to profit by them; but such a prayer as this, uttered amid the dead and the dying, with a rich tone of mingled triumph and adoration, was beyond them all—it was like the song of the inspired prophetess who dwelt beneath the palm-tree between Ramah and Bethel. He was silent; and for a brief space we remained with our faces bent to the earth—no man daring to lift his head. At length we looked up, but our deliverer was no longer amongst us; nor was he ever again seen in the land which he had rescued.'

Here Bridgenorth, who had told this singular story with an eloquence and vivacity of detail very contrary to the usual dryness of his conversation, paused for an instant and then resumed—'Thou seest, young man, that men of valour and of discretion are called forth to command in circumstances of national exigence, though their very existence is unknown in the land which they are predestined to deliver.'

'But what thought the people of the mysterious stranger?' said Julian, who had listened with eagerness, for the story was of a kind interesting to the youthful and the brave.

'Many things,' answered Bridgenorth, 'and, as usual, little to the purpose. The prevailing opinion was, notwithstanding his own disclamation, that the stranger was really a supernatural being; others believed him an inspired champion, transported in the body from some distant climate, to show us the way to safety; others, again, concluded that he was a recluse, who, either from motives of piety, or other cogent reasons, had become a dweller in the wilderness, and shunned the face of man.'

'And if I may presume to ask,' said Julian, 'to which of these opinions were you disposed to adhere?'

'The last suited best with the transient though close view with which I had perused the stranger's features,' replied Bridgenorth; 'for although I dispute not that it may please Heaven, on high occasions, even to raise one from the dead in defence of his country, yet I doubted not then, as I doubt not now, that I looked on the living form of one, who had indeed powerful reasons to conceal him in the cleft of the rock.'

'Are these reasons a secret?' asked Julian Peveril.

'Not properly a secret,' replied Bridgenorth; 'for I fear not thy betraying what I might tell thee in private discourse; and besides, wert thou so base, the prey lies too distant for any hunters to whom thou couldst point out its traces. But the name of this worthy will sound harsh in thy ear, on account of one action of his life—being his accession to a great measure, which made the extreme isles of the earth to tremble. Have you never heard of Richard Whalley?'

'Of the regicide?' exclaimed Peveril, starting.

'Call his act what thou wilt,' said Bridgenorth; 'he was not less the rescuer of that devoted village, that, with other leading spirits of the age, he sat in the judgment-seat when Charles Stuart was arraigned at the bar, and subscribed the sentence that went forth upon him.'

'I have ever heard,' said Julian, in an altered voice, and colouring deeply, 'that you, Master Bridgenorth, with other Presbyterians, were totally averse to that detestable crime, and were ready to have made joint cause with the Cavaliers in preventing so horrible a parricide.'

'If it were so,' replied Bridgenorth, 'we have been richly rewarded by his successor.'

'Rewarded!' exclaimed Julian; 'does the distinction of good and evil, and our obligation to do the one and forbear the other, depend on the reward which may attach to our actions?'

'God forbid!' answered Bridgenorth; 'yet those who view the havoc which this House of Stuart have made in the Church and State—the tyranny which they exercise over men's persons and consciences—may well doubt whether it be lawful to use weapons in their defence. Yet you hear me not praise, or even vindicate, the death of the King, though so far deserved, as he was false to his oath as a prince and magistrate. I only tell you what you desired to know, that Richard Whalley, one of the late King's judges, was he of whom I have just been speaking. I knew his lofty brow, though time had made it balder and higher; his grey eye retained all its lustre; and though the grizzled beard covered the lower part of his face, it prevented me not from recognising him. The scent

was hot after him for his blood; but by the assistance of those friends whom Heaven had raised up for his preservation, he was concealed carefully, and emerged only to do the will of Providence in the matter of that battle. Perhaps his voice may be heard in the field once more, should England need one of her noblest hearts.' *

'Now, God forbid!' said Julian.

'Amen,' returned Bridgenorth. 'May God avert civil war, and pardon those whose madness would bring it on us!'

There was a long pause, during which Julian, who had scarce lifted his eyes towards Alice, stole a glance in that direction, and was struck by the deep cast of melancholy which had stolen over features, to which a cheerful, if not gay expression, was most natural. So soon as she caught his eye, she remarked, and, as Julian thought, with significance, that the shadows were lengthening, and evening coming on.

He heard; and, although satisfied that she hinted at his departure, he could not, upon the instant, find resolution to break the spell which detained him. The language which Bridgenorth held was not only new and alarming, but so contrary to the maxims in which he was brought up, that, as a son of Sir Geoffrey Peveril of the Peak, he would, in another case, have thought himself called upon to dispute its conclusions, even at the sword's point. But Bridgenorth's opinions were delivered with so much calmness—seemed so much the result of conviction, that they excited in Julian rather a spirit of wonder than of angry controversy. There was a character of sober decision and sedate melancholy in all that he said, which, even had he not been the father of Alice (and perhaps Julian was not himself aware how much he was influenced by that circumstance), would have rendered it difficult to take personal offence. His language and sentiments were of that quiet, yet decided kind, upon which it is difficult either to fix controversy or quarrel, although it be impossible to acquiesce in the conclusions to which they lead.

While Julian remained, as if spell-bound to his chair, scarce more surprised at the company in which he found himself, than at the opinions to which he was listening, another circumstance reminded him that the proper time of his stay at Black Fort had been expended. Little Fairy, the Manx pony which, well accustomed to the vicinity of Black Fort, used to feed near the house while her master made his visits there, began to find his present stay rather too long. She had been the gift of the countess to Julian whilst a youth, and came of a high-spirited mountain breed, remarkable alike for hardiness, for longevity, and for a degree of sagacity approaching to that of the dog. Fairy showed the latter quality, by the way in which she chose to express her impatience to be moving homewards. At least such seemed the purpose of the shrill neigh with which she startled the female inmates of the parlour, who, the moment afterwards, could not forbear smiling to see the nose of the pony advanced through the opened casement.

'Fairy reminds me,' said Julian, looking to Alice, and rising, 'that the term of my stay here is exhausted.'

'Speak with me yet one moment,' said Bridgenorth, withdrawing him into a Gothic recess of the old-fashioned apartment, and speaking so low that he could not be overheard by Alice and her governante, who in the meantime, caressed and fed with fragments of bread the intruder Fairy.

'You have not, after all,' said Bridgenorth, 'told me the cause of your coming hither.' He stopped, as if to enjoy his embarrassment, and then added, 'And indeed it were most unnecessary that you should do so. I have not so far forgotten the days of my youth, or those affections which bind poor frail humanity but too much to the things of this world. Will you find no words to ask of me the great boon which you seek, and which, peradventure, you would not have hesitated to have made your own, without my knowledge, and against my consent?—Nay, never vindicate thyself, but mark me further. The patriarch bought his beloved by fourteen years' hard service to her father Laban, and they seemed to him but as a few days. But he that would wed my daughter must serve, in comparison, but a few days; though in matters of such mighty import, that they shall seem as the service of many years. Reply not to me now, but go, and peace be with you.'

He retired so quickly, after speaking, that Peveril had literally not an instant to reply. He cast his eyes around the apartment, but Deborah and her charge had also disappeared. His gaze rested for a moment on the portrait of Christian, and his imagination suggested that his dark features were illuminated by a smile of haughty triumph. He started, and looked more attentively—it was but the effect of the evening beam which touched the picture at the instant. The effect was gone, and there remained but the fixed, grave, inflexible features of the republican soldier.

Julian left the apartment as one who walks in a dream; he mounted Fairy, and, agitated by a variety of thoughts, which he was unable to reduce to order, he returned to Castle Rushin before the night sat down.

Here he found all in movement. The countess, with her son, had, upon some news received, or resolution formed, during his absence, removed, with a principal part of their family, to the yet stronger castle of Holm Peel, about eight miles' distance across the island; and which had been suffered to fall into a much more dilapidated condition than that of Castletown, so far as it could be considered as a place of residence. But as a fortress, Holm Peel was stronger than Castletown; nay, unless assailed regularly, was almost impregnable; and was always held by a garrison belonging to the Lords of Man. Here Peveril arrived at nightfall. He was told in the fishing-village, that the night-bell of the castle had been rung earlier than usual, and the watch set with circumstances of unusual and jealous precaution.

Resolving, therefore, not to disturb the garrison by entering at that late hour, he obtained an indifferent lodging in the town for the night, and determined to go to the castle

* Note I. Whalley the regicide.

succeeding morning. He was not sorry thus to gain a few hours of solitude, to think over the agitating events of the preceding day.

CHAPTER XV.

What seem'd its head,
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
PARADISE LOST.

SODOR, or Holm Peel,* so is named the castle to which our Julian directed his course early on the following morning, is one of those extraordinary monuments of antiquity with which this singular and interesting island abounds. It occupies the whole of a high rocky peninsula, or rather an island, for it is surrounded by the sea at high water, and scarcely accessible even when the tide is out, although a stone causeway, of great solidity, erected for the express purpose, connects the island with the mainland. The whole space is surrounded by double walls of great strength and thickness; and the access to the interior, at the time which we treat of, was only by two flights of steep and narrow steps, divided from each other by a strong tower and guard-house; under the former of which there is an entrance-arch. The open space within the walls extends to two acres, and contains many objects worthy of antiquarian curiosity. There were, besides the castle itself, two cathedral churches, dedicated, the earlier to Saint Patrick, the latter to Saint Germain; besides two smaller churches; all of which had become, even in that day, more or less ruinous. Their decayed walls, exhibiting the rude and massive architecture of the most remote period, were composed of a ragged greystone, which formed a singular contrast with the bright red freestone of which the window-cases, corner-stones, arches, and other ornamental parts of the building, were composed.

Besides these four ruinous churches, the space of ground enclosed by the massive exterior walls of Holm Peel exhibited many other vestiges of the olden time. There was a square mound of earth, facing, with its angles to the points of the compass, one of those motes, as they were called, on which, in ancient times, the northern tribes elected or recognised their chiefs, and held their solemn popular assemblies, or *comitia*. There was also one of those singular towers so common in Ireland, as to have proved the favourite theme of her antiquaries, but of which the real use and meaning seem yet to be hidden in the mist of ages. This of Holm Peel had been converted to the purpose of a watch-tower. There were, besides, Runic monuments, of which the legends could not be deciphered; and later inscriptions to the memory of champions, of whom the names only were preserved from oblivion. But tradition and superstitious eld, still most busy where real history is silent, had filled up the long blank of accurate information with tales of sea-kings and pirates, Hebridean chiefs and Norwegian Resolutes, who had formerly warred against, and in defence of, this famous castle. Superstition, too, had her tales of fairies, ghosts, and spectres—her legends of saints and demons, of fairies and of familiar spirits, which in no corner of the British empire are told and received with more absolute credulity than in the Isle of Man.

Amidst all these ruins of an older time arose the castle itself—now ruinous, but in Charles II.'s reign well garrisoned, and, in a military point of view, kept in complete order. It was a venerable and very ancient building, containing several apartments of sufficient size and height to be termed noble. But in the surrender of the island by Christian, the furniture had been, in a great measure, plundered or destroyed by the republican soldiers; so that, as we have before hinted, its present state was ill adapted for the residence of the noble proprietor. Yet it had been often the abode, not only of the Lords of Man, but of those State prisoners whom the Kings of Britain sometimes committed to their charge.

In this castle of Holm Peel the great king-maker, Richard, Earl of Warwick, was confined during one period of his eventful life, to ruminate at leisure on his further schemes of ambition. And here, too, Eleanor, the haughty wife of the good Duke of Gloucester, pined out in seclusion the last days of her banishment. The sentinels pretended that her discontented spectre was often visible at night, traversing the battlements of the external walls, or standing motionless beside a particular solitary turret of one of the watch-towers with which they are flanked; but dissolving into air at cock-crow, or when the bell tolled from the yet remaining tower of Saint Germain's Church.

Such was Holm Peel, as records inform us, till towards the end of the seventeenth century.

It was in one of the lofty but almost unfurnished apartments of this ancient castle that Julian Peveril found his friend the Earl of Derby, who had that moment sat down to a breakfast composed of various sorts of fish. 'Welcome, most imperial Julian,' he said; 'welcome to our royal fortress; in which, as yet, we are not like to be starved with hunger, though well-nigh dead for cold.'

Julian answered by inquiring the meaning of this sudden movement.

'Upon my word,' replied the earl, 'you know nearly as much of it as I do. My mother has told me nothing about it; supposing, I believe, that I shall at length be tempted to inquire; but she will find herself much mistaken. I shall give her credit for full wisdom in her proceedings, rather than put her to the trouble to render a reason, though no woman can render one better.'

'Come, come, this is affectation, my good friend,' said Julian. 'You should inquire into these matters a little more curiously.'

'To what purpose?' said the earl. 'To hear old stories about the Tinwald laws, and the contending rights of the lords and the clergy, and all the rest of that Celtic barbarism, which, like Burgess's † thorough-paced doctrine, enters at one ear, paces through, and goes out at the other!'

* Note J. Holm Peel.

† [Anthony Burgess was a Nonconformist preacher and voluminous writer, who was ejected from his living at the Restoration.]

'Come, my lord,' said Julian, 'you are not so indifferent as you would represent yourself—you are dying of curiosity to know what this hurry is about; only you think it the courtly humour to appear careless about your own affairs.'

'Why, what should it be about,' said the young earl, 'unless some factious dispute between our Majesty's minister, Governor Nowel, and our vassals? or perhaps some dispute betwixt our Majesty and the ecclesiastical jurisdictions? for all which our Majesty cares as little as any king in Christendom.'

'I rather suppose there is intelligence from England,' said Julian. 'I heard last night in Peel Town, that Greenhalgh is come over with unpleasant news.'

'He brought me nothing that was pleasant, I wot well,' said the earl. 'I expected something from Saint Evremond or Hamilton—some new plays by Dryden or Lee, and some waggery or lampoons from the Rose Coffee-house; and the fellow has brought me nothing but a parcel of tracts about Protestants and Papists, and a folio play-book, one of the conceptions, as she calls them, of that old madwoman the Duchess of Newcastle.' *

'Hush, my lord, for Heaven's sake,' said Peveril; 'here comes the Countess; and you know she takes fire at the least slight to her ancient friend.'

'Let her read her ancient friend's works herself, then,' said the earl, 'and think her as wise as she can; but I would not give one of Waller's songs or Denham's satires, for a whole cartload of her Grace's trash.—But here comes our mother with care on her brow.'

The Countess of Derby entered the apartment accordingly, holding in her hand a number of papers. Her dress was a mourning habit, with a deep train of black velvet, which was borne by a little favourite attendant, a deaf and dumb girl, whom, in compassion to her misfortune, the countess had educated about her person for some years. Upon this unfortunate being, with the touch of romance which marked many of her proceedings, Lady Derby had conferred the name of Fenella, after some ancient princess of the island. The countess herself was not much changed since we last presented her to our readers. Age had rendered her step more slow, but not less majestic; and, while it traced some wrinkles on her brow, had failed to quench the sedate fire of her dark eye. The young men rose to receive her with the formal reverence which they knew she loved, and were greeted by her with equal kindness.

'Cousin Peveril,' she said (for so she always called Julian, in respect of his mother being a kinswoman of her husband), 'you were ill abroad last night, when we much needed your counsel.'

Julian answered, with a blush which he could not prevent, 'That he had followed his sport among the mountains too far—had returned late—and, finding her ladyship was removed from Castletown, had instantly followed the family hither; but as the night-bell was rung, and the watch set, he had deemed it more respectful to lodge for the night in the town.'

'It is well,' said the countess; 'and, to do you justice, Julian, you are seldom a truant neglecter of appointed hours, though, like the rest of the youth of this age, you sometimes suffer your sports to consume too much of time that should be spent otherwise. But for your friend Philip, he is an avowed contemner of good order, and seems to find pleasure in wasting time, even when he does not enjoy it.'

'I have been enjoying my time just now at least,' said the earl, rising from table, and picking his teeth carelessly. 'These fresh mullets are delicious, and so is the Lachrymæ Christi. I pray you to sit down to breakfast, Julian, and partake the goods my royal foresight has provided. Never was King of Man nearer being left to the mercy of the execrable brandy of his dominions. Old Griffiths would never, in the midst of our speedy retreat of last night, have had sense enough to secure a few flasks, had I not given him a hint on that important subject. But presence of mind amid danger and tumult is a jewel I have always possessed.'

'I wish, then, Philip, you would exert it to better purpose,' said the countess, half smiling, half displeased; for she doted upon her son with all a mother's fondness, even when she was most angry with him for being deficient in the peculiar and chivalrous disposition which had distinguished his father, and which was so analogous to her own romantic and high-minded character. 'Lend me your signet,' she added, with a sigh; 'for it were, I fear, vain to ask you to read over these despatches from England, and execute the warrants which I have thought necessary to prepare in consequence.'

'My signet you shall command with all my heart, madam,' said Earl Philip; 'but spare me the revision of what you are much more capable to decide upon. I am, you know, a most complete *Roi fainéant*, and never once interfered with my *Maire de palais* in her proceedings.'

The countess made signs to her little train-bearer, who immediately went to seek for wax and a light, with which she presently returned.

In the meanwhile, the countess continued, addressing Peveril, 'Philip does himself less than justice. When you were absent, Julian (for if you had been here I would have given you the credit of prompting your friend), he had a spirited controversy with the bishop, for an attempt to enforce spiritual censures against a poor wretch, by confining her in the vault under the chapel.' †

'Do not think better of me than I deserve,' said the Earl to Peveril; 'my mother has

* [This lady, who died in 1673, was the author of several volumes of poems and plays, which are now chiefly valued for the portraits some of them contain. In one of these the authoress is seated under a canopy, attended by four cupids, two of whom are crowning her with laurel.]

† Beneath the only one of the four churches in Castle Rushin, which is or was kept a little in repair, is a prison or dungeon, for ecclesiastical offenders. 'This,' says Waldron, 'is certainly one of the most dreadful places that imagination can form; the sea runs under it through the hollows of the rock with such a continual roar, that you would think it were every moment breaking in upon you, and over it are the vaults for burying the dead. The stairs descending to this place of terrors are not above thirty, but so steep and narrow, that they are very difficult to go down, a child of eight or nine years not being able to pass them but sideways.'—WALDRON'S *Description of the Isle of Man in his Works*, p. 105, folio.

omitted to tell you the culprit was pretty Peggy of Ramsey, and her crime what in Cupid's courts would have been called a peccadillo.'

'Do not make yourself worse than you are,' replied Peveril, who observed the countess's cheek redden,—'you know you would have done as much for the oldest and poorest cripple in the island. Why, the vault is under the burial ground of the chapel, and, for aught I know, under the ocean itself, such a roaring do the waves make in its vicinity. I think no one could remain there long, and retain his reason.'

'It is an infernal hole,' answered the earl, 'and I will have it built up one day—that is full certain. But hold—hold—for God's sake, madam—what are you going to do?—Look at the seal before you put it to the warrant: you will see it is a choice antique cameo, Cupid riding on a flying fish.—I had it for twenty zecchins from Signor Furabosco at Rome—a most curious matter for an antiquary, but which will add little faith to a Manx warrant.'

'How can you trifle thus, you simple boy?' said the countess, with vexation in her tone and look. 'Let me have your signet, or rather, take these warrants, and sign them yourself.'

'My signet—my signet—Oh! you mean that with the three monstrous legs, which I suppose was devised as the most preposterous device, to represent our most absurd Majesty of Man.—The signet—I have not seen it since I gave it to Gibbon, my monkey, to play with. He did whine for it most piteously. I hope he has not gemmed the green breast of ocean with my symbol of sovereignty.'

'Now, by Heaven,' said the countess, trembling, and colouring deeply with anger, 'it was your father's signet! the last pledge which he sent, with his love to me, and his blessing to thee, the night before they murdered him at Bolton!'

'Mother, dearest mother,' said the earl, startled out of his apathy, and taking her hand, which he kissed tenderly, 'I did but jest: the signet is safe—Peveril knows that it is so. Go fetch it, Julian, for Heaven's sake—here are my keys—it is in the left hand drawer of my travelling cabinet.—Nay, mother, forgive me—it was but a *mauvaise plaisanterie*; only an ill imagined jest, ungracious, and in bad taste, I allow—but only one of Philip's follies. Look at me, dearest mother, and forgive me.'

The countess turned her eyes towards him, from which the tears were fast falling.

'Philip,' she said, 'you try me too unkindly and too severely. If times are changed, as I have heard you allege—if the dignity of rank, and the high feelings of honour and duty, are now drowned in giddy jests and trifling pursuits, let me at least, who live secluded from all others, die without perceiving the change which has happened, and, above all, without perceiving it in mine own son. Let me not learn the general prevalence of this levity, which laughs at every sense of dignity or duty, through your personal disrespect. Let me not think that when I

[illegible] nothing of it, mother,' said the earl, [illegible]pting her affectionately. 'It is true, I cannot promise to be all my father and his fathers were; for we wear silk vests for their steel coats, and feathered beavers for their crested helmets. But believe me, though to be an absolute Palmerin of England is not in my nature, no son ever loved a mother more dearly, or would do more to oblige her. And that you may own this, I will forthwith not only seal the warrants, to the great endangerment of my precious fingers, but also read the same from end to end, as well as the despatches thereunto appertaining.'

A mother is easily appeased, even when most offended; and it was with an expanding heart that the countess saw her son's very handsome features, while reading these papers, settle into an expression of deep seriousness, such as they seldom wore. It seemed to her as if the family likeness to his gallant but unfortunate father increased, when the expression of their countenances became similar in gravity. The earl had no sooner perused the despatches, which he did with great attention, than he rose and said, 'Julian, come with me.'

The countess looked surprised. 'I was wont to share your father's counsels, my son,' she said, 'but do not think that I wish to intrude myself upon yours. I am too well pleased to see you assume the power and the duty of thinking for yourself, which is what I have so long urged you to do. Nevertheless, my experience, who have been so long administrator of your authority in Man, might not, I think, be superfluous to the matter in hand.'

'Hold me excused, dearest mother,' said the earl gravely. 'The interference was none of my seeking; had you taken your own course, without consulting me, it had been well; but since I have entered on the affair—and it appears sufficiently important—I must transact it to the best of my own ability.'

'Go then, my son,' said the countess, 'and may Heaven enlighten thee with its counsel, since thou wilt have none of mine.—I trust that you, Master Peveril, will remind him of what is fit for his own honour; and that only a coward abandons his rights, and only a fool trusts his enemies.'

The earl answered not, but, taking Peveril by the arm, led him up a winding stair to his own apartment, and from thence into a projecting turret, where, amidst the roar of waves and seamews clang, he held with him the following conversation:—

'Peveril, it is well I looked into these warrants. My mother queens it at such a rate as may cost me not only my crown, which I care little for, but perhaps my head, which, though others may think little of, I would feel it an inconvenience to be deprived of.'

'What on earth is the matter?' said Peveril, with considerable anxiety.

'It seems,' said the Earl of Derby, 'that Old England, who takes a frolicsome brain-fever once every two or three years, for the benefit of her doctors, and the purification of the torpid lethargy brought on by peace and prosperity, is now gone stark staring mad on the subject of a real or supposed Popish Plot. I read one programme on the subject, by a fellow called Oates,

and thought it the most absurd foolery I ever perused. But that cunning fellow Shaftesbury, and some others amongst the great ones, have taken it up, and are driving on at such a rate as makes harness crack and horses smoke for it. The King, who has sworn never to kiss the pillow his father went to sleep on, temporizes, and gives way to the current; the Duke of York, suspected and hated on account of his religion, is about to be driven to the Continent; several principal Catholic nobles are in the Tower already; and the nation, like a bull at Tutbury-running, is persecuted with so many inflammatory rumours and pestilent pamphlets, that she has cocked her tail, flung up her heels, taken the bit betwixt her teeth, and is as furiously unmanageable as in the year 1642.'

'All this you must have known already,' said Peveril; 'I wonder you told me not of news so important.'

'It would have taken long to tell,' said the earl; 'moreover, I desired to have you *solus;* thirdly, I was about to speak when my mother entered; and, to conclude, it was no business of mine. But these despatches of my politic mother's private correspondent put a new face on the whole matter; for it seems some of the informers — a trade which, having become a thriving one, is now pursued by many—have dared to glance at the Countess herself as an agent in this same plot—ay, and have found those that are willing enough to believe their report.'

'On mine honour,' said Peveril, 'you both take it with great coolness. I think the Countess the more composed of the two; for, except her movement hither, she exhibited no mark of alarm, and, moreover, seemed no way more anxious to communicate the matter to your lordship than decency rendered necessary.'

'My good mother,' said the earl, 'loves power, though it has cost her dear. I wish I could truly say that my neglect of business is entirely assumed in order to leave it in her hands, but that better motive combines with natural indolence. But she seems to have feared I should not think exactly like her in this emergency, and she was right in supposing so.'

'How comes the emergency upon you?' said Julian; 'and what form does the danger assume?'

'Marry, thus it is,' said the earl: 'I need not bid you remember the affair of Colonel Christian. That man, besides his widow, who is possessed of large property,—Dame Christian of Kirk Truagh, whom you have often heard of, and perhaps seen,—left a brother called Edward Christian, whom you never saw at all. Now this brother—but I daresay you know all about it.'

'Not I, on my honour,' said Peveril; 'you know the Countess seldom or never alludes to the subject.'

'Why,' replied the Count, 'I believe in her heart she is something ashamed of that gallant act of royalty and supreme jurisdiction, the consequences of which maimed my estate so cruelly. Well, cousin, this same Edward Christian was one of the Dempsters at the time, and, naturally enough, was unwilling to concur in the sentence which adjudged his *ain* to be shot like a dog. My mother, who was then in high force, and not to be controlled by any one, would have served the Dempster with the same sauce with which she dressed his brother, had he not been wise enough to fly from the island. Since that time, the thing has slept on all hands; and though we knew that Dempster Christian made occasionally secret visits to his friends in the island, along with two or three other Puritans of the same stamp, and particularly a prick-eared rogue, called Bridgenorth, brother-in-law to the defunct, yet my mother, thank Heaven, has hitherto had the sense to connive at them, though, for some reason or other, she holds this Bridgenorth in especial disfavour.'

'And why,' said Peveril, forcing himself to speak, in order to conceal the very unpleasant surprise which he felt, 'why does the Countess now depart from so prudent a line of conduct?'

'You must know the case is now different. The rogues are not satisfied with toleration—they would have supremacy. They have found friends in the present heat of the popular mind. My mother's name, and especially that of her confessor, Aldrick the Jesuit, have been mentioned in this beautiful maze of a plot, which, if any such at all exists, she knows as little of as you or I. However, she is a Catholic, and that is enough; and I have little doubt that, if the fellows could seize on our scrap of a kingdom here, and cut all our throats, they would have the thanks of the present House of Commons, as willingly as old Christian had those of the Rump for a similar service.'

'From whence did you receive all this information?' said Peveril, again speaking, though by the same effort which a man makes who talks in his sleep.

'Aldrick has seen the Duke of York in secret, and his Royal Highness, who wept while he confessed his want of power to protect his friends, —and it is no trifle will wring tears from him,—told him to send us information that we should look to our safety, for that Dempster Christian and Bridgenorth were in the island, with secret and severe orders; that they had formed a considerable party there, and were likely to be owned and protected in anything they might undertake against us. The people of Ramsey and Castletown are unluckily discontented about some new regulation of the imposts; and, to tell you the truth, though I thought yesterday's sudden remove a whim of my mother's, I am almost satisfied they would have blockaded us in Rushin Castle, where we could not have held out for lack of provisions. Here we are better supplied, and, as we are on our guard, it is likely the intended rising will not take place.'

'And what is to be done in this emergency?' said Peveril.

'That is the very question, my gentle coz,' answered the earl. 'My mother sees but one way of going to work, and that is by royal authority. Here are the warrants she had prepared, to search for, take, and apprehend the bodies of Edward Christian and Robert—no, Ralph Bridgenorth, and bring them to instant trial. No doubt she would soon have had them in the castle court, with a dozen of the old match-

locks levelled against them—that is her way of solving all sudden difficulties'

'But in which I trust you do not acquiesce, my lord?' answered Peveril, whose thoughts instantly reverted to Alice, if they could ever be said to be absent from her

'Truly I acquiesce in no such matter' said the earl 'William Christian's death cost me a fair half of my inheritance I have no fancy to fall under the displeasure of my royal brother, King Charles, for a new escapade of the same kind But how to pacify my mother I know not I wish the insurrection would take place and then, as we are better provided than they can be, we might knock the knaves on the head and yet, since they begin the fray, we should keep the law on our side'

'Were it not better said Peveril, 'if by any means these men could be induced to quit the island?'

'Surely' replied the earl 'but that will be no easy matter—they are stubborn on principle and empty threats will not move them This storm blast in London is wind in their sails and they will run their length, you may depend on it I have sent orders, however, to clap up the Manxmen upon whose assistance they depend d, and if I can find the two worthies thems lve here are sloops enough in the harbour I will take the freedom to send them on a pretty distant voyage, and I hope matters will be settled before they return to give an account of it

At this moment a soldier belonging to the garrison approached the two young men with many bows and tokens of respect 'How now, friend?' said the earl to him Leave off thy courtesies, and tell thy business'

The man, who was a native islander, answered in Manx that he had a letter for his honour, Master Julian Peveril Julian snatched the billet hastily, and asked whence it came

'It was delivered to him by a young woman,' the soldier replied, 'who had given him a piece of money to deliver it into Master Peveril's own hand.'

'Thou art a lucky fellow, Julian,' said the earl. 'With that grave brow of thine, and thy character for sobriety and early wisdom, you set the girls a wooing, without waiting till they are asked, whilst I, their drudge and vassal, waste both language and leisure, without getting a kind word or look, far less a billet doux'

This the young earl said with a smile of conscious triumph, as in fact he valued himself not a little upon the interest which he supposed himself to possess with the fair sex

Meanwhile the letter impressed on Peveril a different train of thoughts from what his companion apprehended It was in Alice's hand, and contained these few words —

'I fear what I am going to do is wrong but I must see you Meet me at noon at Goddard Crovan's Stone, with as much secrecy as you may'

The letter was signed only with the initials A B, but Julian had no difficulty in recognising the handwriting, which he had often seen, and which was remarkably beautiful He stood suspended, for he saw the difficulty and impropriety of withdrawing himself from the countess and his friend at this moment of impending danger; and yet to neglect this invitation was not to be thought of He paused in the utmost perplexity

'Shall I read your riddle?' said the earl. 'Go where love calls you—I will make an excuse to my mother—only, most grave anchorite, be hereafter more indulgent to the failings of others than you have been hitherto, and blaspheme not the power of the little deity.'

'Nay, but, Cousin Derby'—said Peveril, and stopped short for he really knew not what to say Secured himself by a virtuous passion from the contagious influence of the time, he had seen with regret his noble kinsman mingle more in its irregularities than he approved of, and had sometimes played the part of a monitor Circumstances seemed at present to give the earl a right of retaliation He kept his eye fixed on his friend, as if he waited till he should complete his sentence, and at length exclaimed, What! cousin, quite *à la mort!* O, most judicious Julian! O, most precise Peveril! have you bestowed so much wisdom on me that you have none left for yourself? Come, be frank—tell me name and place or say but the colour of the eyes of the most emphatic she—or do but let me have the pleasure to hear thee say, "I love!" confess one touch of human frailty—conjugate the verb *amo*, and I will be a gentle schoolmaster and you shall have, as Father Richards used to say when we were under his ferule "*licentia exeundi*"'

'Enjoy your pleasant humour at my expense, my lord said Peveril 'I fairly will confess thus much, that I would fain, if it consisted with my honour and your safety, have two hours at my own disposal, the more especially as the manner in which I shall employ them may much concern the safety of the island'

'Very likely, I dare say, answered the earl, still laughing 'No doubt you are summoned out by some Lady Politic Wouldbe of the isle, to talk over some of the breast laws, counsel, mind go, and go speedily mine — I trust that as quaker Peveril, will remind him of what is ... for his own honour, and that only a coward abandons his rights, and only a fool trusts his enemies

'The earl answered not, but taking Peveril by ... neglected, ... him up a winding stair to his own ... the raillery of his cousin, ... thence into a projecting ... of waves and sea- ... the gate of the castle, meaning ... the following ... the village, and there take h... stables for the place of rendezv... these warrants ... ate, as may cost ... care little for, ... gh others may ... inconvenience

CHAPTER XIV

Acasto Can she not speak?
Oswald If speech be only in ac...
Framed by the tongue and lips, ...
But if by quick and apprehensiv...
By motion sign and glance, to ...
Express as clothed in language, ...
She hath that wondrous faculty ...
Like the bright stars of heaven ...
Though it be mute and soundless

... said Peveril, ... of Derby, 'that ... licsome brain-fever ... ars, for the benefit ... cation of the torpid ... e and prosperity, is ... d on the subject of a ... Plot. I read one pro- ... a fellow called Oates,

AT the head of the first ... descended towards the diffic...

entrance of the castle of Holm Peel, Peveril was met and stopped by the countess's train-bearer. This little creature—for she was of the least and slightest size of womankind—was exquisitely well formed in all her limbs, which the dress she usually wore (a green silk tunic, of a peculiar form) set off to the best advantage. Her face was darker than the usual hue of Europeans; and the profusion of long and silken hair, which, when she undid the braids in which she commonly wore it, fell down almost to her ankles, was also rather a foreign attribute. Her countenance resembled a most beautiful miniature; and there was a quickness, decision, and fire in Fenella's look, and especially in her eyes, which was probably rendered yet more alert and acute, because, through the imperfection of her other organs, it was only by sight that she could obtain information of what passed around her.

The pretty mute was mistress of many little accomplishments, which the countess had caused to be taught to her in compassion for her forlorn situation, and which she learned with the most surprising quickness. Thus, for example, she was exquisite in the use of the needle, and so ready and ingenious a draughtswoman, that, like the ancient Mexicans, she sometimes made a hasty sketch with her pencil the means of conveying her ideas, either by direct or emblematical representation. Above all, in the art of ornamental writing, much studied at that period, Fenella was so great a proficient as to rival the fame of Messrs. Snow, Shelley, and other masters of the pen, whose copybooks, preserved in the libraries of the curious, still show the artists smiling on the frontispiece in all the honours of flowing gowns and full-bottomed wigs, to the eternal glory of caligraphy.

The little maiden had, besides these accomplishments, much ready wit and acuteness of intellect. With Lady Derby, and with the two young gentlemen, she was a great favourite, and used much freedom in conversing with them, by means of a system of signs which had been gradually established amongst them, and which served all ordinary purposes of communication.

But, though happy in the indulgence and favour of her mistress, from whom indeed she was seldom separate, Fenella was by no means a favourite with the rest of the household. In fact, it seemed that her temper, exasperated perhaps by a sense of her misfortune, was by no means equal to her abilities. She was very haughty in her demeanour even towards the upper domestics, who in that establishment were of much higher rank and better birth than in the families of the nobility in general. These often complained, not only of her pride and reserve, but of her high and irascible temper and vindictive disposition. Her passionate propensity had been indeed idly encouraged by the young men, and particularly by the earl, who sometimes amused himself with teasing her, that he might enjoy the various singular motions and murmurs by which she expressed her resentment. Towards him, these were of course only petulant and whimsical indications of pettish anger. But when she was angry with others of inferior degree—before whom she did not control herself—the expression of her passion, unable to display itself in language, had something even frightful, so singular were the tones, contortions, and gestures to which she had recourse. The lower domestics, to whom she was liberal almost beyond her apparent means, observed her with much deference and respect, but much more from fear than from any real attachment; for the caprices of her temper displayed themselves even in her gifts; and those who most frequently shared her bounty seemed by no means assured of the benevolence of the motives which dictated her liberality.

All these peculiarities led to a conclusion consonant with Manx superstition. Devout believers in all the legends of fairies, so dear to the Celtic tribes, the Manx people held it for certainty that the elves were in the habit of carrying off mortal children before baptism, and leaving in the cradle of the new-born babe one of their own brood, which was almost always imperfect in some one or other of the organs proper to humanity. Such a being they conceived Fenella to be; and the smallness of her size, her dark complexion, her long locks of silken hair, the singularity of her manners and tones, as well as the caprices of her temper, were to their thinking all attributes of the irritable, fickle, and dangerous race from which they supposed her to be sprung. And it seemed that, although no jest appeared to offend her more than when Lord Derby called her in sport the Elfin Queen, or otherwise alluded to her supposed connection with 'the pigmy folk,' yet still her perpetually affecting to wear the colour of green, proper to the fairies, as well as some other peculiarities, seemed voluntarily assumed by her, in order to countenance the superstition, perhaps because it gave her more authority among the lower orders.

Many were the tales circulated respecting the countess's *Elf*, as Fenella was currently called in the island; and the malcontents of the stricter persuasion were convinced that no one but a Papist and a malignant would have kept near her person a creature of such doubtful origin. They conceived that Fenella's deafness and dumbness were only towards those of this world, and that she had been heard talking, and singing, and laughing most elvishly, with the invisibles of her own race. They alleged, also, that she had a *Double*, a sort of apparition resembling her, which slept in the countess's anteroom, or bore her train, or wrought in her cabinet, while the real Fenella joined the song of the mermaids on the moonlight sands, or the dance of the fairies in the haunted valley of Glenmoy, or on the heights of Snawfell and Barool. The sentinels, too, would have sworn they had seen the little maiden trip past them in their solitary night walks, without their having it in their power to challenge her, any more than if they had been as mute as herself. To all this mass of absurdities the better informed paid no more attention than to the usual idle exaggerations of the vulgar, which so frequently connect that which is unusual with what is supernatural.*

Such, in form and habits, was the little female, who, holding in her hand a small old-fashioned ebony rod, which might have passed for a divin-

* Note K. Manx Superstitions.

ing wand, confronted Julian on the top of the flight of steps which led down the rock from the castle court. We ought to observe, that, as Julian's manner to the unfortunate girl had been always gentle, and free from those teasing jests in which his gay friend indulged, with less regard to the peculiarity of her situation and feelings; so Fenella, on her part, had usually shown much greater deference to him than to any of the household, her mistress, the countess, always excepted.

On the present occasion, planting herself in the very midst of the narrow descent, so as to make it impossible for Peveril to pass by her, she proceeded to put him to the question by a series of gestures which we will endeavour to describe. She commenced by extending her hand slightly, accompanied with the sharp, inquisitive look which served her as a note of interrogation. This was meant as an inquiry whether he was going to a distance. Julian, in reply, extended his arm more than half, to intimate that the distance was considerable. Fenella looked grave, shook her head and pointed to the countess's window, which was visible from the spot where they stood. Peveril smiled, and nodded, to intimate there was no danger in quitting her mistress for a short space. The little maiden next touched an eagle's feather which she wore in her hair, a sign which she usually employed to designate the earl, and then looked inquisitively at Julian once more, as if to say, 'Goes he with you?' Peveril shook his head, and, somewhat wearied by these interrogatories, smiled, and made an effort to pass. Fenella frowned, struck the end of her ebony rod perpendicularly on the ground, and again shook her head, as if opposing his departure. But finding that Julian persevered in his purpose, she suddenly assumed another and a milder mood, held him by the skirt of his cloak with one hand, and raised the other in an imploring attitude, whilst every feature of her lively countenance was composed into the like expression of supplication; and the fire of the large dark eyes, which seemed in general so keen and piercing as almost to over-animate the little sphere to which they belonged, seemed quenched, for the moment, in the large drops which hung on her long eyelashes, but without falling.

Julian Peveril was far from being void of sympathy towards the poor girl, whose motives in opposing his departure appeared to be her affectionate apprehension for her mistress's safety. He endeavoured to reassure her by smiles, and, at the same time, by such signs as he could devise, to intimate that there was no danger, and that he would return presently; and, having succeeded in extricating his cloak from her grasp, and in passing her on the stair, he began to descend the steps as speedily as he could, in order to avoid further importunity.

But with activity much greater than his, the dumb maiden hastened to intercept him, and succeeded by throwing herself, at the imminent risk of life and limb, a second time into the pass which he was descending, so as to interrupt his purpose. In order to achieve this, she was obliged to let herself drop a considerable height from the wall of a small flanking battery, where two patereroes were placed to scour the pass, in case any enemy could have mounted so high. Julian had scarce time to shudder at her purpose, as he beheld her about to spring from the parapet, ere, like a thing of gossamer, she stood light and uninjured on the rocky platform below. He endeavoured, by the gravity of his look and gesture, to make her understand how much he blamed her rashness; but the reproof, though obviously quite intelligible, was entirely thrown away. A hasty wave of her hand intimated how she contemned the danger and the remonstrance; while, at the same time, she instantly resumed, with more eagerness than before, the earnest and impressive gestures by which she endeavoured to detain him in the fortress.

Julian was somewhat staggered by her pertinacity. 'Is it possible,' he thought, 'that any danger can approach the Countess, of which this poor maiden has, by the extreme acuteness of her observation, obtained knowledge which has escaped others?'

He signed to Fenella hastily to give him the tablets and the pencil which she usually carried with her, and wrote on them the question, 'Is there danger near to your mistress, that you thus stop me?'

'There is danger around the Countess,' was the answer instantly written down; 'but there is much more in your own purpose.'

'How?—what?—what know you of my purpose?' said Julian, forgetting, in his surprise, that the party he addressed had neither ear to comprehend, nor voice to reply, to uttered language. She had regained her book in the meantime, and sketched, with a rapid pencil, on one of the leaves, a scene which she showed to Julian. To his infinite surprise, he recognised Goddard Crovan's Stone, a remarkable monument, of which she had given the outline with sufficient accuracy; together with a male and female figure, which, though only indicated by a few slight touches of the pencil, bore yet, he thought, some resemblance to himself and Alice Bridgenorth.

When he had gazed on the sketch for an instant with surprise, Fenella took the book from his hand, laid her finger upon the drawing, and slowly and sternly shook her head, with a frown which seemed to prohibit the meeting which was there represented. Julian, however, though disconcerted, was in no shape disposed to submit to the authority of his monitress. By whatever means she, who so seldom stirred from the countess's apartment, had become acquainted with a secret which he thought entirely his own, he esteemed it the more necessary to keep the appointed rendezvous, that he might learn from Alice, if possible, how the secret had transpired. He had also formed the intention of seeking out Bridgenorth: entertaining an idea that a person so reasonable and calm as he had shown himself in their late conference, might be persuaded, when he understood that the countess was aware of his intrigues, to put an end to her danger and his own, by withdrawing from the island. And could he succeed in this point, he should at once, he thought, render a material benefit to the father of his beloved Alice—remove the earl from his state of anxiety—save the countess from

a second time putting her feudal jurisdiction in opposition to that of the Crown of England,—and secure quiet possession of the island to her and her family.

With this scheme of mediation in his mind, Peveril determined to rid himself of the opposition of Fenella to his departure, with less ceremony than he had hitherto observed towards her; and, suddenly lifting up the damsel in his arms before she was aware of his purpose, he turned about, set her down on the steps above him, and began to descend the pass himself as speedily as possible. It was then that the dumb maiden gave full course to the vehemence of her disposition; and, clapping her hands repeatedly, expressed her displeasure in a sound, or rather a shriek, so extremely dissonant, that it resembled more the cry of a wild creature than anything which could have been uttered by female organs. Peveril was so astounded at the scream as it rang through the living rocks, that he could not help stopping and looking back in alarm to satisfy himself that she had not sustained some injury. He saw her, however, perfectly safe, though her face seemed inflamed and distorted with passion. She stamped at him with her foot, shook her clenched hand; and, turning her back upon him, without further adieu, ran up the rude steps as lightly as a kid could have tripped up that rugged ascent, and paused for a moment at the summit of the first flight.

Julian could feel nothing but wonder and compassion for the impotent passion of a being so unfortunately circumstanced, cut off, as it were, from the rest of mankind, and incapable of receiving in childhood that moral discipline which teaches us mastery of our wayward passions, ere yet they have attained their meridian strength and violence. He waved his hand to her, in token of amicable farewell; but she only replied by once more menacing him with her little hand clenched; and then, ascending the rocky staircase with almost preternatural speed, was soon out of sight.

Julian, on his part, gave no further consideration to her conduct or its motives; but, hastening to the village on the mainland, where the stables of the castle were situated, he again took his palfrey from the stall, and was soon mounted and on his way to the appointed place of rendezvous, much marvelling as he ambled forward with speed far greater than was promised by the diminutive size of the animal he was mounted on, what could have happened to produce so great a change in Alice's conduct towards him, that, in place of enjoining his absence as usual, or recommending his departure from the island, she should now voluntarily invite him to a meeting. Under impression of the various doubts which succeeded each other in his imagination, he sometimes pressed Fairy's sides with his legs; sometimes laid his holly rod lightly on her neck; sometimes incited her by his voice; for the mettled animal needed neither whip nor spur, and achieved the distance betwixt the castle of Holm Peel and the stone at Goddard Crovan, at the rate of twelve miles within the hour.

The monumental stone, designed to commemorate some feat of an ancient King of Man, which had been long forgotten, was erected on the side of a narrow, lonely valley, or rather glen, secluded from observation by the steepness of its banks, upon a projection of which stood the tall, shapeless, solitary rock, frowning, like a shrouded giant, over the brawling of the small rivulet which watered the ravine.

CHAPTER XIII

This a love meeting? See the maiden mourns,
And the sad suitor bends his looks on earth.
There's more hath passed between them than belongs
To love's sweet sorrows.

OLD PLAY.

As he approached the monument of Goddard Crovan, Julian cast many an anxious glance to see whether any object visible beside the huge grey stone should apprise him whether he was anticipated, at the appointed place of rendezvous, by her who had named it. Nor was it long before the flutter of a mantle, which the breeze slightly waved, and the motion necessary to replace it upon the wearer's shoulders, made him aware that Alice had already reached their place of meeting. One instant set the palfrey at liberty, with slackened girths and loosened reins, to pick its own way through the dell at will; another placed Julian by the side of Alice Bridgenorth.

That Alice should extend her hand to her lover, as with the ardour of a young greyhound he bounded over the obstacles of the rugged path, was as natural as that Julian, seizing on the hand so kindly stretched out, should devour it with kisses, and for a moment or two, without reprehension; while the other hand, which should have aided in the liberation of its fellow, served to hide the blushes of the fair owner. But Alice, young as she was, and attached to Julian by such long habits of kindly intimacy, still knew well how to subdue the tendency of her own treacherous affections.

'This is not right,' she said, extricating her hand from Julian's grasp, 'this is not right, Julian. If I have been too rash in admitting such a meeting as the present, it is not you that should make me sensible of my folly.'

Julian Peveril's mind had been early illuminated with that touch of romantic fire which deprives passion of selfishness, and confers on it the high and refined tone of generous and disinterested devotion. He let go the hand of Alice with as much respect as he could have paid to that of a princess; and when she seated herself upon a rocky fragment, over which nature had stretched a cushion of moss and lichen, interspersed with wild flowers, backed with a bush of copsewood, he took his place beside her indeed, but at such distance as to intimate the duty of an attendant, who was there only to hear and to obey. Alice Bridgenorth became more assured as she observed the power which she possessed over her lover; and the self-command which Peveril exhibited, which other damsels in her situation might have judged inconsistent with intensity of passion, she appreciated more justly, as a proof of his respectful and disinterested

sincerity. She recovered, in addressing him, the tone of confidence which rather belonged to the scenes of their early acquaintance, than to those which had passed betwixt them since Peveril had disclosed his affection, and thereby had brought restraint upon their intercourse.

'Julian,' she said, 'your visit of yesterday—your most ill-timed visit, has distressed me much. It has misled my father—it has endangered you. At all risks, I resolved that you should know this, and blame me not if I have taken a bold and imprudent step in desiring this solitary interview, since you are aware how little poor Deborah is to be trusted.'

'Can you fear misconstruction from me, Alice?' replied Peveril warmly; 'from me, whom you have thus highly favoured—thus deeply obliged?'

'Cease your protestations, Julian,' answered the maiden; 'they do but make me the more sensible that I have acted over boldly. But I did for the best.—I could not see you whom I have known so long—you, who say you regard me with partiality'——

'*Say* that I regard you with partiality!' interrupted Peveril in his turn. 'Ah, Alice, what a cold and doubtful phrase you have used to express the most devoted, the most sincere affection!'

'Well, then,' said Alice sadly, 'we will not quarrel about words; but do not again interrupt me,—I could not, I say, see you, who, I believe, regard me with sincere though vain and fruitless attachment, rush blindfold into a snare, deceived and seduced by those very feelings towards me.'

'I understand you not, Alice,' said Peveril; 'nor can I see any danger to which I am at present exposed. The sentiments which your father has expressed towards me are of a nature irreconcilable with hostile purposes. If he is not offended with the bold wishes I may have formed,—and his whole behaviour shows the contrary,—I know not a man on earth from whom I have less cause to apprehend any danger or ill-will.'

'My father,' said Alice, 'means well by his country and well by you; yet I sometimes fear he may rather injure than serve his good cause; and still more do I dread that, in attempting to engage you as an auxiliary, he may forget those ties which ought to bind you, and I am sure which will bind you, to a different line of conduct from his own.'

'You lead me into still deeper darkness, Alice,' answered Peveril. 'That your father's especial line of politics differs widely from mine, I know well; but how many instances have occurred, even during the bloody scenes of civil warfare, of good and worthy men laying the prejudice of party affections aside, and regarding each other with respect, and even with friendly attachment, without being false to principle on either side?'

'It may be so,' said Alice; 'but such is not the league which my father desires to form with you, and that to which he hopes your misplaced partiality towards his daughter may afford a motive for your forming with him.'

'And what is it,' said Peveril, 'which I would refuse, with such a prospect before me?'

'Treachery and dishonour!' replied Alice; 'whatever would render you unworthy of the poor boon at which you aim—ay, were it more worthless than I confess it to be.'

'Would your father,' said Peveril, as he unwillingly received the impression which Alice designed to convey,—'would he, whose views of duty are so strict and severe—would he wish to involve me in aught, to which such harsh epithets as treachery and dishonour can be applied with the slightest shadow of truth?'

'Do not mistake me, Julian,' replied the maiden; 'my father is incapable of requesting aught of you that is not to his thinking just and honourable; nay, he conceives that he only claims from you a debt, which is due as a creature to the Creator, and as a man to your fellow-men.'

'So guarded, where can be the danger of our intercourse?' replied Julian. 'If he be resolved to require, and I determined to accede to, nothing save what flows from conviction, what have I to fear, Alice? And how is my intercourse with your father dangerous? Believe not so; his speech has already made impression on me in some particulars, and he listened with candour and patience to the objections which I made occasionally. You do Master Bridgenorth less than justice in confounding him with the unreasonable bigots in policy and religion, who can listen to no argument but what favours their own prepossessions.'

'Julian,' replied Alice, 'it is you who misjudge my father's powers, and his purpose with respect to you, and who overrate your own powers of resistance. I am but a girl, but I have been taught by circumstances to think for myself, and to consider the character of those around me. My father's views in ecclesiastical and civil policy are as dear to him as the life which he cherishes only to advance them. They have been, with little alteration, his companions through life. They brought him at one period into prosperity, and when they suited not the times, he suffered for having held them. They have become not only a part, but the very dearest part, of his existence. If he shows them not to you at first, in the flexible strength which they have acquired over his mind, do not believe that they are the less powerful. He who desires to make converts must begin by degrees. But that he should sacrifice to an inexperienced young man, whose ruling motive he will term a childish passion, any part of those treasured principles which he has maintained through good repute and bad repute—O, do not dream of such an impossibility! If you meet at all, you must be the wax, he the seal—you must receive, he must bestow, an absolute impression.'

'That,' said Peveril, 'were unreasonable. I will frankly avow to you, Alice, that I am not a sworn bigot to the opinions entertained by my father, much as I respect his person. I could wish that our Cavaliers, or whatsoever they are pleased to call themselves, would have some more charity towards those who differ from them in Church and State. But to hope that I would surrender the principles in which I have lived, were to suppose me capable of deserting my benefactress, and breaking the hearts of my parents.'

'Even so I judged of you,' answered Alice; 'and therefore I asked this interview, to conjure

that you will break off all intercourse with our family—return to your parents—or, what will be much safer, visit the Continent once more, and abide till God sends better days to England, for these are black with many a storm.'

'And can you bid me go, Alice?' said the young man, taking her unresisting hand; 'can you bid me go, and yet own an interest in my fate?—Can you bid me, for fear of dangers, which as a man, as a gentleman, and a loyal one, I am bound to show my face to, meanly abandon my parents, my friends, my country—suffer the existence of evils which I might aid to prevent—forego the prospect of doing such little good as might be in my power—fall from an active and honourable station, into the condition of a fugitive and time-server—Can you bid me do all this, Alice? Can you bid me do all this, and, in the same breath, bid farewell to you and happiness?—It is impossible. I cannot surrender at once my love and my honour.'

'There is no remedy,' said Alice, but she could not suppress a sigh while she said so—'there is no remedy—none whatever. What we might have been to each other, placed in more favourable circumstances, it avails not to think of now; and, circumstanced as we are, with open war about to break out betwixt our parents and friends, we can be but well-wishers—cold and distant well-wishers, who must part on this spot, and at this hour, never to meet again.'

'No, by Heaven!' said Peveril, animated at the same time by his own feelings, and by the sight of the emotions which his companion in vain endeavoured to suppress.—'No, by Heaven!' he exclaimed, 'we part not—Alice, we part not. If I am to leave my native land, you shall be my companion in my exile. What have you to lose?—Whom have you to abandon?—Your father?—The good old cause, as it is termed, is dearer to him than a thousand daughters; and setting him aside, what tie is there between you and this barren isle—between my Alice and any spot of the British dominions, where her Julian does not sit by her?'

'O, Julian,' answered the maiden, 'why make my duty more painful by visionary projects, which you ought not to name, or I to listen to? Your parents—my father—it cannot be!'

'Fear not for my parents, Alice,' replied Julian, and, pressing close to his companion's side, he ventured to throw his arm around her; 'they love me, and they will soon learn to love, in Alice, the only being on earth who could have rendered their son happy. And for your own father, when State and Church intrigues allow him to bestow a thought upon you, will he not think that your happiness, your security, is better cared for when you are my wife, than were you to continue under the mercenary charge of yonder foolish woman? What could his pride desire better for you, than the establishment which will one day be mine? Come then, Alice, and since you condemn me to banishment—since you deny me a share in those stirring achievements which are about to agitate England—come, do you—for you only can—do you reconcile me to exile and inaction, and give happiness to one who, for your sake, is willing to resign honour.'

'It cannot—it cannot be,' said Alice, faltering as she uttered her negative. 'And yet,' she said, 'how many in my place—left alone and unprotected as I am—But I must not—I must not—for your sake, Julian, I must not.'

'Say not for my sake you must not, Alice,' said Peveril eagerly; 'this is adding insult to cruelty. If you will do aught for my sake, you will say yes; or you will suffer this dear head to drop on my shoulder—the slightest sign—the moving of an eyelid, shall signify consent. All shall be prepared within an hour; within another the priest shall unite us; and within a third, we leave the isle behind us, and seek our fortunes on the Continent.' But while he spoke, in joyful anticipation of the consent which he implored, Alice found means to collect together her resolution, which, staggered by the eagerness of her lover, the impulse of her own affections, and the singularity of her situation,—seeming in her case to justify what would have been most blameable in another,—had more than half abandoned her.

The result of a moment's deliberation was fatal to Julian's proposal. She extricated herself from the arm which had pressed her to his side—arose; and repelling his attempts to approach or detain her, said, with a simplicity not unmingled with dignity, 'Julian, I always knew I risked much in inviting you to this meeting; but I did not guess that I could have been so cruel both to you and to myself, as to suffer you to discover what you have to-day seen too plainly—that I love you better than you love me. But since you do know it, I will show you that Alice's love is disinterested—She will not bring an ignoble name into your ancient house. If hereafter, in your line, there should arise some who may think the claims of the hierarchy too exorbitant, the powers of the crown too extensive, men shall not say these ideas were derived from Alice Bridgenorth, their whig grand-dame.'

'Can you speak thus, Alice?' said her lover. 'Can you use such expressions? and are you not sensible that they show plainly it is your own pride, not regard for me, that makes you resist the happiness of both?'

'Not so, Julian; not so,' answered Alice, with tears in her eyes; 'it is the command of duty to us both—of duty, which we cannot transgress, without risking our happiness here and hereafter. Think what I, the cause of all, should feel, when your father frowns, your mother weeps, your noble friends stand aloof, and you, even you yourself, shall have made the painful discovery, that you have incurred the contempt and resentment of all to satisfy a boyish passion; and that the poor beauty, once sufficient to mislead you, is gradually declining under the influence of grief and vexation. This I will not risk. I see distinctly it is best we should here break off and part; and I thank God, who gives me light enough to perceive, and strength enough to withstand, your folly as well as my own. Farewell, then, Julian; but first take the solemn advice which I called you hither to impart to you:—Shun my father—you cannot walk in his paths, and be true to gratitude and to honour. What he doth from pure and honour-

able motives, you cannot aid him in, except upon the suggestion of a silly and interested passion, at variance with all the engagements you have formed at coming into life.'

'Once more, Alice,' answered Julian, 'I understand you not. If a course of action is good, it needs no vindication from the actor's motives—if bad, it can derive none.'

'You cannot blind me with your sophistry, Julian,' replied Alice Bridgenorth, 'any more than you can overpower me with your passion. Had the patriarch destined his son to death upon any less ground than faith and humble obedience to a divine commandment, he had meditated a murder and not a sacrifice. In our late bloody and lamentable wars, how many drew swords on either side, from the purest and most honourable motives? How many from the culpable suggestions of ambition, self-seeking, and love of plunder? Yet while they marched in the same ranks, and spurred their horses at the same trumpet-sound, the memory of the former is dear to us as patriots or loyalists—that of those who acted on mean or unworthy promptings is either execrated or forgotten. Once more, I warn you, avoid my father—leave this island, which will be soon agitated by strange incidents—while you stay, be on your guard—distrust everything—be jealous of every one, even of those to whom it may seem almost impossible, from circumstances, to attach a shadow of suspicion—trust not the very stones of the most secret apartment in Holm Peel, for that which hath wings shall carry the matter.'

Here Alice broke off suddenly, and with a faint shriek; for, stepping from behind the stunted copse which had concealed him, her father stood unexpectedly before them.

The reader cannot have forgotten that this was the second time in which the stolen interviews of the lovers had been interrupted by the unexpected apparition of Major Bridgenorth. On this second occasion his countenance exhibited anger mixed with solemnity, like that of the spirit to a ghost-seer, whom he upbraids with having neglected a charge imposed at their first meeting. Even his anger, however, produced no more violent emotion than a cold sternness of manner in his speech and action. 'I thank you, Alice,' he said to his daughter, 'for the pains you have taken to traverse my designs towards this young man and towards yourself. I thank you for the hints you have thrown out before my appearance the suddenness of which alone has prevented you from carrying your confidence to a pitch which would have placed my life and that of others at the discretion of a boy, who, when the cause of God and his country is laid before him, has not leisure to think of them, so much is he occupied with such a baby-face as thine.' Alice, pale as death, continued motionless, with her eyes fixed on the ground, without attempting the slightest reply to the ironical reproaches of her father.

'And you,' continued Major Bridgenorth, turning from his daughter to her lover,—'you, sir, have well repaid the liberal confidence which I placed in you with so little reserve. You I have to thank also for some lessons, which may teach me to rest satisfied with the churl's blood which nature has poured into my veins, and with the rude nurture which my father allotted to me.'

'I understand you not, sir,' replied Julian Peveril, who, feeling the necessity of saying something, could not, at the moment, find anything more fitting to say.

'Yes, sir, I thank you,' said Major Bridgenorth, in the same cold, sarcastic tone, 'for having shown me that breach of hospitality, infringement of good faith, and such like peccadilloes, are not utterly foreign to the mind and conduct of the heir of a knightly house of twenty descents. It is a great lesson to me, sir; for hitherto I had thought, with the vulgar, that gentle manners went with gentle blood. But perhaps courtesy is too chivalrous a quality to be wasted in intercourse with a round-headed fanatic like myself.'

'Major Bridgenorth,' said Julian, 'whatever has happened in this interview which may have displeased you, has been the result of feelings suddenly and strongly animated by the crisis of the moment—nothing was premeditated.'

'Not even your meeting, I suppose?' replied Bridgenorth, in the same cold tone. 'You, sir, wandered hither from Holm Peel—my daughter strolled forth from the Black Fort; and chance, doubtless, assigned you a meeting by the stone of Goddard Crovan?—Young man, disgrace yourself by no more apologies—they are worse than useless.—And you, maiden, who, in your fear of losing your lover, could verge on betraying what might have cost a father his life—begone to your home. I will talk with you at more leisure, and teach you practically those duties which you seem to have forgotten.'

'On my honour, sir,' said Julian, 'your daughter is guiltless of all that can offend you; she resisted every offer which the headstrong violence of my passion urged me to press upon her.'

'And, in brief,' said Bridgenorth, 'I am not to believe that you met in this remote place of rendezvous by Alice's special appointment?'

Peveril knew not what to reply, and Bridgenorth again signed with his hand to his daughter to withdraw.

'I obey you, father,' said Alice, who had by this time recovered from the extremity of her surprise,—'I obey you; but Heaven is my witness that you do me more than injustice in suspecting me capable of betraying your secrets, even had it been necessary to save my own life or that of Julian. That you are walking in a dangerous path I well know; but you do it with your eyes open, and are actuated by motives of which you can estimate the worth and value. My sole wish was, that this young man should not enter blindfold on the same perils; and I had a right to warn him, since the feelings by which he is hoodwinked had a direct reference to me.'

''Tis well, minion,' said Bridgenorth, 'you have spoken your say. Retire, and let me complete the conference which you have so considerately commenced.'

'I go, sir,' said Alice.—'Julian, to you my last words are, and I would speak them with my last breath—Farewell, and caution!'

She turned from them, disappeared among the underwood, and was seen no more

'A true specimen of womankind,' said her father, looking after her, 'who would give the cause of nations up, rather than endanger a hair of her lover's head —You, Master Peveril doubtless, hold her opinion, that the best love is a safe love!'

'Were danger alone in my way' said Peveril, much surprised at the softened tone in which Bridgenorth made this observation, 'there are few things which I would not face to—to—deserve your good opinion'

'Or rather to win my daughter's hand' said Bridgenorth 'Well, young man, one thing has pleased me in your conduct, though of much I have my reasons to complain—one thing *has* pleased me You have surmounted that bounding wall of aristocratical pride, in which your father, and, I suppose, his fathers, remained imprisoned, as in the precincts of a feudal fortress —you have leaped over this barrier and shown yourself not unwilling to ally yourself with a family whom your father spurns as low born and ignoble.'

However favourable this speech sounded towards success in his suit, it so broadly stated the consequences of that success so far as his parents were concerned, that Julian felt it in the last degree difficult to reply At length, perceiving that Major Bridgenorth seemed resolved quietly to await his answer, he mustered up courage to say, 'The feelings which I entertain towards your daughter, Master Bridgenorth are of a nature to supersede many other considerations, to which, in any other case, I should feel it my duty to give the most reverential attention I will not disguise from you that my father's prejudices against such a match would be very strong, but I devoutly believe they would disappear when he came to know the merit of Alice Bridgenorth, and to be sensible that she only could make his son happy

'In the meanwhile, you are desirous to complete the union which you propose without the knowledge of your parents, and take the chance of their being hereafter reconciled to it? So I understand, from the proposal which you made but lately to my daughter

The turns of human nature, and of human passion, are so irregular and uncertain, that, although Julian had but a few minutes before urged to Alice a private marriage and an elopement to the Continent as a measure upon which the whole happiness of his life depended, the proposal seemed not to him half so delightful when stated by the calm, cold, dictatorial accents of her father It sounded no longer like the dictates of ardent passion, throwing all other considerations aside, but as a distinct surrender of the dignity of his house to one who seemed to consider their relative situation as the triumph of Bridgenorth over Peveril He was mute for a moment, in the vain attempt to shape his answer so as at once to intimate acquiescence in what Bridgenorth stated, and a vindication of his own regard for his parents, and for the honour of his house

This delay gave rise to suspicion, and Bridgenorth's eye gleamed, and his lip quivered while he gave vent to it. 'Hark ye, young man—deal openly with me in this matter, if you would not have me think you the execrable villain, who would have seduced an unhappy girl, under promises which he never designed to fulfil. Let me but suspect this, and you shall see, on the spot, how far your pride and your pedigree will preserve you against the just vengeance of a father'

'You do me wrong' said Peveril, 'you do me infinite wrong Major Bridgenorth, I am incapable of the infamy which you allude to The proposal I made to your daughter was as sincere as ever was offered by man to woman I only hesitated, because you think it necessary to examine me so very closely, and to possess yourself of all my purposes and sentiments, in their fullest extent, without explaining to me the tendency of your own

'Your proposal, then, shapes itself thus,' said Bridgenorth 'You are willing to lead my only child into exile from her native country, to give her a claim to kindness and protection from your family, which you know will be disregarded, on condition I consent to bestow her hand on you, with a fortune sufficient to have matched that of your ancestors when they had most reason to boast of their wealth This, young man seems no equal bargain And yet, he continued, after a momentary pause, 'so little do I value the goods of this world, that it might not be utterly beyond thy power to reconcile me to the match which you have proposed to me, however unequal it may appear

'Show me but the means which can propitiate your favour, Major Bridgenorth,' said Peveril,—'for I will not doubt that they will be consistent with my honour and duty,—and you shall soon see how eagerly I will obey your directions, or submit to your conditions'

'They are summed in few words,' answered Bridgenorth Be an honest man, and the friend of your country'

'No one has ever doubted,' replied Peveril, 'that I am both'

'Pardon me, replied the major, 'no one has, as yet seen you show yourself either Interrupt me not— I question not your will to be both, but you have hitherto neither had the light nor the opportunity necessary for the display of your principles, or the service of your country. You have lived when an apathy of mind, succeeding to the agitations of the Civil War, had made men indifferent to State affairs, and more willing to cultivate their own ease, than to stand in the gap when the Lord was pleading with Israel But we are Englishmen, and with us such unnatural lethargy cannot continue long Already many of those who most desired the return of Charles Stuart, regard him as a king whom Heaven, importuned by our entreaties, gave to us in his anger His unlimited licence —an example so readily followed by the young and the gay around him—has disgusted the minds of all sober and thinking men. I had not now held conference with you in this intimate fashion, were I not aware that you, Master Julian, were free from such stain of the times. Heaven, that rendered the King's course of licence fruitful, had denied issue to

of wedlock; and in the gloomy and stern character of his bigoted successor, we already see what sort of monarch shall succeed to the crown of England. This is a critical period, at which it necessarily becomes the duty of all men to step forward, each in his degree, and aid in rescuing the country which gave us birth.' Peveril remembered the warning which he had received from Alice, and bent his eyes on the ground, without returning any reply. 'How is it, young man,' continued Bridgenorth, after a pause—'so young as thou art, and bound by no ties of kindred profligacy with the enemies of your country, you can be already hardened to the claims she may form on you at this crisis?'

'It were easy to answer you generally, Major Bridgenorth,' replied Peveril. 'It were easy to say that my country cannot make a claim on me which I will not promptly answer at the risk of lands and life. But in dealing thus generally, we should but deceive each other. What is the nature of this call? By whom is it to be sounded? And what are to be the results? for I think you have already seen enough of the evils of civil war to be wary of again awakening its terrors in a peaceful and happy country.'

'They that are drenched with poisonous narcotics,' said the major, 'must be awakened by their physicians, though it were with the sound of the trumpet. Better that men should die bravely, with their arms in their hands, like free-born Englishmen, than that they should slide into the bloodless but dishonoured grave which slavery opens for its vassals.—But it is not of war that I was about to speak,' he added, assuming a milder tone. 'The evils of which England now complains are such as can be remedied by the wholesome administration of her own laws, even in the state in which they are still suffered to exist. Have these laws not a right to the support of every individual who lives under them? Have they not a right to yours?'

As he seemed to pause for an answer, Peveril replied, 'I have to learn, Major Bridgenorth, how the laws of England have become so far weakened as to require such support as mine. When that is made plain to me, no man will more willingly discharge the duty of a faithful liegeman to the law as well as the King. But the laws of England are under the guardianship of upright and learned judges, and of a gracious monarch.'

'And of a House of Commons,' interrupted Bridgenorth, 'no longer doting upon restored monarchy, but awakened, as with a peal of thunder, to the perilous state of our religion and of our freedom. I appeal to your own conscience, Julian Peveril, whether this awakening hath not been in time, since you yourself know, and none better than you, the secret but rapid strides which Rome has made to erect her Dagon of idolatry within our Protestant land.'

Here Julian, seeing, or thinking he saw, the drift of Bridgenorth's suspicions, hastened to exculpate himself from the thought of favouring the Roman Catholic religion. 'It is true,' he said, 'I have been educated in a family where that faith is professed by one honoured individual, and that I have since travelled in Popish countries; but even for these very reasons I have seen Popery too closely to be friendly to its tenets. The bigotry of the laymen—the persevering arts of the priesthood—the perpetual intrigue for the extension of the forms without the spirit of religion—the usurpation of that church over the consciences of men—and her impious pretensions to infallibility, are as inconsistent to my mind as they can seem to yours, with common sense, rational liberty, freedom of conscience, and pure religion.'

'Spoken like the son of your excellent mother,' said Bridgenorth, grasping his hand; 'for whose sake I have consented to endure so much from your house unrequited, even when the means of requital were in my own hand.'

'It was indeed from the instructions of that excellent parent,' said Peveril, 'that I was enabled, in my early youth, to resist and repel the insidious attacks made upon my religious faith by the Catholic priests into whose company I was necessarily thrown. Like her, I trust to live and die in the faith of the reformed Church of England.'

'The Church of England!' said Bridgenorth, dropping his young friend's hand, but presently resuming it—'Alas! that church, as now constituted, usurps scarcely less than Rome herself, upon men's consciences and liberties; yet, out of the weakness of this half-reformed church, may God be pleased to work out deliverance to England, and praise to himself. I must not forget, that one whose services have been in the cause incalculable, wears the garb of an English priest, and hath had episcopal ordination. It is not for us to challenge the instrument, so that our escape is achieved from the net of the fowler. Enough, that I find thee not as yet enlightened with the purer doctrine, but prepared to profit by it when the spark shall reach thee. Enough, in especial, that I find thee willing to uplift thy testimony to cry aloud and spare not, against the errors and arts of the Church of Rome. But remember, what thou hast now said, thou wilt soon be called upon to justify, in a manner the most solemn—the most awful.'

'What I have said,' replied Julian Peveril, 'being the unbiassed sentiments of my heart, shall upon no proper occasion want the support of my open avowal; and I think it strange you should doubt me so far.'

'I doubt thee not, my young friend,' said Bridgenorth; 'and I trust to see thy name rank high amongst those by whom the prey shall be rent from the mighty. At present, thy prejudices occupy thy mind like the strong keeper of the house mentioned in Scripture. But there shall come a stronger than he; and make forcible entry, displaying on the battlements that sign of faith in which alone there is found salvation.—Watch, hope, and pray, that the hour may come.'

There was a pause in the conversation, which was first broken by Peveril. 'You have spoken to me in riddles, Major Bridgenorth; and I have asked you for no explanation. Listen to a caution on my part, given with the most sincere good-will. Take a hint from me, and believe it, though it is darkly expressed. You

are here—at least are believed to be here—on an errand dangerous to the lord of the island. That danger will be retorted on yourself, if you make Man long your place of residence. Be warned, and depart in time.'

'And leave my daughter to the guardianship of Julian Peveril! Runs not your counsel so, young man?' answered Bridgenorth. 'Trust my safety, Julian, to my own prudence. I have been accustomed to guide myself through worse dangers than now environ me. But I thank you for your caution, which I am willing to believe was at least partly disinterested.'

'We do not, then, part in anger?' said Peveril.

'Not in anger, my son,' said Bridgenorth, 'but in love and strong affection. For my daughter, thou must forbear every thought of seeing her, save through me. I accept not thy suit, neither do I reject it; only this I intimate to you, that he who would be my son, must first show himself the true and loving child of his oppressed and deluded country. Farewell; do not answer me now; thou art yet in the gall of bitterness, and it may be that strife (which I desire not) should fall between us. Thou shalt hear of me sooner than thou thinkest for.'

He shook Peveril heartily by the hand, and again bade him farewell, leaving him under the confused and mingled impression of pleasure, doubt, and wonder. Not a little surprised to find himself so far in the good graces of Alice's father, that his suit was even favoured with a sort of negative encouragement, he could not help suspecting, as well from the language of the daughter as of the father, that Bridgenorth was desirous, as the price of his favour, that he should adopt some line of conduct inconsistent with the principles in which he had been educated.

'You need not fear, Alice,' he said in his heart; 'not even your hand would I purchase by aught which resembled unworthy or truckling compliance with tenets which my heart disowns; and well I know, were I mean enough to do so, even the authority of thy father were insufficient to compel thee to the ratification of so mean a bargain. But let me hope better things. Bridgenorth, though strong minded and sagacious, is haunted by the fears of Popery, which are the bugbears of his sect. My residence in the family of the Countess of Derby is more than enough to inspire him with suspicions of my faith, from which, thank Heaven, I can vindicate myself with truth and a good conscience.'

So thinking, he again adjusted the girths of his palfrey, replaced the bit which he had slipped out of its mouth, that it might feed at liberty, and, mounting, pursued his way back to the castle of Holm Peel, where he could not help fearing that something extraordinary might have happened in his absence.

But the old pile soon rose before him, serene and sternly still, amid the sleeping ocean. The banner, which indicated that the Lord of Man held residence within its ruinous precincts, hung motionless by the ensign staff. The sentinels walked to and fro on their posts, and hummed or whistled their Manx airs. Leaving his faithful companion, Fairy, in the village as before, Julian entered the castle, and found all within in the same state of quietness and good order which external appearances had announced.

CHAPTER XVIII

> Now rede me, rede me, brother dear,
> Throughout Merry England,
> Where will I find a messenger
> Betwixt us two to send.
>
> BALLAD OF KING ESTMERE.

JULIAN'S first rencontre after re-entering the castle, was with its young lord, who received him with his usual kindness and lightness of humour.

'Thrice welcome, Sir Knight of Dames,' said the Earl; 'here you rove gallantly, and at free will through our dominions, fulfilling of appointments and achieving amorous adventures; while we are condemned to sit in our royal halls as dull and as immoveable as if our Majesty was carved on the stern of some Manx smuggling dogger, and christened the King Arthur of Ramsey.'

'Nay, in that case you would take the sea,' said Julian, 'and so enjoy travel and adventure enough.'

'O, but suppose me wind-bound, or detained in harbour by a revenue pink, or ashore, if you like it, and lying high and dry upon the sand. Imagine the royal image in the dullest of all predicaments, and you have not equalled mine.'

'I am happy to hear, at least, that you have had no disagreeable employment,' said Julian; 'the morning's alarm has blown over, I suppose?'

'In faith it has, Julian; and our close inquiries cannot find any cause for the apprehended insurrection. That Bridgenorth is in the island seems certain; but private affairs of consequence are alleged as the cause of his visit; and I am not desirous to have him arrested unless I could prove some malpractices against him and his companions. In fact, it would seem we had taken the alarm too soon. My mother speaks of consulting you on the subject, Julian; and I will not anticipate her solemn communication. It will be partly apologetical, I suppose; for we begin to think our retreat rather unroyal, and that, like the wicked, we have fled when no man pursued. This idea afflicts my mother, who, as a Queen Dowager, a Queen Regent, a heroine, and a woman in general, would be extremely mortified to think that her precipitate retreat hither had exposed her to the ridicule of the islanders; and she is disconcerted and out of humour accordingly. In the meanwhile, my sole amusement has been the grimaces and fantastic gestures of that ape Fenella, who is out of humour, and more absurd in consequence than you ever saw her. Morris says it is because you pushed her down stairs, Julian—how is that?'

'Nay, Morris has misreported me,' answered Julian; 'I did but lift her *up* stairs to be rid of her importunity; for she chose, in her way, to

contest my going abroad in such an obstinate manner, that I had no other mode of getting rid of her.'

'She must have supposed your departure, at a moment so critical, was dangerous to the state of our garrison,' answered the earl; 'it shows how dearly she esteems my mother's safety, how highly she rates your prowess. But, thank Heaven! there sounds the dinner-bell. I would the philosophers, who find a sin and waste of time in good cheer, could devise us any pastime half so agreeable.'

The meal which the young earl had thus longed for, as a means of consuming a portion of the time which hung heavy on his hands, was soon over; as soon, at least, as the habitual and stately formality of the countess's household permitted. She herself, accompanied by her gentlewomen and attendants, retired early after the tables were drawn; and the young gentlemen were left to their own company. Wine had, for the moment, no charms for either; for the earl was out of spirits from ennui, and impatience of his monotonous and solitary course of life; and the events of the day had given Peveril too much matter for reflection, to permit his starting amusing or interesting topics of conversation. After having passed the flask in silence betwixt them once or twice, they withdrew each to a separate embrasure of the windows of the dining apartment, which, such was the extreme thickness of the wall, were deep enough to afford a solitary recess, separated, as it were, from the chamber itself. In one of these sat the Earl of Derby, busied in looking over some of the new publications which had been forwarded from London; and at intervals confessing how little power or interest these had for him, by yawning fearfully as he looked out on the solitary expanse of waters, which, save from the flight of a flock of sea-gulls, or of a solitary cormorant, offered so little of variety to engage his attention.

Peveril, on his part, held a pamphlet also in his hand, without giving, or affecting to give it, even his occasional attention. His whole soul turned upon the interview which he had had that day with Alice Bridgenorth, and with her father; while he in vain endeavoured to form any hypothesis which could explain to him why the daughter, to whom he had no reason to think himself indifferent, should have been so suddenly desirous of their eternal separation, while her father, whose opposition he so much dreaded, seemed to be at least tolerant of his addresses. He could only suppose, in explanation, that Major Bridgenorth had some plan in prospect, which it was in his own power to further or to impede; while, from the demeanour, and indeed the language, of Alice, he had but too much reason to apprehend that her father's favour could only be conciliated by something, on his own part, approaching to dereliction of principle. But by no conjecture which he could form, could he make the least guess concerning the nature of that compliance, of which Bridgenorth seemed desirous. He could not imagine, notwithstanding Alice had spoken of treachery, that her father would dare to propose to him uniting in any plan by which the safety of the countess, or the security of her little kingdom of Man, was to be endangered. This carried such indelible disgrace in the front, that he could not suppose the scheme proposed to him by any who was not prepared to defend with his sword, upon the spot, so flagrant an insult offered to his honour. And such a proceeding was totally inconsistent with the conduct of Major Bridgenorth in every other respect, besides his being too calm and cold-blooded to permit of his putting a mortal affront upon the son of his old neighbour, to whose mother he confessed so much of obligation.

While Peveril in vain endeavoured to extract something like a probable theory out of the hints thrown out by the father and by the daughter, —not without the additional and lover-like labour of endeavouring to reconcile his passion to his honour and conscience,—he felt something gently pull him by the cloak. He unclasped his arms, which in meditation had been folded on his bosom; and, withdrawing his eyes from the vacant prospect of sea-coast and sea which they had perused, without much consciousness upon what they rested, he beheld beside him the little dumb maiden, the elfin Fenella. She was seated on a low cushion or stool, with which she had nestled close to Peveril's side, and had remained there for a short space of time, expecting, no doubt, he would become conscious of her presence; until, tired of remaining unnoticed, she at length solicited his attention in the manner which we have described. Startled out of his reverie by this intimation of her presence, he looked down, and could not, without interest, behold this singular and helpless being.

Her hair was unloosened, and streamed over her shoulders in such length, that much of it lay upon the ground, and in such quantity, that it formed a dark veil, or shadow, not only around her face, but over her whole slender and minute form. From the profusion of her tresses looked forth her small and dark, but well-formed features, together with the large and brilliant black eyes; and her whole countenance was composed into the imploring look of one who is doubtful of the reception she is about to meet with from a valued friend, while she confesses a fault, pleads an apology, or solicits a reconciliation. In short, the whole face was so much alive with expression, that Julian, though her aspect was so familiar to him, could hardly persuade himself but that her countenance was entirely new. The wild, fantastic, elvish vivacity of the features, seemed totally vanished, and had given place to a sorrowful, tender, and pathetic cast of countenance, aided by the expression of the large dark eyes, which, as they were turned up towards Julian, glistened with moisture, that, nevertheless, did not overflow the eyelids.

Conceiving that her unwonted manner arose from a recollection of the dispute which had taken place betwixt them in the morning, Peveril was anxious to restore the little maiden's gaiety, by making her sensible that there dwelt on his mind no unpleasing recollection of their quarrel. He smiled kindly, and shook her hand in one of his; while, with the familiarity of one who had known her from childhood, he stroked down her long dark tresses with the other. She stooped

her head, as if ashamed, and, at the same time, gratified with his caresses—and he was thus induced to continue them, until, under the veil of her rich and abundant locks, he suddenly felt his other hand, which she still held fast in hers, slightly touched with her lips, and, at the same time, moistened with a tear.

At once, and for the first time in his life, the danger of being misinterpreted in his familiarity with a creature to whom the usual modes of explanation were a blank, occurred to Julian's mind; and, hastily withdrawing his hand, and changing his posture, he asked of her, by a sign which custom had rendered familiar, whether she brought any message from the countess. In an instant Fenella's whole deportment was changed. She started up, and arranged herself in her seat with the rapidity of lightning; and, at the same moment, with one turn of her hand, braided her length of locks into a natural head-dress of the most beautiful kind. There was, indeed, when she looked up, a blush still visible on her dark features; but their melancholy and languid expression had given place to that of wild and restless vivacity, which was most common to them. Her eyes gleamed with more than their wonted fire, and her glances were more piercingly wild and unsettled than usual. To Julian's inquiry, she answered, by laying her hand on her heart—a motion by which she always indicated the countess—and rising and taking the direction of her apartment, she made a sign to Julian to follow her.

The distance was not great betwixt the dining apartment and that to which Peveril now followed his mute guide; yet, in going thither, he had time enough to suffer cruelly from the sudden suspicion, that this unhappy girl had misinterpreted the uniform kindness with which he had treated her, and hence come to regard him with feelings more tender than those which belong to friendship. The misery which such a passion was likely to occasion to a creature in her helpless situation, and actuated by such lively feelings, was great enough to make him refuse credit to the suspicion which pressed itself upon his mind; while, at the same time, he formed the internal resolution so to conduct himself towards Fenella, as to check such misplaced sentiments, if indeed she unhappily entertained them towards him.

When they reached the countess's apartment, they found her with writing implements and many sealed letters before her. She received Julian with her usual kindness; and having caused him to be seated, beckoned to the mute to resume her needle. In an instant Fenella was seated at an embroidering frame; where, but for the movement of her dexterous fingers, she might have seemed a statue, so little did she move from her work, either head or eye. As her infirmity rendered her presence no bar to the most confidential conversation, the countess proceeded to address Peveril as if they had been literally alone together.

'Julian,' she said, 'I am not now about to complain to you of the sentiments and conduct of Derby. He is your friend—he is my son. He has kindness of heart and vivacity of talent; and yet'——

'Dearest lady,' said Peveril, 'why will you distress yourself with fixing your eye on deficiencies which arise rather from a change of times and manners, than any degeneracy of my noble friend? Let him be once engaged in his duty, whether in peace or war, and let me pay the penalty if he acquits not himself becoming his high station.'

'Ay,' replied the countess; 'but when will the call of duty prove superior to that of the most idle or trivial indulgence which can serve to drive over the lazy hour? His father was of another mould; and how often was it my lot to entreat that he would spare, from the rigid discharge of those duties which his high station imposed, the relaxation absolutely necessary to recruit his health and his spirits!'

'Still, my dearest lady,' said Peveril, 'you must allow that the duties to which the times summoned your late honoured lord, were of a more stirring, as well as a more peremptory cast, than those which await your son.'

'I know not that,' said the countess. 'The wheel appears to be again revolving; and the present period is not unlikely to bring back such scenes as my younger years witnessed.—Well, be it so; they will not find Charlotte de la Tremouille broken in spirit, though depressed by years. It was even on this subject I would speak with you, my young friend. Since our first early acquaintance, when I saw your gallant behaviour as I issued forth to your childish eye, like an apparition, from my place of concealment in your father's castle—it has pleased me to think you a true son of Stanley and Peveril. I trust your nurture in this family has been ever suited to the esteem in which I hold you.—Nay, I desire no thanks.—I have to require of you, in return, a piece of service, not perhaps entirely safe to yourself; but which, as times are circumstanced, no person is so well able to render to my house.'

'You have been ever my good and noble lady,' answered Peveril, 'as well as my kind, and I may say maternal, protectress. You have a right to command the blood of Stanley in the veins of every one. You have a thousand rights to command it in mine.'*

'My advices from England,' said the countess, 'resemble more the dreams of a sick man, than the regular information which I might have expected from such correspondents as mine;—their expressions are like those of men who walk in their sleep, and speak by snatches of what passes in their dreams. It is said, a plot, real or fictitious, has been detected among the Catholics, which has spread far wider and more uncontrollable terror, than that of the fifth of November. Its outlines seem utterly incredible, and are only supported by the evidence of wretches, the meanest and most worthless in the creation; yet it is received by the credulous people of England with the most undoubting belief.'

'This is a singular delusion to rise without some real ground,' answered Julian.

'I am no bigot, cousin, though a Catholic,' replied the countess. 'I have long feared that

* The reader cannot have forgotten that the Earl of Derby was head of the great house of Stanley.

the well-meant zeal of our priests for increasing converts would draw on them the suspicion of the English nation. These efforts have been renewed with double energy since the Duke of York conformed to the Catholic faith; and the same event has doubled the hate and jealousy of the Protestants. So far, I fear, there may be just cause for suspicion that the Duke is a better Catholic than an Englishman, and that bigotry has involved him, as avarice, or the needy greed of a prodigal, has engaged his brother, in relations with France, whereof England may have too much reason to complain. But the gross, thick, and palpable fabrications of conspiracy and murder, blood and fire—the imaginary armies—the intended massacres—form a collection of falsehoods, that one would have thought indigestible, even by the coarse appetite of the vulgar for the marvellous and horrible; but which are, nevertheless, received as truth by both Houses of Parliament, and questioned by no one who is desirous to *escape the odious appellation* of friend to the bloody Papists, and favourer of their infernal schemes of cruelty.'

'But what say those who are most likely to be affected by these wild reports?' said Julian. 'What say the English Catholics themselves?—a numerous and wealthy body comprising so many noble names?'

'Their hearts are dead within them,' said the countess. 'They are like sheep penned up in the shambles, that the butcher may take his choice among them. In the obscure and brief communications which I have had by a secure hand, they do but anticipate their own utter ruin, and ours—so general is the depression, so universal the despair.'

'But the King,' said Peveril, —'the King and the Protestant royalists—what say they to this growing tempest?'

'Charles,' replied the countess, 'with his usual selfish prudence, truckles to the storm; and will let cord and axe do their work on the most innocent men in his dominions, rather than lose an hour of pleasure in attempting their rescue. And, for the royalists, either they have caught the general delirium which has seized on Protestants in general, or they stand aloof and neutral, afraid to show any interest in the unhappy Catholics, lest they be judged altogether such as themselves, and abettors of the fearful conspiracy in which they are alleged to be engaged. In fact, I cannot blame them. It is hard to expect that mere compassion for a persecuted sect—or, what is yet more rare, an abstract love of justice—should be powerful enough to engage men to expose themselves to the awakened fury of a whole people; for, in the present state of general agitation, whoever disbelieves the least tittle of the enormous improbabilities which have been accumulated by these wretched informers, is instantly hunted down, as one who would smother the discovery of the plot. It is indeed an awful tempest; and, remote as we lie from its sphere, we must expect soon to feel its effects.'

'Lord Derby already told me something of this,' said Julian; 'and that there were agents in this island whose object was to excite insurrection.'

'Yes,' answered the countess, and her eye flashed fire as she spoke; 'and, had my advice been listened to, they had been apprehended in the very fact; and so dealt with, as to be a warning to all others how they sought this independent principality on such an errand. But my son, who is generally so culpably negligent of his own affairs, was pleased to assume the management of them upon this crisis.'

'I am happy to learn, madam,' answered Peveril, 'that the measures of precaution which my kinsman has adopted, have had the complete effect of disconcerting the conspiracy.'

'For the present, Julian; but they should have been such as would have made the boldest tremble to think of such infringement of our rights in future. But Derby's present plan is fraught with greater danger; and yet there is something in it of gallantry, which has my sympathy.'

'What is it, madam?' inquired Julian anxiously; 'and in what can I aid it, or avert its dangers?'

'He purposes,' said the countess, 'instantly to set forth for London. He is, he says, not merely the feudal chief of a small island, but one of the noble peers of England, who must not remain in the security of an obscure and distant castle, when his name, or that of his mother, is slandered before his prince and people. He will take his place, he says, in the House of Lords, and publicly demand justice for the insult thrown on his house by perjured and interested witnesses.'

'It is a generous resolution, and worthy of my friend,' said Julian Peveril. 'I will go with him and share his fate, be it what it may.'

'Alas, foolish boy!' answered the countess, 'as well may you ask a hungry lion to feel compassion, as a prejudiced and furious people to do justice. They are like the madman at the height of frenzy, who murders without compunction his best and dearest friend; and only wonders and wails over his own cruelty, when he is recovered from his delirium.'

'Pardon me, dearest lady,' said Julian, 'this cannot be. The noble and generous people of England cannot be thus strangely misled. Whatever prepossessions may be current among the more vulgar, the Houses of Legislature cannot be deeply infected by them—they will remember their own dignity.'

'Alas, cousin!' answered the countess, 'when did Englishmen, even of the highest degree, remember anything, when hurried away by the violence of party feeling? Even those who have too much sense to believe in the incredible fictions which gull the multitude, will beware how they expose them, if their own political party can gain a momentary advantage by their being accredited. It is amongst such, too, that your kinsman has found friends and associates. Neglecting the old friends of his house, as too grave and formal companions for the humour of the times, his intercourse has been with the versatile Shaftesbury—the mercurial Buckingham—men who would not hesitate to sacrifice to the popular Moloch of the day, whatsoever or whomsoever, whose ruin could propitiate the deity.—Forgive a mother's tears, kinsman; but I see the scaffold at Bolton again erected. If Derby goes

to London while these bloodhounds are in full cry, obnoxious as he is, and I have made him by my religious faith, and my conduct in this island, he dies his father's death. And yet upon what other course to resolve!'——

'Let me go to London, madam,' said Peveril, much moved by the distress of his patroness; 'your ladyship was wont to rely something on my judgment. I will act for the best—will communicate with those whom you point out to me, and only with them; and I trust soon to send you information that this delusion, however strong it may now be, is in the course of passing away; at the worst I can apprise you of the danger, should it menace the Earl or yourself; and may be able also to point out the means by which it may be eluded.'

The countess listened with a countenance in which the anxiety of maternal affection, which prompted her to embrace Peveril's generous offer, struggled with her native disinterested and generous disposition. 'Think what you ask of me, Julian,' she replied, with a sigh. 'Would you have me expose the life of my friend's son to those perils to which I refuse my own?—No, never!'

'Nay, but, madam,' replied Julian, 'I do not run the same risk—my person is not known in London—my situation, though not obscure in my own country, is too little known to be noticed in that huge assemblage of all that is noble and wealthy. No whisper, I presume, however indirect, has connected my name with the alleged conspiracy. I am a Protestant, above all; and can be accused of no intercourse, direct or indirect, with the Church of Rome. My connections also lie amongst those, who, if they do not, or cannot, befriend me, cannot, at least, be dangerous to me. In a word, I run no danger where the Earl might incur great peril.'

'Alas!' said the Countess of Derby, 'all this generous reasoning may be true; but it could only be listened to by a widowed mother. Selfish as I am, I cannot but reflect that my kinswoman has, in all events, the support of an affectionate husband—such is the interested reasoning to which we are not ashamed to subject our better feelings.'

'Do not call it so, madam,' answered Peveril; 'think of me as the younger brother of my kinsman. You have ever done by me the duties of a mother, and have a right to my filial service, were it at a risk ten times greater than a journey to London, to inquire into the temper of the times. I will instantly go, and announce my departure to the Earl.'

'Stay, Julian,' said the countess; 'if you must make this journey on our behalf,—and, alas! I have not generosity enough to refuse your noble proffer,—you must go alone, and without communication with Derby. I know him well; his lightness of mind is free from selfish baseness; and for the world, would he not suffer you to leave Man without his company. And if he went with you, your noble and disinterested kindness would be of no avail—you would but share his ruin, as the swimmer who attempts to save a drowning man is involved in his fate, if he permit the sufferer to grapple with him.'

'It shall be as you please, madam,' said Peveril. 'I am ready to depart upon half an hour's notice.'

'This night, then,' said the countess, after a moment's pause—'This night I will arrange the most secret means of carrying your generous project into effect; for I would not excite that prejudice against you, which will instantly arise, were it known you had so lately left this island, and its Popish lady. You will do well, perhaps, to use a feigned name in London.'

'Pardon me, madam,' said Julian; 'I will do nothing that can draw on me unnecessary attention; but to bear a feigned name, or affect any disguise beyond living with extreme privacy, would, I think, be unwise as well as unworthy; and what, if challenged, I might find some difficulty in assigning a reason for, consistent with perfect fairness of intentions.'

'I believe you are right,' answered the countess, after a moment's consideration; and then added, 'You propose, doubtless, to pass through Derbyshire, and visit Martindale Castle?'

'I should wish it, madam, certainly,' replied Peveril, 'did time permit, and circumstances render it advisable.'

'Of that,' said the countess, 'you must yourself judge. Despatch is, doubtless, desirable; on the other hand, arriving from your own family-seat, you will be less an object of doubt and suspicion, than if you posted up from hence, without even visiting your parents. You must be guided in this,—in all,—by your own prudence. Go, my dearest son—for to me you should be dear as a son—go, and prepare for your journey. I will get ready some despatches and a supply of money—Nay, do not object. Am I not your mother? and are you not discharging a son's duty? Dispute not my right of defraying your expenses. Nor is this all; for, as I must trust your zeal and prudence to act in our behalf when occasion shall demand, I will furnish you with effectual recommendations to our friends and kindred, entreating and enjoining them to render whatever aid you may require, either for your own protection, or the advancement of what you may propose in our favour.'

Peveril made no further opposition to an arrangement, which in truth the moderate state of his own finances rendered almost indispensable, unless with his father's assistance; and the countess put into his hand bills of exchange to the amount of two hundred pounds, upon a merchant in the city. She then dismissed Julian for the space of an hour; after which, she said, she must again require his presence.

The preparations for his journey were not of a nature to divert the thoughts which speedily pressed on him. He found that half an hour's conversation had once more completely changed his immediate prospects and plans for the future. He had offered to the Countess of Derby a service, which her uniform kindness had well deserved at his hand; but, by her accepting it, he was upon the point of being separated from Alice Bridgenorth, at a time when she was become dearer to him than ever, by her avowal of mutual passion. Her image rose before him, such as he had that day pressed her to his bosom—her voice was in his ear, and seemed to ask whether he could desert her in the crisis which everything

seemed to announce as impending. But Julian Peveril, his youth considered, was strict in judging his duty, and severely resolved in executing it. He trusted not his imagination to pursue the vision which presented itself; but, resolutely seizing his pen, wrote to Alice the following letter, explaining his situation, as far as justice to the countess permitted him to do so:—

'I leave you, dearest Alice,' thus ran the letter—'I leave you; and though, in doing so, I but obey the command you have laid on me, yet I can claim little merit for my compliance, since, without additional and most forcible reasons in aid of your orders, I fear I should have been unable to comply with them. But family affairs of importance compel me to absent myself from this island, for, I fear, more than one week. My thoughts, hopes, and wishes will be on the moment that shall restore me to the Black Fort, and its lovely valley. Let me hope that yours will sometimes rest on the lonely exile, whom nothing could render such, but the command of honour and duty. Do not fear that I mean to involve you in a private correspondence, and let not your father fear it. I could not love you so much, but for the openness and candour of your nature; and I would not that you concealed from Major Bridgenorth one syllable of what I now avow. Respecting other matters, he himself cannot desire the welfare of our common country with more zeal than I do. Differences may occur concerning the mode in which that is to be obtained; but, in the principle, I am convinced there can be only one mind between us; nor can I refuse to listen to his experience and wisdom, even where they may ultimately fail to convince me. Farewell—Alice, farewell! Much might be added to that melancholy word, but nothing that could express the bitterness with which it is written. Yet I could transcribe it again and again, rather than conclude the last communication which I can have with you for some time. My sole comfort is, that my stay will scarce be so long as to permit you to forget one who never can forget you.'

He held the paper in his hand for a minute after he had folded, but before he had sealed it, while he hurriedly debated in his own mind whether he had not expressed himself towards Major Bridgenorth in so conciliating a manner as might excite hopes of proselytism, which his conscience told him he could not realize with honour. Yet, on the other hand, he had no right, from what Bridgenorth had said, to conclude that their principles were diametrically irreconcilable; for, though the son of a high Cavalier, and educated in the family of the Countess of Derby, he was himself, upon principle, an enemy of prerogative, and a friend to the liberty of the subject. And with such considerations he silenced all internal objections on the point of honour; although his conscience secretly whispered that these conciliatory expressions towards the father were chiefly dictated by the fear that, during his absence, Major Bridgenorth might be tempted to change the residence of his daughter, and perhaps to convey her altogether out of his reach.

Having sealed his letter, Julian called his servant, and directed him to carry it, under cover of one addressed to Mistress Debbitch, to a house in the town of Rushin, where packets and messages intended for the family at Black Fort were usually deposited; and for that purpose to take horse immediately. He thus got rid of an attendant, who might have been in some degree a spy on his motions. He then exchanged the dress he usually wore, for one more suited to travelling; and, having put a change or two of linen into a small cloak-bag, selected as arms a strong double-edged sword and an excellent pair of pistols, which last he carefully loaded with double bullets. Thus appointed, and with twenty pieces in his purse, and the bills we have mentioned secured in a private pocket-book, he was in readiness to depart as soon as he should receive the countess's commands.

The buoyant spirit of youth and hope, which had, for a moment, been chilled by the painful and dubious circumstances in which he was placed, as well as the deprivation which he was about to undergo, now revived in full vigour. Fancy, turning from more painful anticipations, suggested to him that he was now entering upon life, at a crisis when resolution and talents were almost certain to make the fortune of their possessor. How could he make a more honourable entry on the bustling scene, than sent by, and acting in behalf of, one of the noblest houses in England; and should he perform what his charge might render incumbent with the resolution and the prudence necessary to secure success, how many occurrences might take place to render his mediation necessary to Bridgenorth; and thus enable him, on the most equal and honourable terms, to establish a claim to his gratitude and to his daughter's hand.

Whilst he was dwelling on such pleasing, though imaginary prospects, he could not help exclaiming aloud—'Yes, Alice, I will win thee nobly!' The words had scarce escaped his lips, when he heard at the door of his apartment, which the servant had left ajar, a sound like a deep sigh, which was instantly succeeded by a gentle tap.—'Come in,' replied Julian, somewhat ashamed of his exclamation, and not a little afraid that it had been caught up by some eavesdropper—'Come in,' he again repeated; but his command was not obeyed; on the contrary, the knock was repeated somewhat louder. He opened the door, and Fenella stood before him.

With eyes that seemed red with recent tears, and with a look of the deepest dejection, the little mute, first touching her bosom, and beckoning with her finger, made to him the usual sign that the countess desired to see him—then turned, as if to usher him to her apartment. As he followed her through the long, gloomy, vaulted passages which afforded communication betwixt the various apartments of the castle, he could not but observe that her usual light trip was exchanged for a tardy and mournful step, which she accompanied with low inarticulate moaning (which she was probably the less able to suppress because she could not judge how far it was audible), and also with wringing of the hands, and other marks of extreme affliction.

At this moment a thought came across Peveril's mind, which, in spite of his better reason, made him shudder involuntarily. As a Peakman,

and a long resident in the Isle of Man, he was well acquainted with many a superstitious legend and particularly with a belief, which attached to the powerful family of the Stanleys, for their peculiar demon, a banshie, or female spirit, who was wont to shriek 'foreboding evil times,' and who was generally seen weeping and bemoaning herself before the death of any person of distinction belonging to the family For an instant Julian could scarcely divest himself of the belief that the wailing, gibbering form, which glided before him, with a lamp in her hand, was the genius of his mother's race, come to announce to him his predestined doom It instantly occurred to him as an analogous reflection, that if the suspicion which had crossed his mind concerning Fenella was a just one, her ill fated attachment to him, like that of the prophetic spirit to his family, could bode nothing but disaster, and lamentation, and woe

CHAPTER XIX

> Now hoist the anchor mates—and let the sails
> Give their broad bosom to the buxom wind
> Like lass that woos a lover
>
> ANONYMOUS

THE presence of the countess dispelled the superstitious feeling which for an instant had encroached on Julian's imagination and compelled him to give attention to the matters of ordinary life 'Here are your credentials,' she said, giving him a small packet carefully packed up in a sealskin cover, 'you had better not open them till you come to London You must not be surprised to find that there are one or two addressed to men of my own persuasion These, for all our sakes, you will observe caution in delivering

'I go your messenger, madam,' said Peveril 'and whatever you desire me to charge myself with, of that I undertake the care Yet allow me to doubt whether an intercourse with Catholics will at this moment forward the purposes of my mission'

'You have caught the general suspicion of this wicked sect already said the countess, smiling, 'and are the fitter to go amongst Englishmen in their present mood But, my cautious friend, these letters are so addressed, and the persons to whom they are addressed so disguised, that you will run no danger in conversing with them Without their aid, indeed you will not be able to obtain the accurate information you go in search of None can tell so exactly how the wind sets, as the pilot whose vessel is exposed to the storm Besides, though you Protestants deny our priesthood the harm [illegible]

[illegible] pla[illegible] extensive, and they are not deficient in the power of applying it I therefore wish you to have the benefit of their intelligence and advice, if possible'

'Whatever you impose upon me as a part of my duty, madam, rely on its being discharged punctually,' answered Peveril. 'And, now, as there is little use in deferring the execution of a purpose when once fixed, let me know your ladyship's wishes concerning my departure'

'It must be sudden and secret,' said the countess, 'the island is full of spies, and I would not wish that any of them should have notice that an envoy of mine was about to leave Man for London Can you be ready to go on board to morrow?'

'To night—this instant if you will,' said Julian, 'my little preparations are complete'

'Be ready, then in your chamber, at two hours after midnight I will send one to summon you, for our secret must be communicated, for the present, to as few as possible A foreign sloop is engaged to carry you over, then make the best of your way to London, by Martindale Castle, or otherwise, as you find most advisable When it is necessary to announce your absence, I will say you are gone to see your parents But stay—your journey will be on horseback, of course, from Whitehaven You have bills of exchange it is true, but are you provided with ready money to furnish yourself with a good horse?'

'I am sufficiently rich, madam,' answered Julian, 'and good nags are plenty in Cumberland There are those among them who know how to come by them good and cheap'

'Trust not to that said the countess "Here is what will purchase for you the best horse on the Borders Can you be simple enough to refuse it?' she added as she pressed on him a heavy purse, which he saw himself obliged to accept

'A good horse Julian,' continued the countess, 'and a good sword, next to a good heart and head, are the accomplishments of a cavalier'

'I kiss your hands, then, madam,' said Peveril, 'and humbly beg you to believe that, whatever may fail in my present undertaking my purpose to serve you my noble kinswoman and benefactress can at least never waver or falter

'I know it my son, I know it, and may God forgive me if my anxiety for your friend has sent you on dangers which should have been [illegible] Go—go—May saints and angels bless you! Fenella shall acquaint him that you sup in your own apartment So indeed will I for to night I should be unable to face my son's looks Little will he thank me for sending you on his errand, and there will be many to ask whether it was like the Lady of Latham to trust her friend's son on the danger which should have been braved by her own But O, Julian, I am now a forlorn widow, whom sorrow has made selfish!'

'Tush, madam,' answered Peveril, 'it is more unlike the Lady of Latham to anticipate dangers which may not exist at all, and to which, if they do indeed occur, I am less obnoxious than my noble kinsman Farewell!—All blessings attend you, madam Commend me to Derby, and make him my excuses I shall expect a summons at two hours after midnight'

They took an affectionate leave of each other; the more affectionate, indeed, on the part of the countess, that she could not entirely reconcile her generous mind to exposing Peveril to danger on her son's behalf, and Julian betook himself to his solitary apartment.

His servant soon afterwards brought him wine and refreshments; to which, notwithstanding the various matters he had to occupy his mind, he contrived to do reasonable justice. But when this needful occupation was finished, his thoughts began to stream in upon him like a troubled tide—at once recalling the past, and anticipating the future. It was in vain that he wrapped himself in his riding cloak, and, lying down on his bed, endeavoured to compose himself to sleep. The uncertainty of the prospect before him—the doubt how Bridgenorth might dispose of his daughter during his absence—the fear that the major himself might fall into the power of the vindictive countess, besides a numerous train of vague and half-formed apprehensions, agitated his blood, and rendered slumber impossible. Alternately to recline in the old oaken easy-chair, and listen to the dashing of the waves under the windows, mingled, as the sound was, with the scream of the sea-birds; or to traverse the apartment with long and low steps, pausing occasionally to look out on the sea, slumbering under the influence of a full moon, which tipped each wave with silver—such were the only pastimes he could invent, until midnight had passed for one hour; the next was wasted in anxious expectation of the summons of departure.

At length it arrived—a tap at his door was followed by a low murmur, which made him suspect that the countess had again employed her mute attendant as the most secure minister of her pleasure on this occasion. He felt something like impropriety in this selection; and it was with a feeling of impatience alien to the natural generosity of his temper, that, when he opened the door, he beheld the dumb maiden standing before him. The lamp which he held in his hand showed his features distinctly, and probably made Fenella aware of the expression which animated them. She cast her large dark eyes mournfully on the ground; and, without again looking him in the face, made him a signal to follow her. He delayed no longer than was necessary to secure his pistols in his belt, wrap his cloak closer around him, and take his small portmanteau under his arm. Thus accoutred, he followed her out of the Keep, or inhabited part of the castle, by a series of obscure passages leading to a postern gate, which she unlocked with a key selected from a bundle which she carried at her girdle.

They now stood in the castle-yard, in the open moonlight, which glimmered white and ghastly on the variety of strange and ruinous objects to which we have formerly alluded, and which gave the scene rather the appearance of some ancient cemetery, than of the interior of a fortification. The round and elevated tower—the ancient mount, with its quadrangular sides facing the ruinous edifices which once boasted the name of cathedral—seemed of yet more antique and anomalous form, when seen by the pale light which now displayed them. To one of these churches Fenella took the direct course, and was followed by Julian; although he at once divined, and was superstitious enough to dislike, the path which she was about to adopt. It was by a secret passage through this church, that in former times the guard-room of the garrison, situated at the lower and external defences, communicated with the Keep of the castle; and through this passage were the keys of the castle every night carried to the governor's apartment, so soon as the gates were locked, and the watch set. The custom was given up in James the First's time, and the passage abandoned, on account of the well-known legend of the *Mauthe Dog*—a fiend, or dæmon, in the shape of a large, shaggy black mastiff, by which the church was said to be haunted. It was devoutly believed that in former times this spectre became so familiar with mankind, as to appear almost nightly in the guard-room, issuing from the passage which we have mentioned at night, and retiring to it at daybreak. The soldiers became partly familiarized to its presence; yet not so much so as to use any licence of language while the apparition was visible; until one fellow, rendered daring by intoxication, swore he would know whether it was dog or devil, and, with his drawn sword, followed the spectre when it retreated by the usual passage. The man returned in a few minutes, sobered by terror, his mouth gaping, and his hair standing on end, under which horror he died; but, unhappily for the lovers of the marvellous, altogether unable to disclose the horrors which he had seen. Under the evil repute arising from this tale of wonder, the guard-room was abandoned, and a new one constructed. In like manner, the guards after that period held another and more circuitous communication with the governor or seneschal of the castle; and that which lay through the ruinous church was entirely abandoned.*

In defiance of the legendary terrors which tradition had attached to the original communication, Fenella, followed by Peveril, now boldly traversed the ruinous vaults through which it lay—sometimes only guided over heaps of ruins by the precarious light of the lamp borne by the dumb maiden—sometimes having the advantage of a gleam of moonlight, darting into the dreary abyss through the shafted windows, or through breaches made by time. As the path was by no means a straight one, Peveril could not but admire the intimate acquaintance with the mazes which his singular companion displayed, as well as the boldness with which she traversed them. He himself was not so utterly void of the prejudices of the times, but that he contemplated, with some apprehension, the possibility of their intruding on the lair of the phantom hound, of which he had heard so often; and in every remote sigh of the breeze among the ruins, he thought he heard him baying at the mortal footsteps which disturbed his gloomy realm. No such terrors, however, interrupted their journey; and in the course of a few minutes they attained the deserted and now ruinous guard-house. The broken walls of the little edifice served to conceal them from the sentinels, one of whom was keeping a drowsy watch at the lower gate of the castle; whilst another, seated on the stone steps which com-

* This curious legend, and many others, in which the Isle of Man is perhaps richer than even Ire[illegible] Highlands of Scotland, will be fo[illegible]

municated with the parapet of the bounding and exterior wall, was slumbering, in full security, with his musket peacefully grounded by his side. Fenella made a sign to Peveril to move with silence and caution, and then showed him, to his surprise, from the window of the deserted guard-room, a boat, for it was now high water, with four rowers, lurking under the cliff on which the castle was built; and made him further sensible that he was to have access to it by a ladder of considerable height placed at the window of the ruin.

Julian was both displeased and alarmed by the security and carelessness of the sentinels, who had suffered such preparations to be made without observation or alarm given; and he hesitated whether he should not call the officer of the guard, upbraid him with negligence, and show him how easily Holm Peel, in spite of its natural strength, and although reported impregnable, might be surprised by a few resolute men. Fenella seemed to guess his thoughts with that extreme acuteness of observation which her deprivations had occasioned her acquiring. She laid one hand on his arm, and a finger of the other on her own lips, as if to enjoin forbearance; and Julian, knowing that she acted by the direct authority of the countess, obeyed her accordingly; but with the internal resolution to lose no time in communicating his sentiments to the earl, concerning the danger to which the castle was exposed on this point.

In the meantime he descended the ladder with some precaution, for the steps were unequal, broken, wet, and slippery; and, having placed himself in the stern of the boat, made a signal to the men to push off, and turned to take farewell of his guide. To his utter astonishment, Fenella rather slid down, than descended regularly, the perilous ladder, and, the boat being already pushed off, made a spring from the last step of it with incredible agility, and seated herself beside Peveril, ere he could express either remonstrance or surprise. He commanded the men once more to pull in to the precarious landing-place; and, throwing into his countenance a part of the displeasure which he really felt, endeavoured to make her comprehend the necessity of returning to her mistress. Fenella folded her arms, and looked at him with a haughty smile, which completely expressed the determination of her purpose. Peveril was extremely embarrassed; he was afraid of offending the countess, and interfering with her plan, by giving alarm, which otherwise he was much tempted to have done. On Fenella, it was evident, no species of argument which he could employ was likely to make the least impression; and the question remained, how, if she went on with him, he was to rid himself of so singular and inconvenient a companion, and provide, at the same time, sufficiently for her personal security.

The boatmen brought the matter to a decision; for, after lying on their oars for a minute, and whispering among themselves in Low Dutch or German, they began to pull stoutly, and were soon at some distance from the castle. The possibility of the sentinels sending a musket-ball, or cannon-shot, after them, was one of the contingencies which gave Peveril momentary anxiety; but they left the fortress, as they must have approached it, unnoticed, or at least unchallenged—a carelessness on the part of the garrison, which, notwithstanding that the oars were muffled, and that the men spoke little, and in whispers, argued, in Peveril's opinion, great negligence on the part of the sentinels. When they were a little way from the castle, the men began to row briskly towards a small vessel which lay at some distance. Peveril had, in the meantime, leisure to remark, that the boatmen spoke to each other doubtfully, and bent anxious looks on Fenella, as if uncertain whether they had acted properly in bringing her off.

After about a quarter of an hour's rowing, they reached the little sloop, where Peveril was received by the skipper, or captain, on the quarter-deck, with an offer of spirits or refreshments. A word or two among the seamen withdrew the captain from his hospitable cares, and he flew to the ship's side, apparently to prevent Fenella from entering the vessel. The men and he talked eagerly in Dutch, looking anxiously at Fenella as they spoke together; and Peveril hoped the result would be that the poor young woman should be sent ashore again. But she baffled whatever opposition could be offered to her; and when the accommodation-ladder, as it is called, was withdrawn, she snatched the end of a rope, and climbed on board with the dexterity of a sailor, leaving them no means of preventing her entrance, save by actual violence, to which apparently they did not choose to have recourse. Once on deck, she took the captain by the sleeve, and led him to the head of the vessel, where they seemed to hold intercourse in a manner intelligible to both.

Peveril soon forgot the presence of the mute, as he began to muse upon his own situation, and the probability that he was separated for some considerable time from the object of his affections. 'Constancy,' he repeated to himself,—'Constancy.' And, as if in coincidence with the theme of his reflections, he fixed his eyes on the polar star, which that night twinkled with more than ordinary brilliancy. Emblem of pure passion and steady purpose—the thoughts which arose as he viewed its clear and unchanging light were disinterested and noble. To seek his country's welfare, and secure the blessings of domestic peace—to discharge a bold and perilous duty to his friend and patron—to regard his passion for Alice Bridgenorth as the loadstar which was to guide him to noble deeds—were the resolutions which thronged upon his mind, and which exalted his spirits to that state of romantic melancholy, which perhaps is ill exchanged even for feelings of joyful rapture.

He was recalled from those contemplations by something which nestled itself softly and closely to his side—a woman's sigh sounded so near him, as to disturb his reverie; and, as he turned his head, he saw Fenella seated beside him, with her eyes fixed on the same star which had just occupied his own. His first emotion was that of displeasure; but it was impossible to persevere in it towards a being so helpless in many respects, so interesting in others; whose

large dark eyes were filled with dew, which glistened in the moonlight; and the source of whose emotions seemed to be in a partiality which might well claim indulgence, at least from him who was the object of it. At the same time, Julian resolved to seize the present opportunity, for such expostulations with Fenella on the strangeness of her conduct, as the poor maiden might be able to comprehend. He took her hand with great kindness, but at the same time with much gravity, pointed to the boat, and to the castle, whose towers and extended walls were now scarce visible in the distance; and thus intimated to her the necessity of her return to Holm Peel. She looked down, and shook her head, as if negativing his proposal with obstinate decision. Julian renewed his expostulation by look and gesture—pointed to his own heart to intimate the countess—and bent his brows, to show the displeasure which she must entertain. To all which the maiden only answered by her tears.

At length, as if driven to explanation by his continued remonstrances, she suddenly seized him by the arm, to arrest his attention—cast her eye hastily around, as if to see whether she was watched by any one—then drew the other hand, edgewise, across her slender throat—pointed to the boat, and to the castle, and nodded.

On this series of signs Peveril could put no interpretation, excepting that he was menaced with some personal danger, from which Fenella seemed to conceive that her presence was a protection. Whatever was her meaning, her purpose seemed unalterably adopted; at least it was plain he had no power to shake it. He must therefore wait till the end of their short voyage, to disembarrass himself of his companion; and, in the meanwhile, acting on the idea of her having harboured a misplaced attachment to him, he thought he should best consult her interest, and his own character, in keeping at as great a distance from her as circumstances admitted. With this purpose, he made the sign she used for going to sleep, by leaning his head on his palm; and, having thus recommended to her to go to rest, he himself desired to be conducted to his berth.

The captain readily showed him a hammock in the after-cabin, into which he threw himself, to seek that repose which the exercise and agitation of the preceding day, as well as the lateness of the hour, made him now feel desirable. Sleep, deep and heavy, sunk down on him in a few minutes, but it did not endure long. In his sleep he was disturbed by female cries; and at length, as he thought, distinctly heard the voice of Alice Bridgenorth call on his name.

He awoke, and, starting up to quit his bed, became sensible, from the motion of the vessel and the swinging of the hammock, that his dream had deceived him. He was still startled by its extreme vivacity and liveliness. 'Julian Peveril, help! Julian Peveril!' The sounds still rung in his ears—the accents were those of Alice—and he could scarce persuade himself that his imagination had deceived him. Could she be in the same vessel? The thought was not altogether inconsistent with her father's character, and the intrigues in which he was engaged; but then, if so, to what peril was she exposed, that she invoked his name so loudly?

Determined to make instant inquiry, he jumped out of his hammock, half-dressed as he was, and stumbling about the little cabin, which was as dark as pitch, at length, with considerable difficulty, reached the door. The door, however, he was altogether unable to open; and was obliged to call loudly to the watch upon deck. The skipper, or captain, as he was called, being the only person abroad who could speak English, answered to the summons, and replied to Peveril's demand, what noise that was?—that a boat was going off with the young woman—that she whimpered a little as she left the vessel—and 'dat vas all.'

This explanation satisfied Julian, who thought it probable that some degree of violence might have been absolutely necessary to remove Fenella and although he rejoiced at not having witnessed it, he could not feel sorry that such had been employed. Her pertinacious desire to continue on board, and the difficulty of freeing himself, when he should come ashore, from so singular a companion, had given him a good deal of anxiety on the preceding night, which he now saw removed by this bold stroke of the captain.

His dream was thus fully explained. Fancy had caught up the inarticulate and vehement cries with which Fenella was wont to express resistance or displeasure—had coined them into language, and given them the accents of Alice Bridgenorth. Our imagination plays wilder tricks with us almost every night.

The captain now undid the door, and appeared with a lantern; without the aid of which, Peveril could scarce have regained his couch, where he now slumbered secure and sound, until day was far advanced, and the invitation of the captain called him up to breakfast.

CHAPTER XX.

Now, what is this that haunts me like my shadow,
Frisking and mumming like an elf in moonlight?
BEN JONSON.

PEVERIL found the master of the vessel rather less rude than those in his station of life usually are, and received from him full satisfaction concerning the fate of Fenella, upon whom the captain bestowed a hearty curse, for obliging him to lay-to until he had sent his boat ashore, and had her back again.

'I hope,' said Peveril, 'no violence was necessary to reconcile her to go ashore? I trust she offered no foolish resistance?'

'Resist! mein Gott!' said the captain, 'she did resist like a troop of horse—she did cry, you might hear her at Whitehaven—she did go up de rigging like a cat up a chimney; but dat vas ein trick of her old trade.'

'What trade do you mean?' said Peveril.

'O,' said the seaman, 'I vas know more about her than you, Meinheer. I vas know that she vas a little, very little girl, and prentice to one seiltanzer, when my lady yonder had the good luck to buy her.'

'A seiltanzer?' said Peveril, 'what do you mean by that?'

'I mean a rope danzer, a mountebank, a Hans pickel haring. I vas know Adrian Brackel vell—he sell de powders dat empty men's stomach, and fill him's own purse Not know Adrian Brackel, mein Gott! I have smoked many a pound of tabak with him'

Peveril now remembered that Fenella had been brought into the family when he and the young earl were in England, and while the countess was absent on an expedition to the Continent When the countess found her, she never communicated to the young men, but only intimated that she had received her out of compassion, in order to relieve her from a situation of extreme distress

He hinted so much to the communicative seaman, who replied, 'that for distress he knew nocht's on t, only, that Adrian Brackel beat her when she would not dance on the rope, and starved her when she did to prevent her growth The bargain between the countess and the mountebank, he said, he had made himself, because the countess had hired his bark upon her expedition to the Continent None else knew where she came from The countess had seen her on a public stage at Ostend—compassionated her helpless situation and the severe treatment she received—and had employed him to purchase the poor creature from her master, and charged him with silence towards all her retinue *—'And so I do keep silence continued the faithful confidant, 'when I am in the havens of Man, but when I am on the broad sea, den my tongue is mine own you know Die foolish beoples in the island they say she is a wechsel balg—what you call a fairy elf changeling My faith, they do not never have seen ein wechsel balg, for I saw one myself at Cologne and it was twice as big as yonder girl and did break the poor people with eating them up like de great big cuckoo in the sparrow's nest But this Venella eat no more than other girls it was no wechsel balg in the world

By a different train of reasoning Julian had arrived at the same conclusion, in which, therefore, he heartily acquiesced

During the seaman's prosing, he was reflecting within himself, how much of the singular flexibility of her limbs and movements the unfortunate girl must have derived from the discipline and instructions of Adrian Brackel, and also how far the germs of her wilful and capricious passions might have been sown during her wandering and adventurous childhood Aristocratic also, as his education had been, these anecdotes respecting Fenella's original situation and education rather increased his pleasure at having shaken off her company, and yet he still felt desirous to know any further particulars which the seaman could communicate on the same subject. But he had already told all he knew Of her parents he knew nothing, except that 'her father must have been a damned hundsfoot, and a schelm, for selling his own flesh and blood to Adrian Brackel,' for by such a transaction had the mountebank become possessed of his pupil.

* Note L. Sale of a Dancing girl.

This conversation tended to remove any passing doubts which might have crept on Peveril's mind concerning the fidelity of the master of the vessel, who appeared from thence to have been a former acquaintance of the countess, and to have enjoyed some share of her confidence. The threatening motion used by Fenella he no longer considered as worthy of any notice, excepting as a new mark of the irritability of her temper.

He amused himself with walking the deck, and musing on his past and future prospects, until his attention was forcibly arrested by the wind, which began to rise in gusts from the north west in a manner so unfavourable to the course they intended to hold, that the master after many efforts to beat against it, declared his bark which was by no means an excellent sea boat was unequal to making Whitehaven, and that he was compelled to make a fair wind of it and run for Liverpool To this course Peveril did not object It saved him some land journey in case he visited his father's castle, and the countess's commission would be discharged as effectually the one way as the other

The vessel was put, accordingly, before the wind and ran with great steadiness and velocity The captain notwithstanding pleading some nautical hazards, chose to lie off and did not attempt the mouth of the Mersey until morning, when Peveril had at length the satisfaction of being landed upon the quay of Liverpool, which even then showed symptoms of the commercial prosperity that has since been carried to such a height

The master who was well acquainted with the port pointed out to Julian a decent place of entertainment chiefly frequented by seafaring people, for, although he had been in the town formerly he did not think it proper to go anywhere at present where he might have been unnecessarily recognised Here he took leave of the seaman after pressing upon him with difficulty a small present for his crew As for his passage, the captain declined any recompense whatever, and they parted upon the most civil terms

The inn to which he was recommended was full of strangers, seamen and mercantile people, all intent upon their own affairs, and discussing them with noise and eagerness, peculiar to the business of a thriving seaport But although the general clamour of the public room, in which the guests mixed with each other, related chiefly to their own commercial dealings, there was a general theme mingling with them, which was alike common and interesting to all, so that, amidst disputes about freight, tonnage, demurrage, and such like, were heard the emphatic sounds of 'Deep, damnable, accursed plot,'—'Bloody Papist villains,—'The King in danger—the gallows too good for them,' and so forth

The fermentation excited in London had plainly reached even this remote seaport, and was received by the inhabitants with the peculiar stormy energy which invests men in their situation with the character of the winds and waves with which they are chiefly conversant. The commercial and nautical interests of England

were indeed particularly anti-Catholic; although it is not, perhaps, easy to give any distinct reason why they should be so, since theological disputes in general could scarce be considered as interesting to them. But zeal, amongst the lower orders at least, is often in an inverse ratio to knowledge; and sailors were not probably the less earnest and devoted Protestants, that they did not understand the controversy between the churches. As for the merchants, they were almost necessarily inimical to the gentry of Lancashire and Cheshire; many of whom still retained the faith of Rome, which was rendered ten times more odious to the men of commerce, as the badge of their haughty aristocratic neighbours.

From the little which Peveril heard of the sentiments of the people of Liverpool, he imagined he should act most prudently in leaving the place as soon as possible, and before any suspicion should arise of his having any connection with the party which appeared to have become so obnoxious.

In order to accomplish his journey, it was first necessary that he should purchase a horse; and for this purpose he resolved to have recourse to the stables of a dealer well known at the time, and who dwelt in the outskirts of the place; and, having obtained directions to his dwelling, he went thither to provide himself.

Joe Bridlesley's stables exhibited a large choice of good horses; for that trade was in former days more active than at present. It was an ordinary thing for a stranger to buy a horse for the purpose of a single journey, and to sell him, as well as he could, when he had reached the point of his destination; and hence there was a constant demand, and a corresponding supply; upon both of which, Bridlesley, and those of his trade, contrived, doubtless, to make handsome profits.

Julian, who was no despicable horse-jockey, selected for his purpose a strong well-made horse, about sixteen hands high, and had him led into the yard, to see whether his paces corresponded with his appearance. As these also gave perfect satisfaction to the customer, it remained only to settle the price with Bridlesley; who of course swore his customer had pitched upon the best horse ever darkened the stable-door since he had dealt that way; that no such horses were to be had now-a-days, for that the mares were dead that foaled them; and, having named a corresponding price, the usual haggling commenced betwixt the seller and purchaser, for adjustment of what the French dealers call *le prix juste*.

The reader, if he be at all acquainted with this sort of traffic, well knows it is generally a keen encounter of wits, and attracts the notice of all the idlers within hearing, who are usually very ready to offer their opinions or their evidence. Amongst these, upon the present occasion, was a thin man, rather less than the ordinary size, and meanly dressed; but whose interference was in a confident tone, and such as showed himself master of the subject on which he spoke. The price of the horse being settled to about fifteen pounds, which was very high for the period, that of the saddle and bridle had next to be adjusted, and the thin, mean-looking person before mentioned found nearly as much to say on this subject as on the other. As his remarks had a conciliating and obliging tendency towards the stranger, Peveril concluded he was one of those idle persons, who, unable or unwilling to supply themselves with the means of indulgence at their own cost, do not scruple to deserve them at the hands of others, by a little officious complaisance; and, considering that he might acquire some useful information from such a person, was just about to offer him the courtesy of a morning draught, when he observed he had suddenly left the yard. He had scarce remarked this circumstance, before a party of customers entered the place, whose haughty assumption of importance claimed the instant attention of Bridlesley, and all his militia of grooms and stable-boys.

'Three good horses,' said the leader of the party, a tall, bulky man, whose breath was drawn full and high, under a consciousness of fat, and of importance—'three good and able-bodied horses, for the service of the Commons of England.'

Bridlesley said he had some horses which might serve the Speaker himself at need; but that, to speak Christian truth, he had just sold the best in his stable to that gentleman present, who, doubtless, would give up the bargain if the horse was needed for the service of the State.

'You speak well, friend,' said the important personage; and, advancing to Julian, demanded in a very haughty tone the surrender of the purchase which he had just made.

Peveril, with some difficulty, subdued the strong desire which he felt to return a round refusal to so unreasonable a request, but fortunately, recollecting that the situation in which he at present stood required, on his part, much circumspection, he replied simply, that, upon showing him any warrant to seize upon horses for the public service, he must of course submit to resign his purchase.

The man, with an air of extreme dignity, pulled from his pocket, and thrust into Peveril's hands, a warrant, subscribed by the Speaker of the House of Commons, empowering Charles Topham, their officer of the Black Rod, to pursue and seize upon the persons of certain individuals named in the warrant; and of all other persons who are, or should be, accused by competent witnesses, of being accessory to, or favourers of, the hellish and damnable Popish Plot, at present carried on within the bowels of the kingdom; and charging all men, as they loved their allegiance, to render the said Charles Topham their readiest and most effective assistance, in execution of the duty entrusted to his care.

On perusing a document of such weighty import, Julian had no hesitation to give up his horse to this formidable functionary; whom somebody compared to a lion, which, as the House of Commons was pleased to maintain such an animal, they were under the necessity of providing for by frequent commitments; until '*Take him, Topham*,' became a proverb, and a formidable one, in the mouth of the public.

The acquiescence of Peveril procured him some grace in the sight of the emissary; who, before

selecting two horses for his attendants, gave permission to the stranger to purchase a grey horse, much inferior, indeed, to that which he had resigned, both in form and in action, but very little lower in price, as Mr Bridlesley, immediately on learning the demand for horses upon the part of the Commons of England, had passed a private resolution in his own mind, augmenting the price of his whole stud by an ...ation of at least twenty per cent *ad rem*.

Peveril adjusted and paid the price with much less argument than on the former occasion, for, to be plain with the reader, he had noticed in the warrant of Mr Topham the name of his father, Sir Geoffrey Peveril of Martindale Castle engrossed at full length, as one of those subjected to arrest by that officer

When aware of this material fact it became Julian's business to leave Liverpool directly, and carry the alarm to Derbyshire, if, indeed, Mr Topham had not already executed his charge in that county, which he thought unlikely, as it was probable they would commence by securing those who lived nearest to the seaports A word or two which he overheard strengthened his hopes

'And hark ye friend said Mr Topham 'you will have the horses at the door of Mr Shortell, the mercer, in two hours as we shall refresh ourselves there with a cool tankard, and learn what folks live in the neighbourhood that may be concerned in my way And you will please to have that saddle padded, for I am told the Derbyshire roads are rough And you Captain Dangerfield, and Master Everett you must put on your Protestant spectacles, and show me where there is the shadow of a priest or of a priest's favourer, for I am come down with a broom in my cap to sweep this north country of such like cattle

One of the persons he thus addressed who wore the garb of a broken down citizen, only answered, 'Ay, truly, Master Topham, it is time to purge the garner

The other, who had a formidable pair of whiskers, a red nose, and a tarnished laced coat, together with a hat of Pistol's dimensions, was more loquacious 'I take it on my damnation said this zealous Protestant witness, 'that I will discover the marks of the beast on every one of them betwixt sixteen and seventy as plainly as if they had crossed themselves with ink instead of holy water Since we have a King willing to do justice, and a House of Commons to uphold prosecutions, why, damn me the cause must not stand still for lack of evidence

'Stick to that, noble captain' answered the officer, 'but, prithee, reserve thy oaths for the court of justice, it is but sheer waste to throw them away, as you do in your ordinary conversation.'

'Fear you nothing, Master Topham,' answered Dangerfield, 'it is right to keep a man's gifts in use; and were I altogether to renounce oaths in my private discourse, how should I know how to use one when I needed it? But you hear me use none of your Papist abjurations. I swear not by the Mass, or before George, or by anything that belongs to idolatry, but such downright oaths as may serve a poor Protestant gentleman, who would fain serve Heaven and the King'

'Bravely spoken, most noble Festus,' said his yokefellow But do not suppose, that although I do use to garnish my words with oaths which you may think out of season, I shall be wanting when called upon to declare the height and the depth, the width and the length, of this hellish plot against the king and the Protestant faith'

Dizzy, and almost sick, with listening to the undisguised brutality of these fellows, Peveril, having with difficulty prevailed on Bridlesley to settle his purchase at length led forth his grey steed but was scarce out of the yard when he heard the following alarming conversation pass, of which he seemed himself the object

'Who is that youth' said the slow soft voice of the more precise of the two witnesses 'Methinks I have seen him somewhere before. Is he from these parts?'

Not that I know of said Bridlesley, who, like all the other inhabitants of England at the time, answered the interrogatories of these fellows with the deference which is paid in Spain to the questions of an inquisitor 'A stranger—entirely a stranger never saw him before—a wild young colt I warrant him, and knows a horse's mouth as well as I do'

I begin to bethink me I saw such a face as his at the Jesuits consult in the White Horse Tavern answered Everett

'And I think I recollect said Captain Dangerfield——

'Come come master and captain,' said the authoritative voice of Topham 'we will have none of your recollections at present We all know what these are likely to end in But I will have you know you are not to run till the leash is slipped The young man is a well looking lad and gave up his horse handsomely for the service of the House of Commons He knows how to behave himself to his betters, I warrant you, and I scarce think he has enough in his purse to pay the fees *

This speech concluded the dialogue, which Peveril, finding himself so much concerned in the issue thought it best to hear to an end Now, when it ceased to get out of the town unobserved and take the nearest way to his father's castle seemed his wisest plan He had settled his reckoning at the inn, and brought with him to Bridlesley's the small portmanteau which contained his few necessaries, so that he had no occasion to return thither He resolved, therefore, to ride some miles before he stopped, even for the purpose of feeding his horse, and, being pretty well acquainted with the country, he hoped to be able to push forward to Martindale Castle sooner than the worshipful Master Topham, whose saddle was, in the first place, to be padded, and who, when mounted, would, in all probability, ride with the precaution of those who require such security against the effects of a hard trot

Under the influence of these feelings, Julian pushed for Warrington, a place with which he was well acquainted, but, without halting in

* Note M Witnesses of the Plot

the town, he crossed the Mersey, by the bridge built by an ancestor of his friend the Earl of Derby, and continued his route towards Dishley, on the borders of Derbyshire. He might have reached this latter village easily had his horse been fitter for a forced march; but in the course of the journey he had occasion more than once to curse the official dignity of the person who had robbed him of his better steed, while taking the best direction he could through a country with which he was only generally acquainted.

At length, near Altringham, a halt become unavoidable; and Peveril had only to look for some quiet and sequestered place of refreshment. This presented itself in the form of a small cluster of cottages; the best of which united the characters of an alehouse and a mill, where the sign of the Cat (the landlord's faithful ally in defence of his meal-sacks), booted as high as Grimalkin in the fairy tale, and playing on the fiddle for the more grace, announced that John Whitecraft united the two honest occupations of landlord and miller; and, doubtless, took toll from the public in both capacities.

Such a place promised a traveller who journeyed incognito safer, if not better accommodation, than he was like to meet with in more frequented inns; and at the door of the Cat and Fiddle Julian halted accordingly.

CHAPTER XXI.

> In these distracted times, when each man dreads
> The bloody stratagems of busy heads.
>
> OTWAY.

At the door of the Cat and Fiddle, Julian received the usual attention paid to the customers of an inferior house of entertainment. His horse was carried by a ragged lad, who acted as hostler, into a paltry stable; where, however, the nag was tolerably supplied with food and litter.

Having seen the animal on which his comfort, perhaps his safety, depended, properly provided for, Peveril entered the kitchen, which indeed was also the parlour and hall of the little hostelry, to try what refreshment he could obtain for himself. Much to his satisfaction, he found there was only one guest in the house besides himself; but he was less pleased when he found that he must either go without dinner, or share with that single guest the only provisions which chanced to be in the house, namely, a dish of trouts and eels, which their host, the miller, had brought in from his mill-stream.

At the particular request of Julian, the landlady undertook to add a substantial dish of eggs and bacon, which perhaps she would not have undertaken for, had not the sharp eye of Peveril discovered the flitch hanging in its smoky retreat, when, as its presence could not be denied, the hostess was compelled to bring it forward as a part of her supplies.

She was a buxom dame about thirty, whose comely and cheerful countenance did honour to the choice of the jolly miller, her loving mate; and was now stationed under the shade of an old-fashioned, huge projecting chimney, within which it was her province to 'work i' the fire,' and provide, for the wearied wayfaring man, the good things which were to send him rejoicing on his course. Although, at first, the honest woman seemed little disposed to give herself much additional trouble on Julian's account, yet the good looks, handsome figure, and easy civility of her new guest, soon bespoke the principal part of her attention; and while busy in his service, she regarded him, from time to time, with looks where something like pity mingled with complacency. The rich smoke of the rasher, and the eggs with which it was flanked, already spread itself through the apartment; and the hissing of these savoury viands bore chorus to the simmering of the pan, in which the fish were undergoing a slower decoction. The table was covered with a clean huckaback napkin, and all was in preparation for the meal, which Julian began to expect with a good deal of impatience, when the companion who was destined to share it with him entered the apartment.

At the first glance, Julian recognised, to his surprise, the same indifferently-dressed, thin-looking person, who, during the first bargain which he had made with Bridlesley, had officiously interfered with his advice and opinion. Displeased at having the company of any stranger forced upon him, Peveril was still less satisfied to find one who might make some claim of acquaintance with him, however slender, since the circumstances in which he stood compelled him to be as reserved as possible. He therefore turned his back upon his destined messmate, and pretended to amuse himself by looking out of the window, determined to avoid all intercourse until it should be inevitably forced upon him.

In the meanwhile, the other stranger went straight up to the landlady, where she toiled on household cares intent, and demanded of her what she meant by preparing bacon and eggs, when he had positively charged her to get nothing ready but the fish.

The good woman, important as every cook in the discharge of her duty, deigned not for some time so much as to acknowledge that she heard the reproof of her guest; and when she did so, it was only to repel it in a magisterial and authoritative tone.—'If he did not like bacon —(bacon from their own hutch, well fed on pease and bran)—if he did not like bacon and eggs—(new-laid eggs, which she had brought in from the hen-roost with her own hands)—why so put case—it was the worse for his honour, and the better for those who did.'

'The better for those who like them?' answered the guest; 'that is as much as to say I am to have a companion, good woman.'

'Do not good woman me, sir,' replied the miller's wife, 'till I call you good man; and, I promise you, many would scruple to do that to one who does not love eggs and bacon of a Friday.'

'Nay, my good lady,' said her guest, 'do not fix any misconstruction upon me—I dare say the eggs and the bacon are excellent [illegible] they are rather a dish [illegible] the public.

'Ay, or your cons[illegible] Peveril procured him some the hostess. 'And, [illegible] the emissary; who, before

needs have your fish fried with oil, instead of the good drippings I was going to put to them. I would I could spell the meaning of all this now; but I warrant John Bigstaff, the constable, could conjure something out of it.'

There was a pause here; but Julian, somewhat alarmed at the tone which the conversation assumed, became interested in watching the dumb show which succeeded. By bringing his head a little towards the left, but without turning round, or quitting the projecting latticed window where he had taken his station, he could observe that the stranger, secured, as he seemed to think himself, from observation, had sidled close up to the landlady, and, as he conceived, had put a piece of money into her hand. The altered tone of the miller's moiety corresponded very much with this supposition.

'Nay, indeed, and forsooth,' she said, 'her house was Liberty Hall; and so should every publican's be. What was it to her what gentlefolks ate or drank, providing they paid for it honestly? There were many honest gentlemen, whose stomachs could not abide bacon, grease, or dripping, especially on a Friday; and what was that to her, or any one in her line, so gentlefolks paid honestly for the trouble? Only, she would say, that her bacon and eggs could not be mended betwixt this and Liverpool, and that she would live and die upon.'

'I shall hardly dispute it,' said the stranger; and, turning towards Julian, he added, 'I wish this gentleman, who I suppose is my trencher-companion, much joy of the dainties which I cannot assist him in consuming.'

'I assure you, sir,' answered Peveril, who now felt himself compelled to turn about, and reply with civility, 'that it was with difficulty I could prevail on my landlady to add my cover to yours, though she seems now such a zealot for the consumption of eggs and bacon.'

'I am zealous for nothing,' said the landlady, 'save that men would eat their victuals, and pay their score; and if there be enough in one dish to serve two guests, I see little purpose in dressing them two; however, they are ready now, and done to a nicety.—Here, Alice! Alice!'

The sound of that well-known name made Julian start, but the Alice who replied to the call ill resembled the vision which his imagination connected with the accents, being a dowdy, slipshod wench, the drudge of the low inn which afforded him shelter. She assisted her mistress in putting on the table the dishes which the latter had prepared; and a foaming jug of home-brewed ale being placed betwixt them, was warranted by Dame Whitecraft as excellent; 'for,' said she, 'we know by practice that too much water drowns the miller, and we spare it on our malt as we would in our mill-dam.'

'I drink to your health in it, dame,' said the elder stranger; 'and a cup of thanks for these excellent fish; and to the drowning of all unkindness between us.'

'I thank you, sir,' said the dame, 'and wish you the like; but I dare not pledge you, for our use none of your's brewed too strong for women; not by the Mass, or before mary at a time with thing that belongs to idolatry guest that is so

'You shall drink one with me then, dame,' said Peveril, 'so you will let me have a flagon.'

'That you shall, sir, and as good as ever was broached; but I must to the mill, to get the key from the goodman.'

So saying, and tucking her clean gown through the pocket-holes, that her steps might be the more alert, and her dress escape dust, off she tripped to the mill, which lay close adjoining.

'A dainty dame, and dangerous, is the miller's wife,' said the stranger, looking at Peveril. 'Is not that old Chaucer's phrase?'

'I— I believe so,' said Peveril, not much read in Chaucer, who was then even more neglected than at present; and much surprised at a literary quotation from one of the mean appearance exhibited by the person before him.

'Yes,' answered the stranger, 'I see that you, like other young gentlemen of the time, are better acquainted with Cowley and Waller than with the "well of English undefiled." I cannot help differing. There are touches of nature about the old bard of Woodstock, that, to me, are worth all the turns of laborious wit in Cowley, and all the ornate and artificial simplicity of his courtly competitor. The description, for instance, of his country coquette—

> Wincing she was, as is a wanton colt,
> Sweet as a flower, and upright as a bolt.

Then, again, for pathos, where will you mend the dying scene of Arcite?—

> Alas, my hertis queen! alas, my wife!
> Giver at once, and ender of my life.
> What is this world?—What axen men to have?
> Now with his love—now in his cold grave
> Alone, withouten other company.

But I tire you, sir, and do injustice to the poet, whom I remember but by halves.'

'On the contrary, sir,' replied Peveril, 'you make him more intelligible to me in your recitation than I have found him when I have tried to peruse him myself.'

'You were only frightened by the antiquated spelling, and "the letters black,"' said his companion. 'It is many a scholar's case, who mistakes a nut, which he could crack with a little exertion, for a bullet, which he must needs break his teeth on: but yours are better employed.—Shall I offer you some of this fish?'

'Not so, sir,' replied Julian, willing to show himself a man of reading in his turn; 'I hold with old Caius, and profess to fear judgment, to fight where I cannot choose, and to eat no fish.'

The stranger cast a startled look around him at this observation, which Julian had thrown out on purpose to ascertain, if possible, the quality of his companion, whose present language was so different from the character he had assumed at Bridlesley's.—His countenance, too, although the features were of an ordinary, not to say mean cast, had that character of intelligence which education gives to the most homely face; and his manners were so easy and disembarrassed, as plainly showed a complete acquaintance with society, as well as the habit of mingling with it in the higher stages. The alarm which he had evidently shown at Peveril's answer was but momentary; for he almost instantly replied, with a smile, 'I promise you, sir, that you are

in no dangerous company ; for, notwithstanding my fish dinner, I am much disposed to trifle with some of your savoury mess, if you will indulge me so far.'

Peveril accordingly reinforced the stranger's trencher with what remained of the bacon and eggs, and saw him swallow a mouthful or two with apparent relish ; but presently after he began to dally with his knife and fork, like one whose appetite was satiated, and then took a long draught of the black-jack, and handed his platter to the large mastiff dog, who, attracted by the smell of the dinner, had sat down before him for some time, licking his chops and following with his eye every morsel which the guest raised to his head.

'Here, my poor fellow,' said he, 'thou hast had no fish, and needest this supernumerary trencher-load more than I do. I cannot withstand thy mute supplication any longer.'

The dog answered these courtesies by a civil shake of the tail, while he gobbled up what was assigned him by the stranger's benevolence, in the greater haste, that he heard his mistress's voice at the door.

'Here is the canary, gentlemen,' said the landlady ; 'and the goodman has set off the mill to come to wait on you himself. He always does so when company drink wine.'

'That he may come in for the host's, that is, for the lion's share,' said the stranger, looking at Peveril.

'The shot is mine,' said Julian ; 'and if mine host will share it, I will willingly bestow another quart on him and on you, sir. I never break old customs.'

These sounds caught the ear of Gaffer Whitecraft, who had entered the room, a strapping specimen of his robust trade, prepared to play the civil or the surly host, as his company should be acceptable or otherwise. At Julian's invitation he doffed his dusty bonnet—brushed from his sleeve the looser particles of his professional dust—and sitting down on the end of a bench, about a yard from the table, filled a glass of canary, and drank to his guests, and 'especially to this noble gentleman,' indicating Peveril, who had ordered the canary.

Julian returned the courtesy by drinking his health, and asking what news were about in the country.

'Nought, sir, I hears on nought, except this Plot, as they call it, that they are pursuing the Papishers about ; but it brings water to my mill, as the saying is. Between expresses hurrying hither and thither, and guards and prisoners riding to and again, and the custom of the neighbours, that come to speak over the news of an evening, nightly, I may say, instead of once a-week, why, the spigot is in use, gentlemen, and your land thrives ; and then I, serving as constable, and being a known Protestant, I have tapped, I may venture to say, it may be ten stands of ale extraordinary, besides a reasonable sale of wine for a country corner. Heaven make us thankful, and keep all good Protestants from Plot and Popery.'

'I can easily conceive, my friend,' said Julian, 'that curiosity is a passion which runs naturally to the alehouse ; and that anger, and jealousy, and fear are all of them thirsty passions, and great consumers of home-brewed. But I am a perfect stranger in these parts ; and I would willingly learn from a sensible man like you a little of this same Plot, of which men speak so much, and appear to know so little.'

'Learn a little of it ?—Why, it is the most horrible—the most damnable, bloodthirsty beast of a Plot—But hold, hold, my good master ; I hope, in the first place, you believe there is a Plot ; for, otherwise, the justice must have a word with you, as sure as my name is John Whitecraft.'

'It shall not need,' said Peveril ; 'for I assure you, mine host, I believe in the Plot as freely and fully as a man can believe in anything he cannot understand.'

'God forbid that anybody should pretend to understand it,' said the implicit constable ; 'for his worship the justice says it is a mile beyond him ; and he be as deep as most of them. But men may believe, though they do not understand ; and that is what the Romanists say themselves. But this I am sure of, it makes a rare stirring time for justices, and witnesses, and constables.—So here's to your health again, gentlemen, in a cup of neat canary.'

'Come, come, John Whitecraft,' said his wife, 'do not you demean yourself by naming witnesses along with justices and constables. All the world knows how they come by their money.'

'Ay, but all the world knows that they *do* come by it, dame ; and that is a great comfort. They rustle in their canonical silks, and swagger in their buff and scarlet, who but they ? Ay, ay, the cursed fox thrives—and not so cursed neither. Is there not Doctor Titus Oates, the saviour of the nation—does he not live at Whitehall, and eat off plate, and have a pension of thousands a year, for what I know ? and is he not to be Bishop of Lichfield as soon as Dr. Doddrum dies ?'

'Then I hope Dr. Doddrum's reverence will live these twenty years ; and I dare say I am the first that ever wished such a wish,' said the hostess. 'I do not understand these doing[illegible] not I ; and if a hundred Jesuits came to hol[illegible] consult at my house, as they did at the [illegible] Horse Tavern, I should think it quite [illegible] line of business to bear witness agai[illegible] provided they drank well, and paid their score.'

'Very true, dame,' said her elder guest ; 'that is what I call keeping a good publican conscience ; and so I will pay my score presently, and be jogging on my way.'

Peveril, on his part, also demanded a reckoning, and discharged it so liberally, that the miller flourished his hat as he bowed, and the hostess curtseyed down to the ground.

The horses of both guests were brought forth ; and they mounted in order to depart in company. The host and hostess stood in the doorway to see them depart. The landlord proffered a stirrup-cup to the elder guest, while the landlady offered Peveril a glass from her own peculiar bottle. For this purpose she mounted on the horse-block, with flask and glass in hand ; so that it was easy for the departing guest, although on horseback, to return the courtesy in the most approved manner, namely, by throwing

his arm over his landlady's shoulder, and saluting her at parting.

Dame Whitecraft did not decline this familiarity; for there is no room for traversing upon a horse-block, and the hands which might have served her for resistance were occupied with glass and bottle—matters too precious to be thrown away in such a struggle. Apparently, however, she had something else in her head; for, as, after a brief affectation of reluctance, she permitted Peveril's face to approach hers, she whispered in his ear, 'Beware of trepans!'—an awful intimation, which, in those days of distrust, suspicion, and treachery, was as effectual in interdicting free and social intercourse as the advertisement of 'man-traps and spring-guns' to protect an orchard. Pressing her hand in intimation that he comprehended her hint, she shook his warmly in return, and bade God speed him. There was a cloud on John Whitecraft's brow; nor did his final farewell sound half so cordial as that which had been spoken within doors. But then Peveril reflected that the same guest is not always equally acceptable to landlord and landlady; and, unconscious of having done anything to excite the miller's displeasure, he pursued his journey without thinking further of the matter.

Julian was a little surprised, and not altogether pleased, to find that his new acquaintance held the same road with him. He had many reasons for wishing to travel alone; and the hostess's caution still rang in his ears. If this man, possessed of so much shrewdness as his countenance and conversation intimated, versatile as he had occasion to remark, and disguised beneath his condition, should prove, as was likely, to be a concealed Jesuit or seminary priest travelling upon their great task of the conversion of England, and rooting out of the Northern heresy,—a more dangerous companion for a person in his own circumstances, could hardly be imagined; since keeping society with him might seem to authorize whatever reports had been spread concerning the attachment of his family to the Catholic cause. At the same time, it was very difficult, without actual rudeness, to shake off the company of one who seemed determined, whether spoken to or not, to remain alongside of him.

Peveril tried the experiment of riding slow; but his companion, determined not to drop him, slackened his pace, so as to keep close by him. Julian then spurred his horse to a full trot; and was soon satisfied that the stranger, notwithstanding the meanness of his appearance, was so much better mounted than himself, as to render vain any thoughts of outriding him. He pulled up his horse to a more reasonable pace, therefore, in a sort of despair. Upon his doing so, his companion, who had been hitherto silent, observed, that Peveril was not so well qualified to try speed upon the road, as he would have been had he abode by his first bargain of horse-flesh that morning.

Peveril assented dryly, but observed, that the animal would serve his immediate purpose, though he feared it would render him indifferent company for a person better mounted.

'By no means,' answered his civil companion; 'I am one of those who have travelled so much, as to be accustomed to make my journey at any rate of motion which may be most agreeable to my company.'

Peveril made no reply to this polite intimation, being too sincere to tender the thanks which, in courtesy, were the proper answer.—A second pause ensued, which was broken by Julian asking the stranger whether their roads were likely to lie long together in the same direction.

'I cannot tell,' said the stranger, smiling, 'unless I knew which way you were travelling.'

'I am uncertain how far I shall go to-night,' said Julian, willingly misunderstanding the purport of the reply.

'And so am I,' replied the stranger; 'but, though my horse goes better than yours, I think it will be wise to spare him; and, in case our road continues to lie the same way, we are likely to sup, as we have dined, together.'

Julian made no answer whatever to this round intimation, but continued to ride on, turning, in his own mind, whether it would not be wisest to come to a distinct understanding with his pertinacious attendant, and to explain, in so many words, that it was his pleasure to travel alone. But, besides that the sort of acquaintance which they had formed during dinner, rendered him unwilling to be directly uncivil towards a person of gentleman-like manners, he had also to consider that he might very possibly be mistaken in this man's character and purpose; in which case, the cynically refusing the society of a sound Protestant would afford as pregnant matter of suspicion as travelling in company with a disguised Jesuit.

After brief reflection, therefore, he resolved to endure the encumbrance of the stranger's society until a fair opportunity should occur to rid himself of it; and, in the meantime, to act with as much caution as he possibly could, in any communication that might take place between them; for Dame Whitecraft's parting caution still rang anxiously in his ears, and the consequences of his own arrest upon suspicion must deprive him of every opportunity of serving his father, or the countess, or Major Bridgenorth, upon whose interest, also, he had promised himself to keep an eye.

While he revolved these things in his mind, they had journeyed several miles without speaking; and now entered upon a more waste country, and worse roads, than they had hitherto found, being, in fact, approaching the more hilly district of Derbyshire. In travelling on a very stony and uneven lane, Julian's horse repeatedly stumbled; and, had he not been supported by the rider's judicious use of the bridle, must at length certainly have fallen under him.

'These are times which crave wary riding, sir,' said his companion; 'and by your seat in the saddle, and your hand on the rein, you seem to understand it to be so.'

'I have been long a horseman, sir,' answered Peveril.

'And long a traveller too, sir, I should suppose; since, by the great caution you observe, you seem to think the human tongue requires a curb, as well as the horse's jaws.'

'Wiser men than I have been of opinion,

answered Peveril, 'that it were a part of prudence to be silent, when men have little or nothing to say.'

'I cannot approve of their opinion,' answered the stranger. 'All knowledge is gained by communication, either with the dead, through books, or, more pleasingly, through the conversation of the living. The *deaf and dumb*, alone, are excluded from improvement; and surely their situation is not so enviable that we should imitate them.'

At this illustration, which awakened a startling echo in Peveril's bosom, the young man looked hard at his companion; but in the composed countenance, and calm blue eye, he read no consciousness of a further meaning than the words immediately and directly implied. He paused a moment, and then answered, 'You seem to be a person, sir, of shrewd apprehension; and I should have thought it might have occurred to you, that, in the present suspicious times, men may, without censure, avoid communication with strangers. You know not me; and to me you are totally unknown. There is not room for much discourse between us, without trespassing on the general topics of the day, which carry in them seeds of quarrel between friends, much more betwixt strangers. At any other time, the society of an intelligent companion would have been most acceptable upon my solitary ride; but at present'——

'At present!' said the other, interrupting him. 'You are like the old Romans, who held that *hostis* meant both a stranger and an enemy. I will therefore be no longer a stranger. My name is Ganlesse—by profession I am a Roman Catholic priest—I am travelling here in dread of my life—and I am very glad to have you for a companion.'

'I thank you for the information with all my heart,' said Peveril; 'and, to avail myself of it to the uttermost, I must beg of you to ride forward, or lag behind, or take a side-path, at your own pleasure; for, as I am no Catholic, and travel upon business of high concernment, I am exposed both to risk and delay, and even to danger, by keeping such suspicious company. And so, Master Ganlesse, keep your own pace, and I will keep the contrary; for I beg leave to forbear your company.'

As Peveril spoke thus, he pulled up his horse, and made a full stop.

The stranger burst out a-laughing. 'What!' he said, 'you forbear my company for a trifle of danger? Saint Anthony! How the warm blood of the Cavaliers is chilled in the young men of the present day! This young gallant, now, has a father, I warrant, who has endured as many adventures for hunting priests, as a knight errant for distressed damsels.'

'This raillery avails nothing, sir,' said Peveril. 'I must request you will keep your own way.'

'My way is yours,' said the pertinacious Master Ganlesse, as he called himself; 'and we will both travel the safer, that we journey in company. I have the receipt of fern-seed, man, and walk invisible. Besides, you would not have me quit you in this lane, where there is no turn to right or left?'

Peveril moved on, desirous to avoid open violence—for which the indifferent tone of the traveller, indeed, afforded no apt pretext—yet highly disliking his company, and determined to take the first opportunity to rid himself of it.

The stranger proceeded at the same pace with him, keeping cautiously on his bridle hand, as if to secure that advantage in case of a struggle. But his language did not intimate the least apprehension. 'You do me wrong,' he said to Peveril, 'and you equally wrong yourself. You are uncertain where to lodge to-night—trust to my guidance. Here is an ancient hall, within four miles, with an old knightly Pantaloon for its lord—an all-be-ruffed Dame Barbara for the lady gay—a Jesuit, in a butler's habit, to say grace—an old tale of Edgehill and Worster fights to relish a cold venison pasty, and a flask of claret mantled with cobwebs—a bed for you in the priest's hiding-hole—and, for aught I know, pretty Mistress Betty, the dairy-maid, to make it ready.'

'This has no charms for me, sir,' said Peveril, who, in spite of himself, could not but be amused with the ready sketch which the stranger gave of many an old mansion in Cheshire and Derbyshire, where the owners retained the ancient faith of Rome.

'Well, I see I cannot charm you in this way,' continued his companion; 'I must strike another key. I am no longer Ganlesse, the seminary-priest, but' (changing his tone, and snuffling in the nose) 'Simon Canter, a poor preacher of the word, who travels this way to call sinners to repentance; and to strengthen, and to edify, and to fructify among the scattered remnant who hold fast the truth.—What say you to this, sir?'

'I admire your versatility, sir, and could be entertained with it at another time. At present sincerity is more in request.'

'Sincerity!' said the stranger;—'a child's whistle, with but two notes in it—yea, yea, and nay, nay. Why, man, the very Quakers have renounced it, and have got in its stead a gallant recorder, called Hypocrisy, that is somewhat like Sincerity in form, but of much greater compass, and combines the whole gamut. Come, be ruled—be a disciple of Simon Canter for the evening, and we will leave the old tumble-down castle of the knight aforesaid, on the left hand, for a new brick-built mansion, erected by an eminent salt-boiler from Namptwich, who expects the said Simon to make a strong spiritual pickle for the preservation of a soul somewhat corrupted by the evil communications of this wicked world. What say you? He has two daughters—brighter eyes never beamed under a pinched hood; and for myself, I think there is more fire in those who live only to love and to devotion, than in your court beauties, whose hearts are running on twenty follies besides. You know not the pleasure of being conscience-keeper to a pretty precisian, who in one breath repeats her foibles, and in the next confesses her passion. Perhaps, though, you may have known such in your day? Come, sir, it grows too dark to see your blushes; but I am sure they are burning on your cheek.'

'You take great freedom, sir,' said Peveril, as they now approached the ... return the courtesy in

it opened on a broad common; 'and you seem rather to count more on my forbearance, than you have room to do with safety. We are now nearly free of the lane which has made us companions for this last half-hour. To avoid your further company, I will take the turn to the left, upon that common; and if you follow me, it shall be at your peril. Observe, I am well armed; and you will fight at odds.'

'Not at odds,' returned the provoking stranger, 'while I have my brown jennet, with which I can ride round and round you at pleasure; and this text of a handful in length' (showing a pistol which he drew from his bosom), 'which discharges very convincing doctrine on the pressure of a forefinger, and is apt to equalize all odds, as you call them, of youth and strength. Let there be no strife between us, however—the moor lies before us—choose your path on it—I take the other.'

'I wish you good-night, sir,' said Peveril to the stranger. 'I ask your forgiveness, if I have misconstrued you in anything; but the times are perilous, and a man's life may depend on the society in which he travels.'

'True,' said the stranger; 'but in your case, the danger is already undergone, and you should seek to counteract it. You have travelled in my company long enough to devise a handsome branch of the Popish Plot. How will you look when you see come forth, in comely folio form, The Narrative of Simon Canter, otherwise called Richard Ganlesse, concerning the horrid Popish Conspiracy for the Murder of the King, and Massacre of all Protestants, as given on oath to the Honourable House of Commons; setting forth how far Julian Peveril, younger of Martindale Castle, is concerned in carrying on the same' *——

'How, sir? What mean you?' said Peveril, much startled.

'Nay, sir,' replied his companion, 'do not interrupt my title-page. Now that Oates and Bedloe have drawn the great prizes, the subordinate discoverers get little but by the sale of their Narrative; and Janeway, Newman, Simmons, and every bookseller of them, will tell you that the title is half the narrative. Mine shall therefore set forth the various schemes you have communicated to me, of landing ten thousand soldiers from the Isle of Man upon the coast of Lancashire; and marching into Wales, to join the ten thousand pilgrims who are to be shipped from Spain; and so completing the destruction of the Protestant religion, and of the devoted city of London. Truly, I think such a Narrative, well spiced with a few horrors, and published *cum privilegio parliamenti*, might, though the market be somewhat overstocked, be still worth some twenty or thirty pieces.'

'You seem to know me, sir,' said Peveril; 'and if so, I think I may fairly ask you your purpose in thus bearing me company, and the meaning of all this rhapsody. If it be mere banter, I can endure it within proper limit; although it is uncivil on the part of a stranger. If you have any further purpose, speak it out; I am not to be trifled with.'

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'By no means,' answered ... of the Plot.

'Good, now,' said the stranger, laughing, 'into what an unprofitable chafe you have put yourself? An Italian *fuoruscito*, when he desires a parley with you, takes aim from behind a wall with his long gun, and prefaces his conference with *Posso tirare*. So does your man-of-war fire a gun across the bows of a Hansmogan Indiaman, just to bring her to; and so do I show Master Julian Peveril, that if I were one of the honourable society of witnesses and informers, with whom his imagination has associated me for these two hours past, he is as much within my danger now, as what he is ever likely to be.' Then, suddenly changing his tone to serious, which was in general ironical, he added, 'Young man, when the pestilence is diffused through the air of a city, it is in vain men would avoid the disease, by seeking solitude, and shunning the company of their fellow-sufferers.'

'In what, then, consists their safety?' said Peveril, willing to ascertain, if possible, the drift of his companion's purpose.

'In following the counsels of wise physicians;' such was the stranger's answer.

'And as such,' said Peveril, 'you offer me your advice?'

'Pardon me, young man,' said the stranger haughtily, 'I see no reason I should do so.—I am not,' he added, in his former tone, 'your fee'd physician—I offer no advice—I only say it would be wise that you sought it.'

'And from whom, or where, can I obtain it?' said Peveril. 'I wander in this country, like one in a dream; so much a few months have changed it. Men who formerly occupied themselves with their own affairs, are now swallowed up in matters of State policy; and those tremble under the apprehension of some strange and sudden convulsion of empire who were formerly only occupied by the fear of going to bed supperless. And, to sum up the matter, I meet a stranger apparently well acquainted with my name and concerns, who first attaches himself to me, whether I will or no; and then refuses me an explanation of his business, while he menaces me with the strangest accusations.'

'Had I meant such infamy,' said the stranger, 'believe me I had not given you the thread of my intrigue. But be wise, and come on with me. There is, hard by, a small inn, where, if you can take a stranger's warrant for it, we shall sleep in perfect security.'

'Yet you yourself,' said Peveril, 'but now were anxious to avoid observation; and in that case, how can you protect me?'

'Pshaw! I did but silence that tattling landlady, in the way in which such people are most readily hushed; and for Topham, and his brace of night-owls, they must hawk at other and lesser game than I should prove.'

Peveril could not help admiring the easy and confident indifference with which the stranger seemed to assume a superiority to all the circumstances of danger around him; and, after hastily considering the matter with himself, came to the resolution to keep company with him for this night at least; and to learn, if possible, who he really was, and to what party in the estate he was attached. The boldness and freedom of his talk, seemed almost inconsistent with his following

the perilous, though at that time the gainful trade of an informer. No doubt, such persons assumed every appearance which could insinuate them into the confidence of their destined victims; but Julian thought he discovered in this man's manner a wild and reckless frankness, which he could not but connect with the idea of sincerity in the present case. He therefore answered, after a moment's recollection, 'I embrace your proposal, sir, although, by doing so, I am reposing a sudden, and perhaps an unwary confidence.'

'And what am I, then, reposing in you?' said the stranger. 'Is not our confidence mutual?'

'No, much the contrary. I know nothing of you whatever; you have named me, and knowing me to be Julian Peveril, know you may travel with me in perfect security.'

'The devil I do!' answered his companion. 'I travel in the same security as with a lighted petard, which I may expect to explode every moment. Are you not the son of Peveril of the Peak, with whose name Prelacy and Popery are so closely allied that no old woman of either sex in Derbyshire concludes her prayer without a petition to be freed from all three? And do you not come from the Popish Countess of Derby, bringing, for aught I know, a whole army of Manxmen in your pocket, with full complement of arms, ammunition, baggage, and a train of field artillery?'

'It is not very likely I should be so poorly mounted,' said Julian, laughing, 'if I had such a weight to carry. But lead on, sir. I see I must wait for your confidence till you think proper to confer it; for you are already so well acquainted with my affairs, that I have nothing to offer you in exchange for it.'

'*Allons*, then,' said his companion; 'give your horse the spur, and raise the curb rein, lest he measure the ground with his nose instead of his paces. We are not now more than a furlong or two from the place of entertainment.'

They mended their pace accordingly, and soon arrived at the small solitary inn which the traveller had mentioned. When its light began to twinkle before them, the stranger, as if he recollecting something he had forgotten, 'By the way, you must have a name to pass by; for it may be ill travelling under your own, as the fellow who keeps this house is an old Cromwellian. What will you call yourself? My name is—for the present—Ganlesse.'

'There is no occasion to assume a name at all,' answered Julian. 'I do not incline to use a borrowed one, especially as I may meet with some one who knows my own.'

'I will call you Julian, then,' said Master Ganlesse; 'for Peveril will smell, in the nostrils of mine host, of idolatry, conspiracy, Smithfield faggots, fish on Fridays, the murder of Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey, and the fire of purgatory.'

As he spoke thus, they alighted under the great broad-branched oak tree, that served to canopy the ale-bench, which, at an earlier hour, had groaned under the weight of a frequent conclave of rustic politicians. Ganlesse, as he dismounted, whistled in a particularly shrill note, and was answered from within the house.*

* Note O. Richard Ganlesse.

CHAPTER XXII.

He was a fellow in a peasant's garb;
Yet one could censure you a woodcock's carving,
Like any courtier at the ordinary.
THE ORDINARY.

The person who appeared at the door of the little inn to receive Ganlesse, as we mentioned in our last chapter, sung, as he came forward, this scrap of an old ballad,—

Good even to you, Diccon;
And how have you sped?
Bring you the bonnie bride
To banquet and bed?

To which Ganlesse answered, in the same tone and tune,—

Content thee, kind Robin,
He need little care,
Who brings home a fat buck
Instead of a hare.

'You have missed your blow, then?' said the other in reply.

'I tell you I have not,' answered Ganlesse; 'but you will think of nought but your own thriving occupation. May the plague that belongs to it stick to it! though it hath been the making of thee.'

'A man must live, Diccon Ganlesse,' said the other.

'Well, well,' said Ganlesse, 'bid my friend welcome, for my sake. Hast thou got any supper?'

'Reeking like a sacrifice—Chaubert has done his best. That fellow is a treasure! give him a farthing candle, and he will cook a good supper out of it.—Come in, sir. My friend's friend is welcome, as we say in my country.'

'We must have our horses looked to first,' said Peveril, who began to be considerably uncertain about the character of his companions—'that done, I am for you.'

Ganlesse gave a second whistle; a groom appeared, who took charge of both their horses, and they themselves entered the inn.

The ordinary room of a poor inn seemed to have undergone some alterations, to render it fit for company of a higher description. There were a beaufet, a couch, and one or two other pieces of furniture, of a style inconsistent with the appearance of the place. The tablecloth, which was already laid, was of the finest damask; and the spoons, forks, etc., were of silver. Peveril looked at this apparatus with some surprise; and again turning his eyes attentively upon his travelling companion, Ganlesse, he could not help discovering (by the aid of imagination perhaps) that, though insignificant in person, plain in features, and dressed like one in indigence, there lurked still about his person and manners that indefinable ease of manner which belongs only to men of birth and quality, or to those who are in the constant habit of frequenting the best company. His companion, whom he called Will Smith, although tall and rather good looking, besides being much better dressed, had not, nevertheless, exactly the same ease of demeanour; and was obliged to make up for the want by an additional proportion of assurance. Who these two persons could be,

Peveril could not attempt even to form a guess. There was nothing for it but to watch their manner and conversation.

After speaking a moment in whispers, Smith said to his companion, 'We must go look after our nags for ten minutes, and allow Chaubert to do his office.'

'Will not he appear, and minister before us, then?' said Ganlesse.

'What! he?—he shift a trencher—he hand a cup?—No, you forget whom you speak of. Such an order were enough to make him fall on his own sword—he is already on the borders of despair, because no craw-fish are to be had.'

'Alack-a-day!' replied Ganlesse. 'Heaven forbid I should add to such a calamity! To stable, then, and see we how our steeds eat their provender, while ours is getting ready.'

They adjourned to the stable accordingly, which, though a poor one, had been hastily supplied with whatever was necessary for the accommodation of four excellent horses; one of which, that from which Ganlesse was just dismounted, the groom we have mentioned was cleaning and dressing by the light of a huge wax-candle.

'I am still so far Catholic,' said Ganlesse, laughing, as he saw that Peveril noticed this piece of extravagance. 'My horse is my saint, and I dedicate a candle to him.'

'Without asking so great a favour for mine, which I see standing behind yonder old hen-coop,' replied Peveril, 'I will at least relieve him of his saddle and bridle.'

'Leave him to the lad of the inn,' said Smith; 'he is not worthy of any other person's handling; and I promise you, if you slip a single buckle, you will so flavour of that stable duty, that you might as well eat roast-beef as ragouts, for any relish you will have of them.'

'I love roast-beef as well as ragouts, at any time,' said Peveril, adjusting himself to a task which every young man should know how to perform when need is; 'and my horse, though it be but a sorry jade, will champ better on hay and corn than on an iron bit.'

While he was unsaddling his horse, and shaking down some litter for the poor wearied animal, he heard Smith observe to Ganlesse,—'By my faith, Dick, thou hast fallen into poor Slender's blunder; missed Anne Page, and brought us a great lubberly post-master's boy.'

'Hush, he will hear thee,' answered Ganlesse; 'there are reasons for all things—it is well as it is. But, prithee, tell thy fellow to help the youngster.'

'What!' replied Smith, 'd'ye think I am mad?—Ask Tom Beacon—Tom of Newmarket—Tom of ten thousand, to touch such a four-legged brute as that?—Why, he would turn me away on the spot—discard me, i' faith. It was all he would do to take in hand your own, my good friend; and if you consider him not the better, you are like to stand groom to him yourself to-morrow.'

'Well, Will,' answered Ganlesse, 'I will say that for thee, thou hast a set of the most useless, scoundrelly, insolent vermin about thee, that ever ate up a poor gentleman's revenues.'

'Useless? I deny it,' replied Smith. 'Every one of my fellows does something or other so exquisitely, that it were sin to make him do anything else—it is your Jacks-of-all-trades who are masters of none.—But hark to Chaubert's signal. The coxcomb is twangling it on the lute, to the tune of *Eveillez-vous, belle endormie*.—Come, Master What-d'ye-call' (addressing Peveril)—'get ye some water, and wash this filthy witness from your hand, as Betterton says in the play; for Chaubert's cookery is like Friar Bacon's Head—time is—time was—time will soon be no more.'

So saying, and scarce allowing Julian time to dip his hands in a bucket, and dry them on a horse-cloth, he hurried him from the stable back to the supper-chamber.

Here all was prepared for their meal, with an epicurean delicacy, which rather belonged to the saloon of a palace, than the cabin in which it was displayed. Four dishes of silver, with covers of the same metal, smoked on the table; and three seats were placed for the company. Beside the lower end of the board was a small side-table, to answer the purpose of what is now called a dumb waiter; on which several flasks reared their tall, stately, and swan-like crests, above glasses and rummers. Clean covers were also placed within reach; and a small travelling-case of morocco, hooped with silver, displayed a number of bottles, containing the most approved sauces that culinary ingenuity had then invented.

Smith, who occupied the lower seat, and seemed to act as president of the feast, motioned the two travellers to take their places and begin. 'I would not stay a grace-time,' he said, 'to save a whole nation from perdition. We could bring no chauffettes with any convenience; and even Chaubert is nothing, unless his dishes are tasted in the very moment of projection. Come, uncover, and let us see what he has done for us. —Hum!—ha!—ay—squab-pigeons—wildfowl—young chickens—venison cutlets—and a space in the centre, wet, alas! by a gentle tear from Chaubert's eye, where should have been the *soupe d'écrivisses*. The zeal of that poor fellow is ill repaid by his paltry ten louis per month.'

'A mere trifle,' said Ganlesse; 'but, like yourself, Will, he serves a generous master.'

The repast now commenced; and Julian, though he had seen his young friend the Earl of Derby, and other gallants, affect a considerable degree of interest and skill in the science of the kitchen, and was not himself either an enemy or a stranger to the pleasures of a good table, found that, on the present occasion, he was a mere novice. Both his companions, but Smith in especial, seemed to consider that they were now engaged in the only true and real business of life; and weighed all its minutiæ with a proportional degree of accuracy. To carve the morsel in the most delicate manner—and to apportion the proper seasoning with the accuracy of the chemist—to be aware, exactly, of the order in which one dish should succeed another, and to do plentiful justice to all—was a minuteness of science to which Julian had hitherto been a stranger. Smith accordingly treated him as a mere novice in epicurism, cautioning him to eat his soup before the bouilli,

and to forget the Manx custom of bolting the boiled meat before the broth, as if Cutlar MacCulloch * and all his whingers were at the door. Peveril took the hint in good part, and the entertainment proceeded with animation.

At length Ganlesse paused, and declared the supper exquisite. 'But, my friend Smith,' he added, 'are your wines curious? When you brought all that trash of plates and trumpery into Derbyshire, I hope you did not leave us at the mercy of the strong ale of the shire, as thick and muddy as the squires who drink it?'

'Did I not know that *you* were to meet me, Dick Ganlesse?' answered their host. 'And can you suspect me of such an omission? It is true, you must make champagne and claret serve, for my Burgundy would not bear travelling. But if you have a fancy for sherry, or Vin de Cahors, I have a notion Chaubert and Tom Beacon have brought some for their own drinking.'

'Perhaps the gentlemen would not care to impart?' said Ganlesse.

'O, fie!--anything in the way of civility,' replied Smith. 'They are, in truth, the best-natured lads alive, when treated respectfully; so that if you would prefer'- —

'By no means,' said Ganlesse—'a glass of champagne will serve in a scarcity of better.'

'The cork shall start obsequious to my thumb,'

said Smith; and, as he spoke, he untwisted the wire, and the cork struck the roof of the cabin. Each guest took a large rummer glass of the sparkling beverage, which Peveril had judgment and experience enough to pronounce exquisite.

'Give me your hand, sir,' said Smith; 'it is the first word of sense you have spoken this evening.'

'Wisdom, sir,' replied Peveril, 'is like the best ware in the pedlar's pack, which he never produces till he knows his customer.'

'Sharp as mustard,' returned the *bon vivant*; 'but be wise, most noble pedlar, and take another rummer of this same flask, which you see I have held in an oblique position for your service—not permitting it to retrograde to the perpendicular. Nay, take it off before the bubble bursts on the rim, and the zest is gone.'

'You do me honour, sir,' said Peveril, taking the second glass. 'I wish you a better office than that of my cupbearer.'

'You cannot wish Will Smith one more congenial to his nature,' said Ganlesse. 'Others have a selfish delight in the objects of sense. Will thrives, and is happy by imparting them to his friends.'

'Better help men to pleasures than to pains, Master Ganlesse,' answered Smith, somewhat angrily.

'Nay, wrath thee not, Will,' said Ganlesse; 'and speak no words in haste, lest you may have cause to repent at leisure. Do I blame thy social concern for the pleasures of others? Why, man, thou dost therein most philosophically multiply thine own. A man has but one throat, and can but eat, with his best efforts, some five or six times a day; but thou dinest with every friend that cuts up a capon, and art quaffing wine in other men's gullets, from morning to night—*et sic de cæteris*.'

'Friend Ganlesse,' returned Smith, 'I prithee beware—thou knowest I can cut gullets as well as tickle them.'

'Ay, Will,' answered Ganlesse carelessly; 'I think I have seen thee wave thy whinyard at the throat of a Hogan-Mogan—a Netherlandish weasand, which expanded only on thy natural and mortal objects of aversion,—Dutch cheese, rye-bread, pickled herring, onions, and Geneva.'

'For pity's sake, forbear the description!' said Smith; 'thy words overpower the perfumes, and flavour the apartment like a dish of salmagundi!'

'But for an epiglottis like mine,' continued Ganlesse, 'down which the most delicate morsels are washed by such claret as thou art now pouring out, thou couldst not, in thy bitterest mood, wish a worse fate than to be necklaced somewhat tight by a pair of white arms.'

'By a tenpenny cord,' answered Smith; 'but not till you were dead; that thereafter you be presently embowelled, you being yet alive; that your head be then severed from your body, and your body divided into quarters, to be disposed of at his Majesty's pleasure.—How like you that, Master Richard Ganlesse?'

'E'en as you like the thoughts of dining on bran bread and milk porridge--an extremity which you trust never to be reduced to. But all this shall not prevent me from pledging you in a cup of sound claret.'

As the claret circulated, the glee of the company increased; and Smith, placing the dishes which had been made use of upon the side-table, stamped with his foot on the floor, and the table, sinking down a trap, again rose, loaded with olives, sliced neat's tongue, caviare, and other provocatives for the circulation of the bottle.

'Why, Will,' said Ganlesse, 'thou art a more complete mechanist than I suspected; thou hast brought thy scene shifting inventions to Derbyshire in marvellously short time.'

'A rope and pulleys can be easily come by,' answered Will; 'and with a saw and a plane, I can manage that business in half a day. I love that knack of clean and secret conveyance—thou knowest it was the foundation of my fortunes.'

'It may be the wreck of them too, Will,' replied his friend.

'True, Diccon,' answered Will; 'but, *dum vivimus, vivamus*,—that is my motto; and therewith I present you a brimmer to the health of the fair lady you wot of.'

'Let it come, Will,' replied his friend; and the flask circulated briskly from hand to hand.

Julian did not think it prudent to seem a check on their festivity, as he hoped in its progress something might occur to enable him to judge of the character and purposes of his companions. But he watched them in vain. Their conversation was animated and lively, and often bore reference to the literature of the period, in which the elder seemed particularly well skilled. They also talked freely of the court, and of that numerous class of gallants

* Note P. Cutlar MacCulloch.

who were then described as 'men of wit and pleasure about town;' and to which it seemed probable they themselves appertained.

At length the universal topic of the Popish Plot was started; upon which Ganlesse and Smith seemed to entertain the most opposite opinions. Ganlesse, if he did not maintain the authority of Oates in its utmost extent, contended, that at least it was confirmed in a great measure by the murder of Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey, and the letters written by Coleman to the confessor of the French king.*

With much more noise, and less power of reasoning, Will Smith hesitated not to ridicule and run down the whole discovery, as one of the wildest and most causeless alarms which had ever been sounded in the ears of a credulous public. 'I shall never forget,' he said, 'Sir Godfrey's most original funeral. Two bouncing parsons, well armed with sword and pistol, mounted the pulpit, to secure the third fellow who preached from being murdered in the face of the congregation. Three parsons in one pulpit—three suns in one hemisphere - no wonder men stood aghast at such a prodigy.'†

'What then, Will,' answered his companion, 'you are one of those who think the good knight murdered himself, in order to give credit to the Plot?'

'By my faith, not I,' said the other; 'but some true-blue Protestant might do the job for him, in order to give the thing a better colour. —I will be judged by our silent friend, whether that be not the most feasible solution of the whole.'

'I pray you, pardon me, gentlemen,' said Julian; 'I am but just landed in England, and am a stranger to the particular circumstances which have thrown the nation into such a ferment. It would be the highest degree of assurance in me to give my opinion betwixt gentlemen who argue the matter so ably; besides, to say truth, I confess weariness - your wine is more potent than I expected, or I have drunk more of it than I meant to do.'

'Nay, if an hour's nap will refresh you,' said the elder of the strangers, 'make no ceremony with us. Your bed- all we can offer as such - is that old-fashioned Dutch-built sofa, as the last new phrase calls it. We shall be early stirrers to-morrow morning.'

'And that we may be so,' said Smith, 'I propose that we do sit up all this night I hate lying rough, and detest a pallet-bed. So have at another flask, and the newest lampoon to help it out—

> Now a plague of their votes
> Upon Papists and Plots,
> And be d—d Doctor Oates.
> Tol de rol.'

'Nay, but our puritanic host,' said Ganlesse.

'I have him in my pocket, man--his eyes, ears, nose, and tongue,' answered his boon companion, 'are all in my possession.'

'In that case when you give him back his eyes and nose, I pray you keep his ears and tongue,' answered Ganlesse. 'Seeing and smelling are organs sufficient for such a knave—to hear and tell are things he should have no manner of pretensions to.'

'I grant you it were well done,' answered Smith; 'but it were a robbing of the hangman and the pillory; and I am an honest fellow, who would give Dun ‡ and the devil his due. So,

> All joy to great Cæsar,
> Long life, love, and pleasure;
> May the King live for ever,
> 'Tis no matter for us, boys.'

While this Bacchanalian scene proceeded, Julian had wrapped himself closely in his cloak, and stretched himself on the couch which they had shown to him. He looked towards the table he had left—the tapers seemed to become hazy and dim as he gazed - he heard the sound of voices, but they ceased to convey any impression to his understanding; and in a few minutes he was faster asleep than he had ever been in the whole course of his life.

CHAPTER XXIII.

> The Gordon then his bugle blew,
> And said, Awa, awa;
> The House of Rhodis is all on flame,
> I hauld it time to ga'.
>
> OLD BALLAD.

When Julian awaked the next morning, all was still and vacant in the apartment. The rising sun, which shone through the half-closed shutters, showed some relics of the last night's banquet, which his confused and throbbing head assured him had been carried into a debauch.

Without being much of a boon companion, Julian, like other young men of the time, was not in the habit of shunning wine, which was then used in considerable quantities; and he could not help being surprised that the few cups he had drunk over-night had produced on his frame the effects of excess. He rose up, adjusted his dress, and sought in the apartment for water to perform his morning ablutions, but without success. Wine there was on the table; and beside it one stool stood, and another lay, as if thrown down in the heedless riot of the evening. 'Surely,' he thought to himself, 'the wine must have been very powerful, which rendered me insensible to the noise my companions must have made ere they finished their carouse.'

With momentary suspicion he examined his weapons, and the packet which he had received from the countess, and kept in a secret pocket of his upper coat, bound close about his person. All was safe; and the very operation reminded him of the duties which lay before him. He left the apartment where they had supped, and went into another, wretched enough, where, in a truckle-bed, were stretched two bodies, covered with a rug, the heads belonging to which were amicably deposited upon the same truss of hay. The one was the black shock-

* Note Q. Coleman. † Note R, Godfrey's Funeral.

‡ Dun was the hangman of the day at Tyburn. He was successor of Gregory Brunden, who was by many believed to be the same who dropped the axe upon Charles I., though others were suspected of being the actual regicide.

head of the groom; the other, graced with a long thrum-night-cap, showed a grizzled pate, and a grave caricatured countenance, which the hook-nose and lantern-jaws proclaimed to belong to the Gallic minister of good cheer, whose praises he had heard sung forth on the preceding evening. These worthies seemed to have slumbered in the arms of Bacchus as well as of Morpheus, for there were broken flasks on the floor; and their deep snoring alone showed that they were alive.

Bent upon resuming his journey, as duty and expedience alike dictated, Julian next descended the trap-stair, and essayed a door at the bottom of the steps. It was fastened within. He called—no answer was returned. It must be, he thought, the apartment of the revellers, now probably sleeping as soundly as their dependents still slumbered, and as he himself had done a few minutes before. Should he awake them?—To what purpose? They were men with whom accident had involved him against his own will; and, situated as he was, he thought it wise to take the earliest opportunity of breaking off from society which was suspicious, and might be perilous. Ruminating thus, he essayed another door which admitted him to a bedroom, where lay another harmonious slumberer. The mean utensils, pewter measures, empty cans and casks, with which this room was lumbered, proclaimed it that of the host, who slept surrounded by his professional implements of hospitality and stock-in-trade.

This discovery relieved Peveril from some delicate embarrassment which he had formerly entertained. He put upon the table a piece of money, sufficient, as he judged, to pay his share of the preceding night's reckoning; not caring to be indebted for his entertainment to the strangers, whom he was leaving without the formality of an adieu.

His conscience cleared of this gentleman-like scruple, Peveril proceeded with a light heart, though somewhat a dizzy head, to the stable, which he easily recognised among a few other paltry out-houses. His horse, refreshed with rest, and perhaps not unmindful of his services the evening before, neighed as his master entered the stable; and Peveril accepted the sound as an omen of a prosperous journey. He paid the augury with a sieveful of corn; and, while his palfrey profited by his attention, walked into the fresh air to cool his heated blood, and consider what course he should pursue in order to reach the Castle of Martindale before sunset. His acquaintance with the country in general gave him confidence that he could not have greatly deviated from the nearest road; and, with his horse in good condition, he conceived he might easily reach Martindale before nightfall.

Having adjusted his route in his mind, he returned into the stable to prepare his steed for the journey, and soon led him into the ruinous court-yard of the inn, bridled, saddled, and ready to be mounted. But as Peveril's hand was upon the mane, and his left foot in the stirrup, a hand touched his cloak, and the voice of Ganlesse said, 'What, Master Peveril, is this your foreign breeding? or have you learned in France to take French leave of your friends?'

Julian started like a guilty thing, although a moment's reflection assured him that he was neither wrong nor in danger. 'I cared not to disturb you,' he said, 'although I did come as far as the door of your chamber. I supposed your friend and you might require, after our last night's revel, rather sleep than ceremony. I left my own bed, though a rough one, with more reluctance than usual; and as my occasions oblige me to be an early traveller, I thought it best to depart without leave-taking. I have left a token for mine host on the table of his apartment.'

'It was unnecessary,' said Ganlesse; 'the rascal is already overpaid.—But are you not rather premature in your purpose of departing? My mind tells me that Master Julian Peveril had better proceed with me to London, than turn aside for any purpose whatever. You may see already that I am no ordinary person, but a master-spirit of the time. For the cuckoo I travel with, and whom I indulge in his prodigal follies, he also has his uses. But you are of a different cast; and I not only would serve you, but even wish you to be my own.'

Julian gazed on this singular person when he spoke. We have already said his figure was mean and slight, with very ordinary and unmarked features, unless we were to distinguish the lightnings of a keen grey eye, which corresponded in its careless and prideful glance with the haughty superiority which the stranger assumed in his conversation. It was not till after a momentary pause that Julian replied, 'Can you wonder, sir, that in my circumstances—if they are indeed known to you so well as they seem—I should decline unnecessary confidence on the affairs of moment which have called me hither, or refuse the company of a stranger, who assigns no reason for desiring mine?'

'Be it as you list, young man,' answered Ganlesse; 'only remember hereafter, you had a fair offer—it is not every one to whom I would have made it. If we should meet hereafter, on other, and on worse terms, impute it to yourself and not to me.'

'I understand not your threat,' answered Peveril, 'if a threat be indeed implied. I have done no evil—I feel no apprehension—and I cannot, in common sense, conceive why I should suffer for refusing my confidence to a stranger, who seems to require that I should submit me blindfold to his guidance.'

'Farewell, then, Sir Julian of the Peak,—that may soon be,' said the stranger, removing the hand which he had as yet left carelessly on the horse's bridle.

'How mean you by that phrase?' said Julian; 'and why apply such a title to me?'

The stranger smiled, and only answered, 'Here our conference ends. The way is before you. You will find it longer and rougher than that by which I would have guided you.'

So saying, Ganlesse turned his back and walked toward the house. On the threshold he turned about once more, and, seeing that Peveril had not yet moved from the spot, he again smiled and beckoned to him; but Julian, recalled by that sign to recollection, spurred his horse and set forward on his journey.

It was not long ere his local acquaintance

with the country enabled him to regain the road to Martindale, from which he had diverged on the preceding evening for about two miles. But the roads, or rather the paths, of this wild country, so much satirized by their native poet, Cotton, were so complicated in some places, so difficult to be traced in others, and so unfit for hasty travelling in almost all, that, in spite of Julian's utmost exertions, and though he made no longer delay upon the journey than was necessary to bait his horse at a small hamlet through which he passed at noon, it was nightfall ere he reached an eminence, from which, an hour sooner, the battlements of Martindale Castle would have been visible; and where, when they were hid in night, their situation was indicated by a light constantly maintained in a lofty tower, called the Warder's Turret; and which domestic beacon had acquired, through all the neighbourhood, the name of Peveril's Pole-star.

This was regularly kindled at curfew toll, and supplied with as much wood and charcoal as maintained the light till sunrise; and at no period was the ceremonial omitted, saving during the space intervening between the death of a lord of the castle and his interment. When this last event had taken place, the nightly beacon was rekindled with some ceremony, and continued till fate called the successor to sleep with his fathers. It is not known from what circumstance the practice of maintaining this light originally sprung. Tradition spoke of it doubtfully. Some thought it was the signal of general hospitality, which, in ancient times, guided the wandering knight, or the weary pilgrim, to rest and refreshment. Others spoke of it as a 'love-lighted watch-fire,' by which the provident anxiety of a former lady of Martindale guided her husband homeward through the terrors of a midnight storm. The less favourable construction of unfriendly neighbours of the dissenting persuasion ascribed the origin and continuance of this practice to the assuming pride of the family of Peveril, who thereby chose to intimate their ancient *suzeraintè* over the whole country, in the manner of the admiral who carries the lantern in the poop, for the guidance of the fleet. And in the former times, our old friend, Master Solsgrace, dealt from the pulpit many a hard hit against Sir Geoffrey as he that had raised his horn, and set up his candlestick on high. Certain it is, that all the Peverils, from father to son, had been especially attentive to the maintenance of this custom, as something intimately connected with the dignity of their family; and in the hands of Sir Geoffrey the observance was not likely to be omitted.

Accordingly, the Polar-star of Peveril had continued to beam more or less brightly during all the vicissitudes of the Civil War; and glimmered, however faintly, during the subsequent period of Sir Geoffrey's depression. But he was often heard to say, and sometimes to swear, that while there was a perch of woodland left to the estate, the old beacon-grate should not lack replenishing. All this his son Julian well knew; and therefore it was with no ordinary feelings of surprise and anxiety, that, looking in the direction of the Castle, he perceived that the light was not visible. He halted—rubbed his eyes—shifted his position—and endeavoured, in vain, to persuade himself that he had mistaken the point from which the Polar-star of his house was visible, or that some newly intervening obstacle, the growth of a plantation, perhaps, or the erection of some building, intercepted the light of the beacon. But a moment's reflection assured him that, from the high and free situation which Martindale Castle bore in reference to the surrounding country, this could not have taken place; and the inference necessarily forced itself upon his mind, that Sir Geoffrey, his father, was either deceased, or that the family must have been disturbed by some strange calamity, under the pressure of which their wonted custom and solemn usage had been neglected.

Under the influence of undefinable apprehension, young Peveril now struck the spurs into his jaded steed, and, forcing him down the broken and steep path, at a pace which set safety at defiance, he arrived at the village of Martindale-Moultrassie, eagerly desirous to ascertain the cause of this ominous eclipse. The street, through which his tired horse paced slow and reluctantly, was now deserted and empty; and scarcely a candle twinkled from a casement, except from the latticed window of the little inn, called the Peveril Arms, from which a broad light shone, and several voices were heard in rude festivity.

Before the door of this inn, the jaded palfrey, guided by the instinct or experience which makes a hackney well acquainted with the outside of a house of entertainment, made so sudden and determined a pause, that, notwithstanding his haste, the rider thought it best to dismount, expecting to be readily supplied with a fresh horse by Roger Raine, the landlord, the ancient dependent of his family. He also wished to relieve his anxiety, by inquiring concerning the state of things at the Castle, when he was surprised to hear, bursting from the taproom of the loyal old host, a well-known song of the Commonwealth time, which some puritanical wag had written in reprehension of the Cavaliers and their dissolute courses, and in which his father came in for a lash of the satirist.

> Ye thought in the world there was no power to tame ye,
> So you tippled and drabbed till the saints overcame ye.
> 'Forsooth,' and 'Ne'er stir, sir, have vanquish'd 'G— d— n me,'
> Which nobody can deny.
>
> There was bluff old Sir Geoffrey loved brandy and mum well,
> And to see a beer-glass turned over the thumb well;
> But he fled like the wind, before Fairfax and Cromwell,
> Which nobody can deny.

Some strange revolution, Julian was aware, must have taken place, both in the village and in the Castle, ere these sounds of unseemly insult could have been poured forth in the very inn which was decorated with the armorial bearings of his family; and not knowing how far it might be advisable to intrude on these unfriendly revellers, without the power of repelling or chastising their insolence, he led his horse to a back door, which, as he recollected, communicated with the landlord's apartment, having determined to make private inquiry of him concerning the state of matters at the Castle. He knocked repeatedly, and as often called on Roger Raine with an earnest

but stifled voice. At length a female voice replied by the usual inquiry, 'Who is there?'

'It is I, Dame Raine—I, Julian Peveril—tell your husband to come to me presently.'

'Alack, and a-well-a-day, Master Julian, if it be really you—you are to know my poor goodman has gone where he can come to no one; but, doubtless, we shall all go to him, as Matthew Chamberlain says.'

'He is dead, then?' said Julian. 'I am extremely sorry'——

'Dead six months and more, Master Julian; and, let me tell you, it is a long time for a lone woman, as Matt Chamberlain says.'

'Well, do you or your chamberlain undo the door. I want a fresh horse; and I want to know how things are at the Castle.'

The Castle—lack-a-day!—Chamberlain—Matthew Chamberlain—I say, Matt!'

Matt Chamberlain apparently was at no great distance, for he presently answered her call; and Peveril, as he stood close to the door, could hear them whispering to each other, and distinguish in a great measure what they said. And here it may be noticed, that Dame Raine, accustomed to submit to the authority of old Roger, who vindicated as well the husband's domestic prerogative, as that of the monarch in the State, had, when left a buxom widow, been so far incommoded by the exercise of her newly-acquired independence, that she had recourse, upon all occasions, to the advice of Matt Chamberlain; and as Matt began no longer to go slipshod, and in a red nightcap, but wore Spanish shoes, and a high-crowned beaver (at least of a Sunday), and moreover was called Master Matthew by his fellow-servants, the neighbours in the village argued a speedy change of the name on the sign-post; nay, perhaps, of the very sign itself, for Matthew was a bit of a Puritan, and no friend to Peveril of the Peak.

"Now counsel me, an you be a man, Matt Chamberlain,' said Widow Raine; 'for never stir, if here be not Master Julian's own self, and he wants a horse, and what not, and all as if things were as they wont to be.'

'Why, dame, an ye will walk by my counsel,' said the chamberlain, 'e'en shake him off—let him be jogging while his boots are green. This is no world for folks to scald their fingers in other folks' broth.'

'And that is well spoken, truly,' answered Dame Raine; 'but then look you, Matt, we have eaten their bread, and, as my poor goodman used to say'——

'Nay, nay, dame, they that walk by the counsel of the dead shall have none of the living; and so you may do as you list; but if you will walk by mine, drop latch, and draw bolt, and bid him seek quarters farther—that is my counsel.'

'I desire nothing of you, sirrah,' said Peveril, 'save but to know how Sir Geoffrey and his lady do?'

'Lack-a-day!—lack-a-day!' in a tone of sympathy, was the only answer he received from the landlady; and the conversation betwixt her and her chamberlain was resumed, but in a tone too low to be overheard.

At length Matt Chamberlain spoke aloud, and with a tone of authority: 'We undo no doors at this time of night, for it is against the justices' orders, and might cost us our licence; and for the Castle, the road up to it lies before you, and I think you know it as well as we do.'

'And I know you,' said Peveril, remounting his wearied horse, 'for an ungrateful churl, whom, on the first opportunity, I will assuredly cudgel to a mummy.'

To this menace Matthew made no reply, and Peveril presently heard him leave the apartment, after a few earnest words betwixt him and his mistress.

Impatient at this delay, and at the evil omen implied in these people's conversation and deportment, Peveril, after some vain spurring of his horse, which positively refused to move a step farther, dismounted once more, and was about to pursue his journey on foot, notwithstanding the extreme disadvantage under which the high riding-boots of the period laid those who attempted to walk with such encumbrances, when he was stopped by a gentle call from the window.

Her counsellor was no sooner gone, than the good-nature and habitual veneration of the dame for the house of Peveril, and perhaps some fear for her counsellor's bones, induced her to open the casement, and cry, but in a low and timid tone, 'Hist! hist! Master Julian—be you gone?'

'Not yet, dame,' said Julian; 'though it seems my stay is unwelcome.'

'Nay, but, good young master, it is because men counsel so differently; for here was my poor old Roger Raine would have thought the chimney corner too cold for you; and here is Matt Chamberlain thinks the cold court-yard is warm enough.'

'Never mind that, dame,' said Julian; 'do but only tell me what has happened at Martindale Castle? I see the beacon is extinguished.'

'Is it in troth?—ay, like enough—then, good Sir Geoffrey has gone to heaven with my old Roger Raine!'

'Sacred Heaven!' exclaimed Peveril; 'when was my father taken ill?'

'Never as I knows of,' said the dame; 'but, about three hours since, arrived a party at the Castle, with buff coats and bandaliers, and one of the Parliament's folks, like in Oliver's time. My old Roger Raine would have shut the gates of the inn against them, but he is in the church-yard, and Matt says it is against law; and so they came in and refreshed men and horses, and sent for Master Bridgenorth, that is at Moultrassie Hall even now; and so they went up to the Castle, and there was a fray, it is like, as the old knight was no man to take napping, as poor Roger Raine used to say. Always the officers had the best on't; and reason there is, since they had the law on their side, as our Matthew says. But since the Pole-star of the Castle is out, as your honour says, why, doubtless, the old gentleman is dead.'

'Gracious Heaven!—Dear dame, for love or gold, let me have a horse to make for the Castle!'

'The Castle?' said the dame; 'the Roundheads, as my poor Roger called them, will kill you as they have killed your father! Better creep into the woodhouse, and I will send Bett with a blanket and some supper—Or stay—my

old Dobbin stands in the little stable beside the hencoop—e'en take him, and make the best of your way out of the country, for there is no safety here for you. Hear what songs some of them are singing at the tap!—so take Dobbin, and do not forget to leave your own horse instead.'

Peveril waited to hear no further, only that, just as he turned to go off to the stable, the compassionate female was heard to exclaim,—'O Lord! what will Matthew Chamberlain say?' but instantly added, 'Let him say what he will, I may dispose of what's my own.'

With the haste of a double-fee'd hostler did Julian exchange the equipments of his jaded brute with poor Dobbin, who stood quietly tugging at his rackful of hay, without dreaming of the business which was that night destined for him. Notwithstanding the darkness of the place, Julian succeeded marvellous quickly in preparing for his journey; and, leaving his own horse to find its way to Dobbin's rack by instinct, he leaped upon his new acquisition, and spurred him sharply against the hill, which rises steeply from the village to the Castle. Dobbin, little accustomed to such exertions, snorted, panted, and trotted as briskly as he could, until at length he brought his rider before the entrance-gate of his father's ancient seat.

The moon was now rising, but the portal was hidden from its beams, being situated, as we have mentioned elsewhere, in a deep recess betwixt two large flanking towers. Peveril dismounted, turned his horse loose, and advanced to the gate, which, contrary to his expectation, he found open. He entered the large court-yard; and could then perceive that lights yet twinkled in the lower part of the building, although he had not before observed them, owing to the height of the outward walls. The main door, or great hall-gate, as it was called, was, since the partially decayed state of the family, seldom opened, save on occasions of particular ceremony. A smaller postern door served the purpose of ordinary entrance; and to that Julian now repaired. This also was open—a circumstance which would of itself have alarmed him, had he not already had so many causes for apprehension. His heart sank within him as he turned to the left, through a small outward hall, towards the great parlour, which the family usually occupied as a sitting-apartment; and his alarm became still greater, when, on a nearer approach, he heard proceeding from thence the murmur of several voices. He threw the door of the apartment wide; and the sight which was thus displayed warranted all the evil bodings which he had entertained.

In front of him stood the old knight, whose arms were strongly secured, over the elbows, by a leathern belt drawn tight round them, and made fast behind; two ruffianly-looking men, apparently his guards, had hold of his doublet. The scabbardless sword which lay on the floor, and the empty sheath which hung by Sir Geoffrey's side, showed the stout old Cavalier had not been reduced to this state of bondage without an attempt at resistance. Two or three persons, having their backs turned towards Julian, sat round a table, and appeared engaged in writing—the voices which he had heard were theirs as they murmured to each other. Lady Peveril—the emblem of death, so pallid was her countenance—stood at the distance of a yard or two from her husband, upon whom her eyes were fixed with an intenseness of gaze, like that of one who looks her last on the object which she loves the best. She was the first to perceive Julian; and she exclaimed, 'Merciful Heaven!—my son!—the misery of our house is complete!'

'My son!' echoed Sir Geoffrey, starting from the sullen state of dejection, and swearing a deep oath—'thou art come in the right time, Julian. Strike me one good blow—cleave me that traitorous thief from the crown to the brisket! and, that done, I care not what comes next."

The sight of his father's situation made the son forget the inequality of the contest which he was about to provoke.

'Villains,' he said, 'unhand him!' and, rushing on the guards with his drawn sword, compelled them to let go Sir Geoffrey, and stand on their own defence.

Sir Geoffrey, thus far liberated, shouted to his lady. 'Undo the belt, dame, and we will have three good blows for it yet—they must fight well that beat both father and son.'

But one of those men who started up from the writing-table when the fray commenced, prevented Lady Peveril from rendering her husband this assistance; while another easily mastered the hampered knight, though not without receiving several severe kicks from his heavy boots—his condition permitting him no other mode of defence. A third, who saw that Julian, young, active, and animated with the fury of a son who fights for his parents, was compelling the two guards to give ground, seized on his collar, and attempted to master his sword. Suddenly dropping that weapon, and snatching one of his pistols, Julian fired it at the head of the person by whom he was thus assailed. He did not drop, but, staggering back as if he had received a severe blow, showed Peveril, as he sunk into a chair, the features of old Bridgenorth, blackened with the explosion, which had even set fire to a part of his grey hair. A cry of astonishment escaped from Julian; and, in the alarm and horror of the moment, he was easily secured and disarmed by those with whom he had been at first engaged.

'Heed it not, Julian,' said Sir Geoffrey; 'heed it not, my brave boy—that shot has balanced all accompts!—but how—what the devil—he lives!—Was your pistol loaded with chaff? or has the foul fiend given him proof against lead?'

There was some reason for Sir Geoffrey's surprise, since, as he spoke, Major Bridgenorth collected himself—sat up in the chair as one who recovers from a stunning blow—then rose, and, wiping with his handkerchief the marks of the explosion from his face, he approached Julian, and said, in the same cold, unaltered tone in which he usually expressed himself, 'Young man, you have reason to bless God, who has this day saved you from the commission of a great crime.'

'Bless the devil, ye crop-eared knave!' exclaimed Sir Geoffrey; 'for nothing less than the father of all fanatics saved your brains from

being blown about like the rinsings of Beelzebub's porridge-pot!'

'Sir Geoffrey,' said Major Bridgenorth, 'I have already told you that with you I will hold no argument; for to you I am not accountable for any of my actions.'

'Master Bridgenorth,' said the lady, making a strong effort to speak, and to speak with calmness, 'whatever revenge your Christian state of conscience may permit you to take on my husband—I—I, who have some right to experience compassion at your hand, for most sincerely did I compassionate you when the hand of Heaven was heavy on you—I implore you not to involve my son in our common ruin!—Let the destruction of the father and mother, with the ruin of our ancient house, satisfy your resentment for any wrong which you have ever received at my husband's hand.'

'Hold your peace, housewife,' said the knight; 'you speak like a fool, and meddle with what concerns you not.—Wrong at *my* hand? The cowardly knave has ever had but even too much right. Had I cudgelled the cur soundly when he first bayed at me, the cowardly mongrel had been now crouching at my feet, instead of flying at my throat. But if I get through this action, as I have got through worse weather, I will pay off old scores, as far as tough crab-tree and cold iron will bear me out.'

'Sir Geoffrey,' replied Bridgenorth, 'if the birth you boast of has made you blind to better principles, it might have at least taught you civility. What do you complain of? I am a magistrate; and I execute a warrant, addressed to me by the first authority in the State. I am a creditor also of yours; and law arms me with powers to recover my own property from the hands of an improvident debtor.'

'You a magistrate!' said the knight; 'much such a magistrate as Noll was a monarch. Your heart is up, I warrant, because you have the King's pardon; and are replaced on the bench, forsooth, to persecute the poor Papist. There was never turmoil in the State, but knaves had their vantage by it—never pot boiled, but the scum was cast uppermost.'

'For God's sake, my dearest husband,' said Lady Peveril, 'cease this wild talk! It can but incense Master Bridgenorth, who might otherwise consider, that in common charity'——

'Incense him!' said Sir Geoffrey, impatiently interrupting her; 'God's death, madam, you will drive me mad! Have you lived so long in this world, and yet expect consideration and charity from an old starved wolf like that? And if he had it, do you think that I, or you, madam, as my wife, are subjects for his charity?—Julian, my poor fellow, I am sorry thou hast come so unluckily, since thy petronel was not better loaded—but thy credit is lost for ever as a marksman.'

This angry colloquy passed so rapidly on all sides, that Julian, scarce recovered from the extremity of astonishment with which he was overwhelmed at finding himself suddenly plunged into a situation of such extremity, had no time to consider in what way he could most effectually act for the succour of his parents. To speak Bridgenorth fair, seemed the more prudent course; but to this his pride could hardly stoop; yet he forced himself to say, with as much calmness as he could assume, 'Master Bridgenorth, since you act as a magistrate, I desire to be treated according to the laws of England; and demand to know of what we are accused, and by whose authority we are arrested?'

'Here is another howlet for ye!' exclaimed the impetuous old knight; 'his mother speaks to a Puritan of charity; and thou must talk of law to a round-headed rebel, with a wannion to you! What warrant hath he, think ye, beyond the Parliament's or the devil's?'

'Who speaks of the Parliament?' said a person entering, whom Peveril recognised as the official person whom he had before seen at the Horse-dealer's, and who now bustled in with all the conscious dignity of plenary authority,—'Who talks of the Parliament?' he exclaimed. 'I promise you, enough has been found in this house to convict twenty plotters—Here be arms, and that good store. Bring them in, Captain.'

'The very same,' exclaimed the captain, approaching, 'which I mention in my printed Narrative of Information, lodged before the Honourable House of Commons; they were commissioned from old Vander Huys of Rotterdam, by orders of Don John of Austria, for the service of the Jesuits.'

'Now, by this light,' said Sir Geoffrey, 'they are the pikes, musketoons, and pistols, that have been hidden in the garret ever since Naseby fight!'

'And here,' said the captain's yoke-fellow, Everett, 'are proper priest's trappings—antiphoners, and missals, and copes, I warrant you—ay, and proper pictures, too, for Papists to mutter and bow over.'

'Now, plague on thy snuffling whine,' said Sir Geoffrey; 'here is a rascal will swear my grandmother's old farthingale to be priest's vestments, and the story book of Owlenspiegel,* a Popish missal!'

'But how's this, Master Bridgenorth?' said Topham, addressing the magistrate; 'your honour has been as busy as we have; and you have caught another knave while we recovered these toys.'

'I think, sir,' said Julian, 'if you look into your warrant, which, if I mistake not, names the persons whom you are directed to arrest, you will find you have no title to apprehend me.'

'Sir,' said the officer, puffing with importance, 'I do not know who you are; but I would you were the best man in England, that I might teach you the respect due to the warrant of the House. Sir, there steps not the man within the British seas, but I will arrest him on authority of this bit of parchment; and I do arrest you accordingly.—What do you accuse him of, gentlemen?'

Dangerfield swaggered forward, and, peeping under Julian's hat, 'Stop my vital breath,' he exclaimed, 'but I have seen you before, my friend, an I could but think where; but my memory is not worth a bean, since I have been obliged to use it so much of late, in the behalf of the poor State. But I do know the fellow;

* [*The Adventures of Ulenspiegel*, a Flemish romance, printed about 1483.]

and I have seen him amongst the Papists—I'll take that on my assured damnation.'

'Why, Captain Dangerfield,' said the captain's smoother, but more dangerous associate,—'verily, it is the same youth whom we saw at the horse-merchant's yesterday; and we had matter against him then, only Master Topham did not desire us to bring it out.'

'Ye may bring out what ye will against him now,' said Topham, 'for he hath blasphemed the warrant of the House. I think ye said ye saw him somewhere.'

'Ay, verily,' said Everett, 'I have seen him amongst the seminary pupils at Saint Omer's he was who but he with the regents there.'

'Nay, Master Everett, collect yourself,' said Topham; 'for, as I think, you said you saw him at a consult of the Jesuits in London.'

'It was I said so, Master Topham,' said the undaunted Dangerfield; 'and mine is the tongue that will swear it.'

'Good Master Topham,' said Bridgenorth, 'you may suspend further inquiry at present, as it doth but fatigue and perplex the memory of the King's witnesses.'

'You are wrong, Master Bridgenorth—clearly wrong. It doth but keep them in wind—only breathes them like greyhounds before a coursing match.'

'Be it so,' said Bridgenorth, with his usual indifference of manner; 'but at present this youth must stand committed upon a warrant, which I will presently sign, of having assaulted me while in discharge of my duty as a magistrate, for the rescue of a person legally attached. Did you not hear the report of a pistol?'

'I will swear to it,' said Everett.

'And I,' said Dangerfield. 'While we were making search in the cellar, I heard something very like a pistol-shot; but I conceived it to be the drawing of a long-corked bottle of sack, to see whether there were any Popish relics in the inside on't.'

'A pistol-shot!' exclaimed Topham; 'here might have been a second Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey's matter.—O, thou real spawn of the red old dragon! for he too would have resisted the House's warrant, had we not taken him something at unawares.—Master Bridgenorth, you are a judicious magistrate, and a worthy servant of the State—I would we had many such sound Protestant justices. Shall I have this young fellow away with his parents—what think you?—or will you keep him for re-examination?'

'Master Bridgenorth,' said Lady Peveril, in spite of her husband's efforts to interrupt her, 'for God's sake, if ever you knew what it was to love one of the many children you have lost, or her who is now left to you, do not pursue your vengeance to the blood of my poor boy! I will forgive you all the rest—all the distress you have wrought—all the yet greater misery with which you threaten us; but do not be extreme with one who never can have offended you! Believe that, if your ears are shut against the cry of a despairing mother, those which are open to the complaint of all who sorrow will hear my petition and your answer!'

The agony of mind and of voice with which Lady Peveril uttered these words, seemed to thrill through all present, though most of them were but too much inured to such scenes. Every one was silent, when, ceasing to speak, she fixed on Bridgenorth her eyes, glistening with tears, with the eager anxiety of one whose life or death seemed to depend upon the answer to be returned. Even Bridgenorth's inflexibility seemed to be shaken; and his voice was tremulous, as he answered, 'Madam, I would to God I had the present means of relieving your great distress, otherwise than by recommending to you a reliance upon Providence; and that you take heed to your spirit, that it murmur not under this crook in your lot. For me, I am but as a rod in the hand of the strong man, which smites not of itself, but because it is wielded by the arm of him who holds the same.'

'Even as I and my black rod are guided by the Commons of England,' said Master Topham, who seemed marvellously pleased with the illustration.

Julian now thought it time to say something in his own behalf; and he endeavoured to temper it with as much composure as it was possible for him to assume. 'Master Bridgenorth,' he said, 'I neither dispute your authority, nor this gentleman's warrant'

'You do not?' said Topham. 'O ho, master youngster, I thought we should bring you to your senses presently!'

'Then, if you so will it, Master Topham,' said Bridgenorth, 'thus it shall be. You shall set out with early day, taking with you, towards London, the persons of Sir Geoffrey and Lady Peveril; and that they may travel according to their quality, you will allow them their coach, sufficiently guarded.'

'I will travel with them myself,' said Topham; 'for these rough Derbyshire roads are no easy riding; and my very eyes are weary with looking on these bleak hills. In the coach I can sleep as sound as if I were in the House, and Master Bodderbrains on his legs.'

'It will become you so to take your ease, Master Topham,' answered Bridgenorth. 'For this youth, I will take him under my charge, and bring him up myself.'

'I may not be answerable for that, worthy Master Bridgenorth,' said Topham, 'since he comes within the warrant of the House.'

'Nay, but,' said Bridgenorth, 'he is only under custody for an assault, with the purpose of a rescue; and I counsel you against meddling with him, unless you have stronger guard. Sir Geoffrey is now old and broken, but this young fellow is in the flower of his youth, and hath at his beck all the debauched young Cavaliers of the neighbourhood—You will scarce cross the country without a rescue.'

Topham eyed Julian wistfully, as a spider may be supposed to look upon a stray wasp which has got into his web, and which he longs to secure, though he fears the consequences of attempting him.

Julian himself replied, 'I know not if this separation be well or ill meant on your part, Master Bridgenorth; but on mine, I am only desirous to share the fate of my parents; and therefore I will give my word of honour to attempt neither rescue nor escape, on condition you do not separate me from them.'

'Do not say so, Julian,' said his mother; 'abide with Master Bridgenorth—my mind tells me he cannot mean so ill by us as his rough conduct would now lead us to infer.'

'And I,' said Sir Geoffrey, 'know that, between the doors of my father's house and the gates of hell, there steps not such a villain on the ground! And if I wish my hands ever to be unbound again, it is because I hope for one downright blow at a grey head, that has hatched more treason than the whole Long Parliament.'

'Away with thee!' said the zealous officer; 'is Parliament a word for so foul a mouth as thine?—Gentlemen,' he added, turning to Everett and Dangerfield, 'you will bear witness to this.'

'To his having reviled the House of Commons—by G—d, that I will!' said Dangerfield; 'I will take it on my damnation.'

'And verily,' said Everett, 'as he spoke of Parliament generally, he hath contemned the House of Lords also.'

'Why, ye poor insignificant wretches,' said Sir Geoffrey, 'whose very life is a lie and whose bread is perjury—would you pervert my innocent words almost as soon as they have quitted my lips? I tell you the country is well weary of you; and should Englishmen come to their senses, the jail, the pillory, the whipping-post, and the gibbet, will be too good preferment for such base blood-suckers. -And now, Master Bridgenorth, you and they may do your worst; for I will not open my mouth to utter a single word while I am in the company of such knaves.'

'Perhaps, Sir Geoffrey,' answered Bridgenorth, 'you would better have consulted your own safety in adopting that resolution a little sooner—the tongue is a little member, but it causes much strife.—You, Master Julian, will please to follow me, and without remonstrance or resistance; for you must be aware that I have the means of compelling.'

Julian was, indeed, but too sensible that he had no other course but that of submission to superior force; but ere he left the apartment, he kneeled down to receive his father's blessing, which the old man bestowed not without a tear in his eye, and in the emphatic words, 'God bless thee, my boy; and keep thee good and true to Church and King, whatever wind shall bring foul weather!'

His mother was only able to pass her hand over his head, and to implore him, in a low tone of voice, not to be rash or violent in any attempt to render them assistance. 'We are innocent,' she said, 'my son—we are innocent—and we are in God's hands. Be the thought our best comfort and protection.'

Bridgenorth now signed to Julian to follow him, which he did, accompanied, or rather conducted, by the two guards who had first disarmed him. When they had passed from the apartment, and were at the door of the outward hall, Bridgenorth asked Julian whether he should consider him as under parole; in which case, he said, he would dispense with all other security but his own promise.

Peveril, who could not help hoping somewhat from the favourable and unresentful manner in which he was treated by one whose life he had so recently attempted, replied, without hesitation, that he would give his parole for twenty-four hours, neither to attempt to escape by force nor by flight.

'It is wisely said,' replied Bridgenorth; 'for though you might cause bloodshed, be assured that your utmost efforts could do no service to your parents.—Horses there—horses to the court-yard!'

The trampling of horses was soon heard; and in obedience to Bridgenorth's signal, and in compliance with his promise, Julian mounted one which was presented to him, and prepared to leave the house of his fathers, in which his parents were now prisoners, and to go, he knew not whither, under the custody of one known to be the ancient enemy of his family. He was rather surprised at observing that Bridgenorth and he were about to travel without any other attendants.

When they were mounted, and as they rode slowly towards the outer gate of the court-yard, Bridgenorth said to him, 'It is not every one who would thus unreservedly commit his safety, by travelling at night, and unaided, with the hot-brained youth who so lately attempted his life.'

'Master Bridgenorth,' said Julian, 'I might tell you truly, that I knew you not at the time when I directed my weapon against you; but I must also add, that the cause in which I used it might have rendered me, even had I known you, a slight respecter of your person. At present, I do know you; and have neither malice against your person, nor the liberty of a parent to fight for. Besides, you have my word; and when was a Peveril known to break it?'

'Ay,' replied his companion, 'a Peveril—a Peveril of the Peak!—a name which has long sounded like a war-trumpet in the land; but which has now perhaps sounded its last loud note. Look back, young man, on the darksome turrets of your father's house, which uplift themselves as proudly on the brow of the hill, as their owners raised themselves above the sons of their people. Think upon your father, a captive—yourself in some sort a fugitive—your light quenched—your glory abased—your estate wrecked and impoverished. Think that Providence has subjected the destinies of the race of Peveril to one whom, in their aristocratic pride, they held as a plebeian upstart. Think of this; and when you again boast of your ancestry, remember that He who raiseth the lowly can also abase the high in heart.'

Julian did indeed gaze for an instant, with a swelling heart, upon the dimly-seen turrets of his paternal mansion, on which poured the moonlight, mixed with long shadows of the towers and trees. But while he sadly acknowledged the truth of Bridgenorth's observation, he felt indignant at his ill-timed triumph. 'If fortune had followed worth,' he said, 'the Castle of Martindale, and the name of Peveril, had afforded no room for their enemy's vain-glorious boast. But those who have stood high on Fortune's wheel, must abide by the consequence of its revolutions. This much I will at least say for my father's house, that it has not stood unhonoured; nor will it fall—if it is to fall—unlamented—Forbear, then, if you are indeed

the Christian you call yourself, to exult in the misfortunes of others, or to confide in your own prosperity. If the light of our house be now quenched, God can rekindle it in his own good time.'

Peveril broke off in extreme surprise; for, as he spake the last words, the bright red beams of the family beacon began again to glimmer from its wonted watch-tower, checkering the pale moonbeam with a ruddier glow. Bridgenorth also gazed on this unexpected illumination with surprise, and not, as it seemed, without disquietude. 'Young man,' he resumed, 'it can scarcely be but that Heaven intends to work great things by your hand, so singularly has that augury followed on your words.'

So saying, he put his horse once more in motion; and looking back, from time to time, as if to assure himself that the beacon of the Castle was actually rekindled, he led the way through the well-known paths and alleys to his own house of Moultrassie, followed by Peveril, who, although sensible that the light might be altogether accidental, could not but receive as a good omen an event so intimately connected with the traditions and usages of his family.

They alighted at the Hall door, which was hastily opened by a female; and while the deep tone of Bridgenorth called on the groom to take their horses, the well-known voice of his daughter Alice was heard to exclaim in thanksgiving to God, who had restored her father in safety.

CHAPTER XXIV.

We meet, as men see phantoms in a dream,
Which glide, and sigh, and sign, and move their lips,
But make no sound; or, if they utter voice,
'Tis but a low and undistinguished moaning,
Which has nor word nor sense of utter'd sound.
THE CHIEFTAIN.

WE said, at the conclusion of the last chapter, that a female form appeared at the door of Moultrassie Hall; and that the well-known accents of Alice Bridgenorth were heard to hail the return of her father from what she naturally dreaded as a perilous visit to the Castle of Martindale.

Julian, who followed his conductor with a throbbing heart into the lighted hall, was therefore prepared to see her whom he best loved with her arms thrown around her father. The instant she had quitted his paternal embrace, she was aware of the unexpected guest who had returned in his company. A deep blush, rapidly succeeded by a deadly paleness, and again by a slighter suffusion, showed plainly to her lover that his sudden appearance was anything but indifferent to her. He bowed profoundly—a courtesy which she returned with equal formality, but did not venture to approach more nearly, feeling at once the delicacy of his own situation and of hers.

Major Bridgenorth turned his cold, fixed, grey, melancholy glance, first on the one of them and then on the other. 'Some,' he said gravely, 'would, in my case, have avoided this meeting; but I have confidence in you both, although you are young, and beset with the snares incidental to your age. There are those within who should not know that ye have been acquainted. Wherefore, be wise, and be as strangers to each other.'

Julian and Alice exchanged glances as her father turned from them, and, lifting a lamp which stood in the entrance-hall, led the way to the interior apartment. There was little of consolation in this exchange of looks; for the sadness of Alice's glance was mingled with fear, and that of Julian clouded by an anxious sense of doubt. The look also was but momentary; for Alice, springing to her father, took the light out of his hand, and, stepping before him, acted as the usher of both into the large oaken parlour, which has been already mentioned as the apartment in which Bridgenorth had spent the hours of dejection which followed the death of his consort and family. It was now lighted up as for the reception of company; and five or six persons sat in it, in the plain, black, stiff dress, which was affected by the formal Puritans, of the time, in evidence of their contempt of the manners of the luxurious court of Charles the Second; amongst whom, excess of extravagance in apparel, like excess of every other kind, was highly fashionable.

Julian at first glanced his eyes but slightly along the range of grave and severe faces which composed this society—men, sincere, perhaps, in their pretensions to a superior purity of conduct and morals, but in whom that high praise was somewhat chastened by an affected austerity in dress and manners, allied to those Pharisees of old, who made broad their phylacteries, and would be seen of man to fast, and to discharge with rigid punctuality the observances of the law. Their dress was almost uniformly a black cloak and doublet, cut straight and close, and undecorated with lace or embroidery of any kind, black Flemish breeches and hose, square-toed shoes, with large roses made of serge ribbon. Two or three had large loose boots of calf-leather, and almost every one was begirt with a long rapier, which was suspended by leathern thongs to a plain belt of buff, or of black leather. One or two of the elder guests, whose hair had been thinned by time, had their heads covered with a skull-cap of black silk or velvet, which, being drawn down betwixt the ears and the skull, and permitting no hair to escape, occasioned the former to project in the ungraceful manner which may be remarked in old pictures, and which procured for the Puritans the term of 'prick-eared Roundheads,' so unceremoniously applied to them by their contemporaries.

These worthies were ranged against the wall, each in his ancient high-backed, long-legged chair; neither looking towards, nor apparently discoursing with each other; but plunged in their own reflections, or awaiting, like an assembly of Quakers, the quickening power of divine inspiration.

Major Bridgenorth glided along this formal society with noiseless step, and a composed severity of manner, resembling their own. He paused before each in succession, and apparently communicated, as he passed, the transactions of the evening, and the circumstances under which

the heir of Martindale Castle was now a guest at Moultrassie Hall. Each seemed to stir at his brief detail, like a range of statues in an enchanted hall, starting into something like life as a talisman is applied to them successively. Most of them, as they heard the narrative of their host, cast upon Julian a look of curiosity, blended with haughty scorn and the consciousness of spiritual superiority; though, in one or two instances, the milder influences of compassion were sufficiently visible.—Peveril would have undergone this gauntlet of eyes with more impatience, had not his own been for the time engaged in following the motions of Alice, who glided through the apartment; and only speaking very briefly, and in whispers, to one or two of the company who addressed her, took her place beside a treble-hooded old lady, the only female of the party, and addressed herself to her in such earnest conversation, as might dispense with her raising her head, or looking at any others in the company.

Her father put a question, to which she was obliged to return an answer—'Where was Mistress Debbitch?'

'She had gone out,' Alice replied, 'early after sunset, to visit some old acquaintances in the neighbourhood, and she was not yet returned.'

Major Bridgenorth made a gesture indicative of displeasure; and, not content with that, expressed his determined resolution that Dame Deborah should no longer remain a member of his family. 'I will have those,' he said aloud, and without regarding the presence of his guests, and those only, around me, who know to keep within the sober and modest bounds of a Christian family. Who pretends to more freedom, must go out from among us, as not being of us.'

A deep and emphatic humming noise, which was at that time the mode in which the Puritans signified their applause, as well of the doctrines expressed by a favourite divine in the pulpit, as of those delivered in private society, ratified the approbation of the assessors, and seemed to secure the dismission of the unfortunate governante, who stood thus detected of having strayed out of bounds. Even Peveril, although he had reaped considerable advantages, in his early acquaintance with Alice, from the mercenary and gossiping disposition of her governess, could not hear of her dismissal without approbation, so much was he desirous that, in the hour of difficulty, which might soon approach, Alice might have the benefit of countenance and advice from one of her own sex, of better manners, and less suspicious probity, than Mistress Debbitch.

Almost immediately after this communication had taken place, a servant in mourning showed his thin, pinched, and wrinkled visage in the apartment, announcing, with a voice more like a passing bell than the herald of a banquet, that refreshments were provided in an adjoining apartment. Gravely leading the way, with his daughter on one side, and the puritanical female whom we have distinguished on the other, Bridgenorth himself ushered his company, who followed, with little attention to order or ceremony, into the eating-room, where a substantial supper was provided.

In this manner, Peveril, although entitled according to ordinary ceremonial to some degree of precedence—a matter at that time considered of much importance, although now little regarded—was left among the last of those who quitted the parlour; and might indeed have brought up the rear of all, had not one of the company, who was himself late in the retreat, bowed and resigned to Julian the rank in the company which had been usurped by others.

This act of politeness naturally induced Julian to examine the features of the person who had offered him this civility; and he started to observe, under the pinched velvet cap, and above the short band-strings, the countenance of Ganlesse, as he called himself—his companion on the preceding evening. He looked again and again, especially when all were placed at the supper board, and when, consequently, he had frequent opportunities of observing this person fixedly, without any breach of good manners. At first he wavered in his belief, and was much inclined to doubt the reality of his recollection; for the difference of dress was such as to effect a considerable change of appearance; and the countenance itself, far from exhibiting anything marked or memorable, was one of those ordinary visages which we see almost without remarking them, and which leave our memory so soon as the object is withdrawn from our eyes. But the impression upon his mind returned, and became stronger, until it induced him to watch with peculiar attention the manners of the individual who had thus attracted his notice.

During the time of a very prolonged grace before meat, which was delivered by one of the company—who, from his Geneva band and serge doublet, presided, as Julian supposed, over some dissenting congregation—he noticed that this man kept the same demure and severe cast of countenance usually affected by the Puritans, and which rather caricatured the reverence unquestionably due upon such occasions. His eyes were turned upward, and his huge penthouse hat, with a high crown and broad brim, held in both hands before him, rose and fell with the cadences of the speaker's voice; thus marking time, as it were, to the periods of the benediction. Yet when the slight bustle took place which attends the adjusting of chairs, &c., as men sit down to table, Julian's eye encountered that of the stranger; and as their looks met, there glanced from those of the latter an expression of satirical humour and scorn, which seemed to intimate internal ridicule of the gravity of his present demeanour.

Julian again sought to fix his eye, in order to ascertain that he had not mistaken the tendency of this transient expression, but the stranger did not allow him another opportunity. He might have been discovered by the tone of his voice; but the individual in question spoke little, and in whispers, which was indeed the fashion of the whole company, whose demeanour at table resembled that of mourners at a funeral feast.

The entertainment itself was coarse, though plentiful; and must, according to Julian's opinion, be distasteful to one so exquisitely skilled in good cheer, and so capable of enjoying, critically and scientifically, the genial preparations of his companion Smith, as Ganlesse

had shown himself on the preceding evening. Accordingly, upon close observation, he remarked that the food which he took upon his plate remained there unconsumed; and that his actual supper consisted only of a crust of bread, with a glass of wine.

The repast was hurried over with the haste of those who think it shame, if not sin, to make mere animal enjoyments the means of consuming time, or of receiving pleasure; and when men wiped their mouths and moustaches, Julian remarked that the object of his curiosity used a handkerchief of the finest cambric—an article rather inconsistent with the exterior plainness, not to say coarseness, of his appearance. He used also several of the more minute refinements, then only observed at tables of the higher rank; and Julian thought he could discern, at every turn, something of courtly manners and gestures, under the precise and rustic simplicity of the character which he had assumed.*

But if this were indeed that same Ganlesse with whom Julian had met on the preceding evening, and who had boasted the facility with which he could assume any character which he pleased to represent for the time, what could be the purpose of his present disguise? He was, if his own words could be credited, a person of some importance, who dared to defy the danger of those officers and informers, before whom all ranks at that time trembled; nor was he likely, as Julian conceived, without some strong purpose, to subject himself to such a masquerade as the present, which could not be otherwise than irksome to one whose conversation proclaimed him of light life and free opinions. Was his appearance here for good or for evil? Did it respect his father's house, or his own person, or the family of Bridgenorth? Was the real character of Ganlesse known to the master of the house, inflexible as he was in all which concerned morals as well as religion? If not, might not the machinations of a brain so subtile affect the peace and happiness of Alice Bridgenorth?

These were questions which no reflection could enable Peveril to answer. His eyes glanced from Alice to the stranger; and new fears and undefined suspicions, in which the safety of that beloved and lovely girl was implicated, mingled with the deep anxiety which already occupied his mind, on account of his father, and his father's house.

He was in this tumult of mind, when, after a thanksgiving as long as the grace, the company arose from table, and were instantly summoned to the exercise of family worship. A train of domestics, grave, sad, and melancholy as their superiors, glided in to assist at this act of devotion, and ranged themselves at the lower end of the apartment. Most of these men were armed with long tucks, as the straight stabbing swords, much used by Cromwell's soldiery, were then called. Several had large pistols also; and the corselets or cuirasses of some were heard to clank, as they seated themselves to partake in this act of devotion. The ministry of him whom Julian had supposed a preacher was not used on this occasion. Major Bridgenorth himself read and expounded a chapter of Scripture, with much strength and manliness of expression, although so as not to escape the charge of fanaticism. The nineteenth chapter of Jeremiah was the portion of Scripture which he selected; in which, under the type of breaking a potter's vessel, the prophet presages the desolation of the Jews. The lecturer was not naturally eloquent; but a strong, deep, and sincere conviction of the truth of what he said, supplied him with language of energy and fire; as he drew a parallel between the abominations of the worship of Baal, and the corruptions of the Church of Rome—so favourite a topic with the Puritans of that period; and denounced against the Catholics, and those who favoured them, that hissing and desolation which the prophet directed against the city of Jerusalem. His hearers made a yet closer application than the lecturer himself suggested; and many a dark proud eye intimated, by a glance on Julian, that on his father's house were already, in some part, realized those dreadful maledictions.

The lecture finished, Bridgenorth summoned them to unite with him in prayer; and on a slight change of arrangements amongst the company, which took place as they were about to kneel down, Julian found his place next to the single-minded and beautiful object of his affection, as she knelt, in her loveliness, to adore her Creator. A short time was permitted for mental devotion; during which, Peveril could hear her half-breathed petition for the promised blessings of peace on earth, and good-will towards the children of men.

The prayer which ensued was in a different tone. It was poured forth by the same person who had officiated as chaplain at the table; and was in the tone of a Boanerges, or Son of Thunder—a denouncer of crimes—an invoker of judgments—almost a prophet of evil and of destruction. The testimonies and the sins of the day were not forgotten—the mysterious murder of Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey was insisted upon—and thanks and praise were offered, that the very night on which they were assembled had not seen another offering of a Protestant magistrate to the bloodthirsty fury of the revengeful Catholics.

Never had Julian found it more difficult, during an act of devotion, to maintain his mind in a frame befitting the posture and the occasion; and when he heard the speaker return thanks for the downfall and devastation of his family, he was strongly tempted to have started upon his feet, and charged him with offering a tribute, stained with falsehood and calumny, at the throne of truth itself. He resisted, however, an impulse which it would have been insanity to have yielded to, and his patience was not without its reward; for when his fair neighbour arose from her knees, the lengthened and prolonged prayer being at last concluded, he observed that her eyes were streaming with tears; and one glance, with which she looked at him in that moment, showed more of affectionate interest for him in his fallen fortunes and precarious condition, than he had been able to obtain from

* A Scottish gentleman *in hiding*, as it was emphatically termed, for some concern in a Jacobite insurrection or plot, was discovered among a number of ordinary persons by the use of his toothpick.

her when his worldly estate seemed so much the more exalted of the two.

Cheered and fortified with the conviction that one bosom in the company, and that in which he most eagerly longed to secure an interest, sympathized with his distress, he felt strong to endure whatever was to follow, and shrunk not from the stern, still smile with which, one by one, the meeting regarded him, as, gliding to their several places of repose, they indulged themselves at parting with a look of triumph on one whom they considered as their captive enemy.

Alice also passed by her lover, her eyes fixed on the ground, and answered his low obeisance without raising them. The room was now empty, but for Bridgenorth and his guest, or prisoner; for it was difficult to say in which capacity Peveril ought to regard himself. He took an old brazen lamp from the table, and, leading the way, said at the same time, 'I must be the uncourtly chamberlain, who am to usher you to a place of repose more rude, perhaps, than you have been accustomed to occupy.'

Julian followed him, in silence, up an old-fashioned winding staircase, within a turret. At the landing-place on the top was a small apartment, where an ordinary pallet bed, two chairs, and a small stone table, were the only furniture. 'Your bed,' continued Bridgenorth, as if desirous to prolong their interview, 'is not of the softest; but innocence sleeps as sound upon straw as on down.'

'Sorrow, Major Bridgenorth, finds little rest on either,' replied Julian. 'Tell me, for you seem to await some question from me, what is to be the fate of my parents, and why you separate me from them?'

Bridgenorth, for answer, indicated with his finger the mark which his countenance still showed from the explosion of Julian's pistol.

'That,' replied Julian, 'is not the real cause of your proceedings against me. It cannot be that you, who have been a soldier, and are a man, can be surprised or displeased by my interference in the defence of my father. Above all, you cannot, and I must needs say you do not, believe that I would have raised my hand against you personally, had there been a moment's time for recognition.'

'I may grant all this,' said Bridgenorth; 'but what the better are you for my good opinion, or for the ease with which I can forgive you the injury which you aimed at me? You are in my custody as a magistrate, accused of abetting the foul, bloody, and heathenish plot for the establishment of Popery, the murder of the King, and the general massacre of all true Protestants.'

'And on what grounds, either of fact or suspicion, dare any one accuse me of such a crime?' said Julian. 'I have hardly heard of the plot, save by the mouth of common rumour, which, while it speaks of nothing else, takes care to say nothing distinctly even on that subject.'

'It may be enough for me to tell you,' replied Bridgenorth, 'and perhaps it is a word too much that you are a discovered intriguer—a spied spy—who carries tokens and messages betwixt the popish Countess of Derby and the Catholic party in London. You have not conducted your matters with such discretion, but that this is well known, and can be sufficiently proved. To this charge, which you are well aware you cannot deny, these men, Everett and Dangerfield, are not unwilling to add, from the recollection of your face, other passages, which will certainly cost you your life when you come before a Protestant jury.'

'They lie like villains,' said Peveril, 'who hold me accessory to any plot either against the King, the nation, or the state of religion; and for the Countess, her loyalty has been too long and too highly proved, to permit her being implicated in such injurious suspicions.'

'What she has already done,' said Bridgenorth, his face darkening as he spoke, 'against the faithful champions of pure religion, hath sufficiently shown of what she is capable. She hath betaken herself to her rock, and sits, as she thinks, in security, like the eagle reposing after his bloody banquet. But the arrow of the fowler may yet reach her—the shaft is whetted—the bow is bended—and it will be soon seen whether Amalek or Israel shall prevail. But for thee, Julian Peveril—why should I conceal it from thee?—my heart yearns for thee as a woman's for her first-born. To thee I will give, at the expense of my own reputation—perhaps at the risk of personal suspicion—for who, in these days of doubt, shall be exempted from it?—to thee, I say, I will give means of escape, which else were impossible to thee. The staircase of this turret descends to the gardens—the postern-gate is unlatched—on the right hand lie the stables, where you will find your own horse—take it, and make for Liverpool—I will give you credit with a friend under the name of Simon Simonson, one persecuted by the prelates; and he will expedite your passage from the kingdom.'

'Major Bridgenorth,' said Julian, 'I will not deceive you. Were I to accept your offer of freedom, it would be to attend to a higher call than that of mere self-preservation. My father is in danger—my mother in sorrow—the voices of religion and nature call me to their side. I am their only child—their only hope—I will aid them, or perish with them!'

'Thou art mad,' said Bridgenorth—'aid them thou canst not—perish with them thou well mayest, and even accelerate their ruin; for, in addition to the charges with which thy unhappy father is loaded, it would be no slight aggravation, that, while he meditated arming and calling together the Catholics and High Churchmen of Cheshire and Derbyshire, his son should prove to be the confidential agent of the Countess of Derby, who aided her in making good her stronghold against the Protestant commissioners, and was despatched by her to open secret communication with the popish interest in London.'

'You have twice stated me as such an agent,' said Peveril, resolved that his silence should not be construed into an admission of the charge, though he felt that it was in some degree well founded—'What reason have you for such an allegation?'

'Will it suffice for a proof of my intimate acquaintance with your mystery,' replied Bridge-

north, 'if I should repeat to you the last words which the Countess used to you when you left the castle of that Amalekitish woman? Thus she spoke: "I am now a forlorn widow," she said, "whom sorrow has made selfish."'

Peveril started, for these were the very words the countess had used; but he instantly recovered himself, and replied, 'Be your information of what nature it will, I deny, and I defy it, so far as it attaches aught like guilt to me. There lives not a man more innocent of a disloyal thought, or of a traitorous purpose. What I say for myself, I will, to the best of my knowledge, say and maintain, on account of the noble Countess, to whom I am indebted for nurture.'

'Perish, then, in thy obstinacy!' said Bridgenorth; and, turning hastily from him, he left the room, and Julian heard him hasten down the narrow staircase, as if distrusting his own resolution.

With a heavy heart, yet with that confidence in an overruling Providence which never forsakes a good and brave man, Peveril betook himself to his lowly place of repose.

CHAPTER XXV.

The course of human life is changeful still,
As is the fickle wind and wandering rill;
Or, like the light dance which the wild breeze weaves
Amidst the faded race of fallen leaves;
Which now its breath bears down, now tosses high,
Beats to the earth, or wafts to middle sky.
Such, and so varied, the precarious play
Of fate with man, frail tenant of a day!

ANONYMOUS.

WHILST, overcome with fatigue and worn out by anxiety, Julian Peveril slumbered as a prisoner in the house of his hereditary enemy, Fortune was preparing his release by one of those sudden frolics with which she loves to confound the calculations and expectancies of humanity; and, as she fixes on strange agents for such purposes, she condescended to employ, on the present occasion, no less a personage than Mistress Deborah Debbitch.

Instigated, doubtless, by the pristine reminiscences of former times, no sooner had that most prudent and considerate dame found herself in the vicinity of the scenes of her earlier days, than she bethought herself of a visit to the ancient housekeeper of Martindale Castle, Dame Ellesmere by name, who, long retired from active service, resided at the keeper's lodge, in the west thicket, with her nephew, Lance Outram, subsisting upon the savings of her better days, and on a small pension allowed by Sir Geoffrey to her age and faithful services.

Now Dame Ellesmere and Mistress Deborah had not by any means been formerly on so friendly a footing, as this haste to visit her might be supposed to intimate. But years had taught Deborah to forget and forgive; or perhaps she had no special objection, under cover of a visit to Dame Ellesmere, to take the chance of seeing what changes time had made on her old admirer the keeper. Both inhabitants were in the cottage, when, after having seen her master set forth on his expedition to the Castle, Mistress Debbitch, dressed in her very best gown, footed it through gutter, and over stile, and by pathway green, to knock at their door, and to lift the latch at the hospitable invitation which bade her come in.

Dame Ellesmere's eyes were so often dim, that, even with the aid of spectacles, she failed to recognise, in the portly and mature personage who entered their cottage, the tight, well-made lass, who, presuming on her good looks and flippant tongue, had so often provoked her by insubordination; and her former lover, the redoubted Lance, not being conscious that ale had given rotundity to his own figure, which was formerly so slight and active, and that brandy had transferred to his nose the colour which had once occupied his cheeks, was unable to discover that Deborah's French cap, composed of sarsenet and Brussels lace, shaded the features which had so often procured him a rebuke from Doctor Dummerar, for suffering his eyes, during the time of prayers, to wander to the maid-servants' bench.

In brief, the blushing visitor was compelled to make herself known; and, when known, was received by aunt and nephew with the most sincere cordiality.

The home-brewed was produced; and, in lieu of more vulgar food, a few slices of venison presently hissed in the frying-pan, giving strong room for inference that Lance Outram, in his capacity of keeper, neglected not his own cottage when he supplied the larder at the Castle. A modest sip of the excellent Derbyshire ale, and a taste of the highly-seasoned hash, soon placed Deborah entirely at home with her old acquaintance.

Having put all necessary questions, and received all suitable answers, respecting the state of the neighbourhood, and such of her own friends as continued to reside there, the conversation began rather to flag, until Deborah found the art of again renewing its interest, by communicating to her friends the dismal intelligence that they must soon look for deadly bad news from the Castle; for that her present master, Major Bridgenorth, had been summoned, by some great people from London, to assist in taking her old master, Sir Geoffrey; and that all Master Bridgenorth's servants, and several other persons whom she named, friends and adherents of the same interest, had assembled a force to surprise the Castle; and that, as Sir Geoffrey was now so old, and gouty withal, it could not be expected he should make the defence he was wont; and then he was known to be so stout-hearted, that it was not to be supposed that he would yield up without stroke of sword; and then if he was killed, as he was like to be, amongst them that liked never a bone of his body, and now had him at their mercy, why, in that case, she, Dame Deborah, would look upon Lady Peveril as little better than a dead woman; and undoubtedly there would be a general mourning through all that country, where they had such great kin; and silks were likely to rise on it, as Master Lutestring, the mercer of Chesterfield, was like to feel in his purse bottom. But for her part, let matters wag how they would, an if Master Julian Peveril

was to come to his own, she could give as near a guess as e'er another who was likely to be lady at Martindale.

The text of this lecture, or, in other words, the fact that Bridgenorth was gone with a party to attack Sir Geoffrey Peveril in his own Castle of Martindale, sounded so stunningly strange in the ears of those old retainers of his family, that they had no power either to attend to Mistress Deborah's inferences, or to interrupt the velocity of speech with which she poured them forth. And when at length she made a breathless pause, all that poor Dame Ellesmere could reply was the emphatic question, 'Bridgenorth brave Peveril of the Peak! - Is the woman mad?'

'Come, come, dame,' said Deborah, 'woman me no more than I woman you. I have not been called Mistress at the head of the table for so many years, to be womaned here by you. And for the news, it is as true as that you are sitting there in a white hood, who will wear a black one ere long.'

'Lance Outram,' said the old woman, 'make out, if thou be'st a man, and listen about if aught stirs up at the Castle.'

'If there should,' said Outram, 'I am even too long here;' and he caught up his crossbow, and one or two arrows, and rushed out of the cottage.

'Well-a-day!' said Mistress Deborah, 'see if my news have not frightened away Lance Outram too, whom they used to say nothing could start. But do not take on so, dame; for I dare say if the Castle and the lands pass to my new master, Major Bridgenorth, as it is like they will,—for I have heard that he has powerful debts over the estate,—you shall have my good word with him, and I promise you he is no bad man; something precise about preaching and praying, and about the dress which one should wear, which, I must own, beseems not a gentleman, as, to be sure, every woman knows best what becomes her. But for you, dame, that wear a prayer-book at your girdle, with your housewife-case, and never change the fashion of your white hood, I dare say he will not grudge you the little matter you need, and are not able to win.'

'Out, sordid jade!' exclaimed Dame Ellesmere, her very flesh quivering betwixt apprehension and anger, 'and hold your peace this instant, or I will find those that shall flay the very hide from thee with dog-whips. Hast thou ate thy noble master's bread, not only to betray his trust, and fly from his service, but wouldst thou come here, like an ill-omened bird as thou art, to triumph over his downfall!'

'Nay, dame,' said Deborah, over whom the violence of the old woman had obtained a certain predominance; 'it is not I that say it—only the warrant of the Parliament folks.'

'I thought we had done with their warrants ever since the blessed twenty-ninth of May,' said the old housekeeper of Martindale Castle; 'but this I tell thee, sweetheart, that I have seen such warrants crammed, at the sword's point, down the throats of them that brought them; and so shall this be, if there is one true man left to drink of the Dove.'

As she spoke, Lance Outram re-entered the cottage. 'Naunt,' he said in dismay, 'I doubt it is true what she says. The beacon-tower is as black as my belt. No Pole-star of Peveril. What does that betoken?'

'Death, ruin, and captivity!' exclaimed old Ellesmere. 'Make for the Castle, thou knave. Thrust in thy great body. Strike for the house that bred thee and fed thee; and if thou art buried under the ruins, thou diest a man's death.'

'Nay, naunt, I shall not be slack,' answered Outram. 'But here come folks that I warrant can tell us more on't.'

One or two of the female servants, who had fled from the Castle during the alarm, now rushed in with various reports of the case; but all agreeing that a body of armed men were in possession of the Castle, and that Major Bridgenorth had taken young Master Julian prisoner, and conveyed him down to Moultrassie Hall, with his feet tied under the belly of the nag—a shameful sight to be seen—and he so well born and so handsome.

Lance scratched his head; and, though feeling the duty incumbent upon him as a faithful servant, which was indeed specially dinned into him by the cries and exclamations of his aunt, he seemed not a little dubious how to conduct himself. 'I would to God, naunt,' he said at last, 'that old Whitaker were alive now, with his long stories about Marston Moor and Edge Hill, that made us all yawn our jaws off their hinges, in spite of broiled rashers and double beer! When a man is missed, he is moaned, as they say; and I would rather than a broad piece he had been here to have sorted this matter, for it is clean out of my way as a woodsman, that have no skill of war. But dang it, if old Sir Geoffrey go to the wall without a knock for it!—Here you, Nell'—(speaking to one of the fugitive maidens from the Castle)—'but no—you have not the heart of a cat, and are afraid of your own shadow by moonlight—But, Cis, you are a stout-hearted wench, and know a buck from a bullfinch. Hark thee, Cis, as you would wish to be married, get up to the Castle again, and get thee in—thou best knowest where—for thou hast oft gotten out of postern to a dance or junketing, to my knowledge—Get thee back to the Castle, as ye hope to be married—See my lady—they cannot hinder thee of that—my lady has a head worth twenty of ours—If I am to gather force, light up the beacon for a signal; and spare not a tar-barrel on't. Thou mayst do it safe enough. I warrant the Roundheads busy with drink and plunder.—And hark thee, say to my lady I am gone down to the miners' houses at Bonadventure. The rogues were mutinying for their wages but yesterday; they will be all ready for good or bad. Let her send orders down to me; or do you come yourself, your legs are long enough.'

'Whether they are or not, Master Lance (and you know nothing of the matter), they shall do your errand to-night, for love of the old knight and his lady.'

So Cisly Sellok, a kind of Derbyshire Camilla, who had won the smock at the foot-race at Ashbourne, sprung forward towards the Castle, with a speed which few could have equalled.

'There goes a mettled wench,' said Lance; 'and now, naunt, give me the old broadsword—

it is above the bed-head—and my wood-knife; and I shall do well enough.'

'And what is to become of me?' bleated the unfortunate Mistress Deborah Debbitch.

'You must remain here with my aunt, Mistress Deb; and, for old acquaintance' sake, she will take care no harm befalls you; but take heed how you attempt to break bounds.'

So saying, and pondering in his own mind the task which he had undertaken, the hardy forester strode down the moonlight glade, scarcely hearing the blessings and cautions which Dame Ellesmere kept showering after him. His thoughts were not altogether warlike. 'What a tight ankle the jade hath! - she trips it like a doe in summer over the dew. Well, but here are the huts—Let us to this gear.—Are ye all asleep, ye dammers, sinkers, and drift-drivers? turn out, ye subterranean badgers. Here is your master, Sir Geoffrey, dead, for aught ye know or care. Do not you see the beacon is unlit, and you sit there like so many asses?'

'Why,' answered one of the miners, who now began to come out of their huts,

> 'An he be dead,
> He will eat no more bread.'

'And you are like to eat none neither,' said Lance; 'for the works will be presently stopped, and all of you turned off.'

'Well, and what of it, Master Lance? As good play for nought as work for nought. Here is four weeks we have scarce seen the colour of Sir Geoffrey's coin; and you ask us to care whether he be dead or in life? For you that goes about, trotting upon your horse, and doing for work what all men do for pleasure, it may be well enough; but it is another matter to be leaving God's light, and burrowing all day and night in darkness, like a toad in a hole—that's not to be done for nought, I trow; and if Sir Geoffrey is dead, his soul will suffer for't; and if he's alive, we'll have him in the Barmoot Court.'

'Hark ye, gaffer,' said Lance, 'and take notice, my mates, all of you,' for a considerable number of these rude and subterranean people had now assembled to hear the discussion—'Has Sir Geoffrey, think you, ever put a penny in his pouch out of this same Bonadventure mine?'

'I cannot say as I think he has,' answered old Ditchley, the party who maintained the controversy.

'Answer on your conscience, though it be but a leaden one. Do not you know that he hath lost a good penny?'

believe he may,' said Gaffer Ditchley. hen?—lose to-day, win to-morrow—the her must eat in the meantime.'

'True; but what will you eat when Master Bridgenorth gets the land, that will not hear of a mine being wrought on his own ground? Will he work on at dead loss, think ye?' demanded trusty Lance.

'Bridgenorth! he of Moultrassie Hall, that stopped the great Felicity Work, on which his father laid out, some say, ten thousand pounds, and never got in a penny? Why, what has he to do with Sir Geoffrey's property down here at Bonadventure? It was never his, I trow.'

'Nay, what do I know?' answered Lance, who saw the impression he had made. 'Law and debt will give him half Derbyshire, I think, unless you stand by old Sir Geoffrey.'

'But if Sir Geoffrey be dead,' said Ditchley cautiously, 'what good will our standing by do to him?'

'I did not say he was dead, but only as bad as dead; in the hands of the Roundheads—a prisoner up yonder, at his own Castle,' said Lance; 'and will have his head cut off, like the good Earl of Derby's, at Bolton-le-Moors.'

'Nay, then, comrades,' said Gaffer Ditchley, 'an it be as Master Lance says, I think we should bear a hand for stout old Sir Geoffrey, against a low-born, mean-spirited fellow like Bridgenorth, who shut up a shaft had cost thousands, without getting a penny profit on't. So hurrah for Sir Geoffrey, and down with the Rump! But hold ye a blink—hold'—(and the waving of his hand stopped the commencing cheer)—'Hark ye, Master Lance, it must be all over, for the beacon is as black as night; and you know yourself that marks the lord's death.'

'It will kindle again in an instant,' said Lance; internally adding, 'I pray to God it may! It will kindle in an instant—lack of fuel, and the confusion of the family.'

'Ay, like enow, like enow,' said Ditchley; 'but I winna budge till I see it blazing.'

'Why, then, there a goes!' said Lance. Thank thee, Cis—thank thee, my good wench. Believe your own eyes, my lads, if you will not believe me; and now hurrah for Peveril of the Peak—the King and his friends—and down with Rumps and Roundheads!'

The sudden rekindling of the beacon had all the effect which Lance could have desired upon the minds of his rude and ignorant hearers, who, in their superstitious humour, had strongly associated the Polar-star of Peveril with the fortunes of the family. Once moved, according to the national character of their countrymen, they soon became enthusiastic; and Lance found himself at the head of thirty stout fellows and upwards, armed with their pickaxes, and ready to execute whatever task he should impose on them.

Trusting to enter the Castle by the postern, which had served to accommodate himself and other domestics upon an emergency, his only anxiety was to keep his march silent; and he earnestly recommended to his followers to reserve their shouts for the moment of the attack. They had not advanced far on their road to the Castle, when Cisly Sellok met them, so breathless with haste, that the poor girl was obliged to throw herself into Master Lance's arms.

'Stand up, my mettled wench,' said he, giving her a sly kiss at the same time, 'and let us know what is going on up at the Castle.'

'My lady bids you, as you would serve God and your master, not to come up to the Castle, which can but make bloodshed; for she says Sir Geoffrey is lawfully in hand, and that he must bide the issue; and that he is innocent of what he is charged with, and is going up to speak for himself before King and Council, and she goes up with him. And besides, they have found out the postern, the Roundhead rogues; for two of them saw me when I went out of

door, and chased me; but I showed them a fair pair of heels.'

'As ever dashed dew from the cowslip,' said Lance. 'But what the foul fiend is to be done? for if they have secured the postern, I know not how the dickens we can get in.'

'All is fastened with bolt and staple, and guarded with gun and pistol, at the Castle,' quoth Cisly; 'and so sharp are they, that they nigh caught me coming with my lady's message, as I told you. But my lady says, if you could deliver her son, Master Julian, from Bridgenorth, that she would hold it good service.'

'What!' said Lance, 'is young master at the Castle? I taught him to shoot his first shaft. But how to get in!'

'He was at the Castle in the midst of the ruffle, but old Bridgenorth has carried him down prisoner to the Hall,' answered Cisly. 'There was never faith nor courtesy in an old Puritan who never had pipe and tabor in his house since it was built.'

'Or who stopped a promising mine,' said Ditchley, 'to save a few thousand pounds, when he might have made himself as rich as the Lord of Chatsworth, and fed a hundred good fellows all the whilst.'

'Why, then,' said Lance, 'since you are all of a mind, we will go draw the cover for the old badger; and I promise you that the Hall is not like one of your real houses of quality, where the walls are as thick as whinstone dykes, but foolish brick-work, that your pickaxes will work through as if it were cheese. Huzza once more for Peveril of the Peak! down with Bridgenorth and all upstart cuckoldly Roundheads!'

Having indulged the throats of his followers with one buxom huzza, Lance commanded them to cease their clamours, and proceeded to conduct them, by such paths as seemed the least likely to be watched, to the court-yard of Moultrassie Hall. On the road they were joined by several stout yeomen farmers, either followers of the Peveril family, or friends to the High Church and Cavalier party; most of whom, alarmed by the news which began to fly fast through the neighbourhood, were armed with sword and pistol.

Lance Outram halted his party at the distance, as he himself described it, of a flight-shot from the house, and advanced alone, and in silence, to reconnoitre; and, having previously commanded Ditchley and his subterranean allies to come to his assistance whenever he should whistle, he crept cautiously forward, and soon found that those whom he came to surprise, true to the discipline which had gained their party such decided superiority during the Civil War, had posted a sentinel, who paced through the court-yard, piously chanting a psalm-tune, while his arms, crossed on his bosom, supported a gun of formidable length.

'Now, a true soldier,' said Lance Outram to himself, 'would put a stop to thy snivelling ditty, by making a broad arrow quiver in your heart, and no great alarm given. But, dang it, I have not the right spirit for a soldier—I cannot fight a man till my blood's up; and for shooting him from behind a wall, it is cruelly like to stalking a deer. I'll e'en face him, and try what to make of him.'

With this doughty resolution, and taking no further care to conceal himself, he entered the court-yard boldly, and was making forward to the front door of the Hall, as a matter of course. But the old Cromwellian, who was on guard, had not so learned his duty. 'Who goes there?—Stand, friend—stand; or, verily, I will shoot thee to death!' were challenges which followed each other quick, the last being enforced by the levelling and presenting the said long-barrelled gun with which he was armed.

'Why, what a murrain!' answered Lance. 'Is it your fashion to go a-shooting at this time o' night? Why, this is but a time for bat-fowling.'

'Nay, but hark thee, friend,' said the experienced sentinel, 'I am none of those who do this work negligently. Thou canst not snare me with thy crafty speech, though thou wouldst make it to sound simple in mine ear. Of a verity I will shoot, unless thou tell thy name and business.'

'Name!' said Lance; 'why, what a dickens should it be but Robin Round—honest Robin of Redham; and for business, as you must needs know, I come on a message from some Parliament man, up yonder at the Castle, with letters for worshipful Master Bridgenorth of Moultrassie Hall; and this be the place, as I think; though why ye be marching up and down at his door, like the sign of a Red Man, with your old firelock there, I cannot so well guess.'

'Give me the letters, my friend,' said the sentinel, to whom this explanation seemed very natural and probable, 'and I will cause them forthwith to be delivered into his worship's own hand.'

Rummaging in his pockets, as if to pull out the letters which never existed, Master Lance approached within the sentinel's piece, and, before he was aware, suddenly seized him by the collar, whistled sharp and shrill, and, exerting his skill as a wrestler, for which he had been distinguished in his youth, he stretched his antagonist on his back—the musket for which they struggled going off in the fall.

The miners rushed into the court-yard at Lance's signal; and, hopeless any longer of prosecuting his design in silence, Lance commanded two of them to secure the prisoner, and the rest to cheer loudly, and attack the door of the house. Instantly the court-yard of the mansion rang with the cry of 'Peveril of the Peak for ever!' with all the abuse which the Royalists had invented to cast upon the Roundheads, during so many years of contention; and, at the same time, while some assailed the door with their mining implements, others directed their attack against the angle, where a kind of porch joined to the main front of the building; and there, in some degree protected by the projection of the wall, and of a balcony which overhung the porch, wrought in more security, as well as with more effect, than the others; for the doors, being of oak, thickly studded with nails, offered a more effectual resistance to violence than the brick-work.

The noise of this hubbub on the outside soon

excited, wild alarm and tumult within. Lights flew from window to window, and voices were heard demanding the cause of the attack; to which the party cries of those who were in the court-yard afforded a sufficient, or at least the only answer, which was vouchsafed. At length the window of a projecting staircase opened, and the voice of Bridgenorth himself demanded authoritatively what the tumult meant, and commanded the rioters to desist upon their own proper and immediate peril.

'We want our young master, you canting old thief,' was the reply; 'and if we have him not instantly, the topmost stone of your house shall lie as low as the foundation.'

'We will try that presently,' said Bridgenorth; 'for if there is another blow struck against the walls of my peaceful house, I will fire my carabine among you, and your blood be upon your own head. I have a score of friends, well armed with musket and pistol, to defend my house; and we have both the means and heart, with Heaven's assistance, to repay any violence you can offer.'

'Master Bridgenorth,' replied Lance, who, though no soldier, was sportsman enough to comprehend the advantage which those under cover and using firearms must necessarily have over his party, exposed to their aim, in a great measure, and without means of answering their fire,—'Master Bridgenorth, let us crave parley with you, and fair conditions. We desire to do you no evil, but will have back our young master; it is enough that you have got our old one and his lady. It is foul chasing to kill hart, hind, and fawn; and we will give you some light on the subject in an instant.'

This speech was followed by a great crash amongst the lower windows of the house, according to a new species of attack which had been suggested by some of the assailants.

'I would take the honest fellow's word, and let young Peveril go,' said one of the garrison, who, carelessly yawning, approached on the inside the post at which Bridgenorth had stationed himself.

'Are you mad?' said Bridgenorth; 'or do you think me poor enough in spirit to give up the advantages I now possess over the family of Peveril, for the awe of a parcel of boors, whom the first discharge will scatter like chaff before the whirlwind?'

'Nay,' answered the speaker, who was the same individual that had struck Julian by his resemblance to the man who called himself Ganlesse, 'I love a dire revenge, but we shall buy it somewhat too dear, if these rascals set the house on fire, as they are like to do, while you are parleying from the window. They have thrown torches or firebrands into the hall; and it is all our friends can do to keep the flames from catching the wainscoting, which is old and dry.'

'Now, may Heaven judge thee for thy lightness of spirit,' answered Bridgenorth; 'one would think mischief was so properly thy element, that to thee it was indifferent whether friend or foe was the sufferer.'

So saying, he ran hastily down-stairs towards the hall, into which, through broken casements, and betwixt the iron bars, which prevented human entrance, the assailants had thrust lighted straw, sufficient to excite much smoke and some fire, and to throw the defenders of the house into great confusion; insomuch, that of several shots fired hastily from the windows, little or no damage followed to the besiegers, who, getting warm in the onset, answered the hostile charges with loud shouts of 'Peveril for ever!' and had already made a practicable breach through the brick wall of the tenement, through which Lance, Ditchley, and several of the most adventurous among their followers, made their way into the hall.

The complete capture of the house remained, however, as far off as ever. The defenders mixed with much coolness and skill that solemn and deep spirit of enthusiasm which sets life at less than nothing, in comparison to real or supposed duty. From the half-open doors which led into the hall, they maintained a fire which began to grow fatal. One miner was shot dead; three or four were wounded; and Lance scarce knew whether he should draw his forces from the house, and leave it a prey to the flames, or, making a desperate attack on the posts occupied by the defenders, try to obtain unmolested possession of the place. At this moment, his course of conduct was determined by an unexpected occurrence, of which it is necessary to trace the cause.

Julian Peveril had been, like other inhabitants of Moultrassie Hall on that momentous night, awakened by the report of the sentinel's musket, followed by the shouts of his father's vassals and followers; of which he collected enough to guess that Bridgenorth's house was attacked with a view to his liberation. Very doubtful of the issue of such an attempt, dizzy with the slumber from which he had been so suddenly awakened, and confounded with the rapid succession of events to which he had been lately a witness, he speedily put on a part of his clothes, and hastened to the window of his apartment. From this he could see nothing to relieve his anxiety, for it looked towards a quarter different from that on which the attack was made. He attempted his door; it was locked on the outside; and his perplexity and anxiety became extreme, when suddenly the lock was turned, and in an undress, hastily assumed in the moment of alarm, her hair streaming on her shoulders, her eyes gleaming betwixt fear and resolution, Alice Bridgenorth rushed into his apartment, and seized his hand, with the fervent exclamation, 'Julian, save my father!'

The light which she bore in her hand served to show those features which could rarely have been viewed by any one without emotion, but which bore an expression irresistible to a lover.

'Alice,' he said, 'what means this? What is the danger? Where is your father?'

'Do not stay to question,' she answered; 'but if you would save him, follow me!'

And at the same time she led the way, with great speed, half-way down the turret staircase which led to his room, thence turning through a side door, along a long gallery, to a larger and wider stair, at the bottom of which stood her father, surrounded by four or five of his friends, scarce discernible through the smoke of the fire

which began to take hold in the hall, as well as that which arose from the repeated discharge of their own firearms.

Julian saw there was not a moment to be lost, if he meant to be a successful mediator. He rushed through Bridgenorth's party ere they were aware of his approach, and, throwing himself amongst the assailants, who occupied the hall in considerable numbers, he assured them of his personal safety, and conjured them to depart.

'Not without a few more slices at the Rump, master,' answered Lance. 'I am principally glad to see you safe and well; but here is Joe Rimegap shot as dead as a buck in season, and more of us are hurt, and we'll have revenge, and roast the Puritans like apples for lambswool!'

'Then you shall roast me along with them,' said Julian; 'for I vow to God, I will not leave the Hall, being bound by parole of honour to abide with Major Bridgenorth till lawfully dismissed.'

'Now, out on you, an you were ten times a Peveril!' said Ditchley; 'to give so many honest fellows loss and labour on your behalf, and to show them no kinder countenance. I say, beat up the fire, and burn all together!'

'Nay, nay; but peace, my masters, and hearken to reason,' said Julian; 'we are all here in evil condition, and you will only make it worse by contention. Do you help to put out this same fire, which will else cost us all dear. Keep yourselves under arms. Let Master Bridgenorth and me settle some grounds of accommodation, and I trust all will be favourably made up on both sides; and if not, you shall have my consent and countenance to fight it out; and, come on it what will, I will never forget this night's good service.'

He then drew Ditchley and Lance Outram aside, while the rest stood suspended at his appearance and words, and, expressing the utmost thanks and gratitude for what they had already done, urged them, as the greatest favour which they could do towards him and his father's house, to permit him to negotiate the terms of his emancipation from thraldom; at the same time forcing on Ditchley five or six gold pieces, that the brave lads of Bonadventure might drink his health; whilst to Lance he expressed the warmest sense of his active kindness, but protested he could only consider it as good service to his house, if he was allowed to manage the matter after his own fashion.

'Why,' answered Lance, 'I am well out on it, Master Julian; for it is matter beyond my mastery. All that I stand to is, that I will see you safe out of this same Moultrassie Hall; for our old Naunt Ellesmere will else give me but cold comfort when I come home. Truth is, I began unwillingly; but when I saw the poor fellow Joe shot beside me, why, I thought we should have some amends. But I put it all in your honour's hands.'

During this colloquy both parties had been amicably employed in extinguishing the fire, which might otherwise have been fatal to all. It required a general effort to get it under; and both parties agreed on the necessary labour, with as much unanimity as if the water they brought in leathern buckets from the well to throw upon the fire, had some effect in slaking their mutual hostility.

CHAPTER XXVI.

> Necessity—thou best of peacemakers,
> As well as surest prompter of invention—
> Help us to composition.
>
> ANONYMOUS.

WHILE the fire continued, the two parties laboured in active union, like the jarring factions of the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem, when compelled to unite in resisting an assault of the besiegers. But when the last bucket of water had hissed on the few embers that continued to glimmer—when the sense of mutual hostility, hitherto suspended by a feeling of common danger, was in its turn rekindled—the parties, mingled as they had hitherto been in one common exertion, drew off from each other, and began to arrange themselves at opposite sides of the hall, and handle their weapons, as if for a renewal of the fight.

Bridgenorth interrupted any further progress of this menaced hostility. 'Julian Peveril,' he said, 'thou art free to walk thine own path, since thou wilt not walk with me that road which is more safe as well as more honourable. But if you do by my counsel, you will get soon beyond the British seas.'

'Ralph Bridgenorth,' said one of his friends, 'this is but evil and feeble conduct on thine own part. Wilt thou withhold thy hand from the battle to defend, from these sons of Belial, the captive of thy bow and of thy spear? Surely we are enow to deal with them in the security of our good old cause; nor should we part with this spawn of the old serpent, until we essay whether the Lord will not give us victory therein.'

A hum of stern assent followed; and had not Ganlesse now interfered, the combat would probably have been renewed. He took the advocate for war apart into one of the window recesses, and apparently satisfied his objections; for, as he returned to his companions, he said to them, 'Our friend hath so well argued this matter, that, verily, since he is of the same mind with the worthy Major Bridgenorth, I think the youth may be set at liberty.'

As no further objection was offered, it only remained with Julian to thank and reward those who had been active in his assistance. Having first obtained from Bridgenorth a promise of indemnity to them for the riot they had committed, a few kind words conveyed his sense of their services; and some broad pieces, thrust into the hand of Lance Outram, furnished the means for affording them a holiday. They would have remained to protect him, but, fearful of further disorder, and relying entirely on the good faith of Major Bridgenorth, he dismissed them all, excepting Lance, whom he detained to attend upon him for a few minutes, till he should depart from Moultrassie. But, ere leaving the Hall, he could not repress his desire to speak with Bridgenorth in secret; and, advancing towards him, he expressed such a desire.

Tacitly granting what was asked of him, Bridgenorth led the way to a small summer saloon adjoining to the Hall, where, with his usual gravity and indifference of manner, he

seemed to await in silence what Peveril had to communicate.

Julian found it difficult, where so little opening was afforded him, to find a tone in which to open the subjects he had at heart, that should be at once dignified and conciliating 'Major Bridgenorth,' he said at length, 'you have been a son, and an affectionate one—you may conceive my present anxiety—My father!—What has been designed for him?'

'What the law will,' answered Bridgenorth 'Had he walked by the counsels which I procured to be given to him, he might have dwelt safely in the house of his ancestors His fate is now beyond my control—far beyond yours It must be with him as his country shall decide'

'And my mother?' said Peveril

'Will consult, as she has ever done, her own duty, and create her own happiness by doing so,' replied Bridgenorth 'Believe, my designs towards your family are better than they may seem through the mist which adversity has spread around your house I may triumph as a man but as a man I must also remember, in my hour that mine enemies have had theirs —Have you aught else to say?' he added after a moment's pause 'You have rejected once, yea, and again, the hand I stretched out to you Methinks little more remains between us'

These words, which seemed to cut short further discussion, were calmly spoken so that though they appeared to discourage further question they could not interrupt that which still trembled on Julian's tongue He made a step or two towards the door, then suddenly returned 'Your daughter?' he said—'Major Bridgenorth —I should ask—I *do* ask forgiveness for mentioning her name—but may I not inquire after her? —May I not express my wishes for her future happiness?'

'Your interest in her is but too flattering,' said Bridgenorth, 'but you have already chosen your part, and you must be in future strangers to each other I may have wished it otherwise, but the hour of grace is past, during which your compliance with my advice might—I will speak it plainly—have led to your union For her happiness—if such a word belongs to mortal pilgrimage—I shall care for it sufficiently She leaves this place to day, under the guardianship of a sure friend'

'Not of——?' exclaimed Peveril and stopped short, for he felt he had no right to pronounce the name which came to his lips

'Why do you pause?' said Bridgenorth, 'a sudden thought is often a wise almost always an honest one. With whom did you suppose I meant to entrust my child, that the idea called forth so anxious an expression?'

'Again I should ask your forgiveness,' said Julian, 'for meddling where I have little right to interfere. But I saw a face here that is known to me—the person calls himself Ganlesse—Is it with him that you mean to entrust your daughter?'

'Even to the person who calls himself Ganlesse,' said Bridgenorth, without expressing either anger or surprise

'And do you know to whom you commit a charge so precious to all who know her, and so dear to yourself?' said Julian.

'Do *you* know, who ask me the question?' answered Bridgenorth.

'I own I do not,' answered Julian; 'but I have seen him in a character so different from that he now wears, that I feel it my duty to warn you how you entrust the charge of your child to one who can alternately play the profligate or the hypocrite as it suits his own interest or humour'

Bridgenorth smiled contemptuously 'I might be angry,' he said, 'with the officious zeal which supposes that its green conceptions can instruct my grey hairs, but, good Julian, I do but only ask from you the liberal construction, that I, who have had much converse with mankind, know with whom I trust what is dearest to me He of whom thou speakest hath one visage to his friends, though he may have others to the world, living amongst those before whom honest features should be concealed under a grotesque vizard even as in the sinful sports of the day, called maskings and mummeries, where the wise, if he show himself at all, must be contented to play the apish and fantastic fool

'I would only pray your wisdom to beware,' said Julian, 'of one who, as he has a vizard for others may also have one which can disguise his real features from you yourself

'This is being over careful young man,' replied Bridgenorth more shortly than he had hitherto spoken 'if you would walk by my counsel, you will attend to your own affairs, which, credit me, deserve all your care and leave others to the management of theirs

This was too plain to be misunderstood, and Peveril was compelled to take his leave of Bridgenorth, and of Moultrassie Hall, without further parley or explanation The reader may imagine how oft he looked back, and tried to guess, amongst the lights which continued to twinkle in various parts of the building, which sparkle it was that gleamed from the bower of Alice When the road turned into another direction, he sank into a deep reverie, from which he was at length roused by the voice of Lance, who demanded where he intended to quarter for the night He was unprepared to answer the question, but the honest keeper himself prompted a solution of the problem by requesting that he would occupy a spare bed in the lodge, to which Julian willingly agreed The rest of the inhabitants had retired to rest when they entered, but Dame Ellesmere, apprised by a messenger of her nephew's hospitable intent had everything in the best readiness she could for the son of her ancient patron Peveril betook himself to rest, and, notwithstanding so many subjects of anxiety, slept soundly till the morning was far advanced

His slumbers were first broken by Lance, who had been long up and already active in his service He informed him that his horse, arms, and small cloak bag had been sent from the Castle by one of Major Bridgenorth's servants, who brought a letter, discharging from the major's service the unfortunate Deborah Debbitch, and prohibiting her return to the Hall. The officer of the House of Commons, escorted by a strong guard, had left Martindale Castle that morning early, travelling in Sir Geoffrey's carriage—his lady being also permitted to attend

on him. To this he had to add, that the property at the Castle was taken possession of by Master Win-the-fight, the attorney from Chesterfield, with other officers of law, in name of Major Bridgenorth, a large creditor of the unfortunate knight.

Having told these Job's tidings, Lance paused; and, after a moment's hesitation, declared he was resolved to quit the country, and go up to London along with his young master. Julian argued the point with him; and insisted he had better stay to take charge of his aunt, in case she should be disturbed by these strangers. Lance replied, 'She would have one with her, who would protect her well enough; for there was wherewithal to buy protection amongst them. But, for himself, he was resolved to follow Master Julian to the death.'

Julian heartily thanked him for his love.

'Nay, it is not altogether out of love neither,' said Lance, 'though I am as loving as another; but it is, as it were, partly out of fear, lest I be called over the coals for last night's matter; for as for the miners, they will never trouble them, as the creatures only act after their kind.'

'I will write in your behalf to Major Bridgenorth, who is bound to afford you protection, if you have such fear,' said Julian.

'Nay, for that matter, it is not altogether fear, more than altogether love,' answered the enigmatical keeper, 'although it hath a tasting of both in it. And, to speak plain truth, thus it is—Dame Debbitch and Naunt Ellesmere have resolved to set up their horses together, and have made up all their quarrels. And of all ghosts in the world, the worst is, when an old true-love comes back to haunt a poor fellow like me. Mistress Deborah, though distressed enow for the loss of her place, has been already speaking of a broken sixpence, or some such token, as if a man could remember such things for so many years, even if she had not gone over seas, like a woodcock, in the meanwhile.'

Julian could scarce forbear laughing. 'I thought you too much of a man, Lance, to fear a woman marrying you whether you would or no.'

'It has been many an honest man's luck, for all that,' said Lance; 'and a woman in the very house has so many deuced opportunities. And then there would be two upon one; for naunt, though high enough when any of *your* folks are concerned, hath some look to the main chance; and it seems Mistress Deb is as rich as a Jew.'

'And you, Lance,' said Julian, 'have no mind to marry for cake and pudding?'

'No, truly, master,' answered Lance, 'unless I knew of what dough they were baked. How the devil do I know how the jade came by so much? And then, if she speaks of tokens and love-passages, let her be the same tight lass I broke the sixpence with, and I will be the same true lad to her. But I never heard of true love lasting ten years; and hers, if it lives at all, must be nearer twenty.'

'Well, then, Lance,' said Julian, 'since you are resolved on the thing, we will go to London together; where, if I cannot retain you in my service, and if my father recovers not these misfortunes, I will endeavour to promote you elsewhere.'

'Nay, nay,' said Lance, 'I trust to be back to bonnie Martindale before it is long, and to keep the greenwood, as I have been wont to do; for, as to Dame Debbitch, when they have not me for their common butt, naunt and she will soon bend bows on each other. So here comes old Dame Ellesmere with your breakfast. I will but give some directions about the deer to Rough Ralph, my helper, and saddle my forest pony and your honour's horse, which is no prime one, and we will be ready to trot.'

Julian was not sorry for this addition to his establishment; for Lance had shown himself on the preceding evening a shrewd and bold fellow, and attached to his master. He therefore set himself to reconcile his aunt to parting with her nephew for some time. Her unlimited devotion for 'the family,' readily induced the old lady to acquiesce in his proposal, though not without a gentle sigh over the ruins of a castle in the air, which was founded on the well-saved purse of Mistress Deborah Debbitch. 'At any rate,' she thought, 'it was as well that Lance should be out of the way of that bold, long-legged, beggarly trollop, Cis Sellok.' But to poor Deb herself, the expatriation of Lance, whom she had looked to as a sailor to a port under his lee, for which he can run if weather becomes foul, was a second severe blow, following close on her dismissal from the profitable service of Major Bridgenorth.

Julian visited the disconsolate damsel, in hopes of gaining some light upon Bridgenorth's projects regarding his daughter—the character of this Ganlesse—and other matters, with which her residence in the family might have made her acquainted; but he found her by far too much troubled in mind to afford him the least information. The name of Ganlesse she did not seem to recollect—that of Alice rendered her hysterical—that of Bridgenorth, furious. She numbered up the various services she had rendered in the family—and denounced the plague of swartness to the linen—of leanness to the poultry—of dearth and dishonour to the housekeeping—and of lingering sickness and early death to Alice;—all which evils, she averred, had only been kept off by her continued, watchful, and incessant cares. —Then again, turning to the subject of the fugitive Lance, she expressed such a total contempt of that mean-spirited fellow, in a tone between laughing and crying, as satisfied Julian it was not a topic likely to act as a sedative; and that, therefore, unless he made a longer stay than the urgent state of his affairs permitted, he was not likely to find Mistress Deborah in such a state of composure as might enable him to obtain from her any rational or useful information.

Lance, who good-naturedly took upon himself the whole burden of Dame Debbitch's mental alienation, or 'taking on,' as such fits of *passio hysterica* are usually termed in the country, had too much feeling to present himself before the victim of her own sensibility and of his obduracy. He therefore intimated to Julian, by his assistant Ralph, that the horses stood saddled behind the lodge, and that all was ready for their departure.

Julian took the hint, and they were soon mounted, and clearing the road, at a rapid trot,

in the direction of London; but not by the most usual route. Julian calculated that the carriage in which his father was transported would travel slowly; and it was his purpose, if possible, to get to London before it should arrive there, in order to have time to consult with the friends of his family, what measures should be taken in his father's behalf.

In this manner they advanced a day's journey towards London; at the conclusion of which, Julian found his resting-place in a small inn upon the road. No one came, at the first call, to attend upon the guests and their horses, although the house was well lighted up; and there was a prodigious chattering in the kitchen, such as can only be produced by a French cook when his mystery is in the very moment of projection. It instantly occurred to Julian—so rare was the ministry of these Gallic artists at that time—that the clamour he heard must necessarily be produced by the Sieur Chaubert, on whose *plats* he had lately feasted, along with Smith and Ganlesse.

One, or both of these, were therefore probably in the little inn; and if so, he might have some opportunity to discover their real purpose and character. How to avail himself of such a meeting, he knew not; but chance favoured him more than he could have expected.

'I can scarce receive you, gentlefolks,' said the landlord, who at length appeared at the door; 'here be a sort of quality in my house tonight, whom less than all will not satisfy; nor all neither, for that matter.'

'We are but plain fellows, landlord,' said Julian; 'we are bound for Moseley market, and can get no farther to-night. Any hole will serve us, no matter what.'

'Why,' said the honest host, 'if that be the case, I must e'en put one of you behind the bar, though the gentlemen have desired to be private; the other must take heart of grace and help me at the tap.'

'The tap for me,' said Lance, without waiting his master's decision. 'It is an element which I could live and die in.'

'The bar, then, for me,' said Peveril; and, stepping back, whispered to Lance to exchange cloaks with him, desirous, if possible, to avoid being recognised.

The exchange was made in an instant; and presently afterwards the landlord brought a light; and as he guided Julian into his hostelry, cautioned him to sit quiet in the place where he should stow him; and if he was discovered, to say that he was one of the house, and leave him to make it good. 'You will hear what the gallants say,' he added; 'but I think thou wilt carry away but little on it; for when it is not French, it is court gibberish; and that is as hard to construe.'

The bar, into which our hero was inducted on these conditions, seemed formed, with respect to the public room, upon the principle of a citadel, intended to observe and bridle a rebellious capital. Here sat the host on the Saturday evenings, screened from the observation of his guests, yet with the power of observing both their wants and their behaviour, and also that of overhearing their conversation—a practice which he was much addicted to, being one of that numerous class of philanthropists, to whom their neighbours' business is of as much consequence, or rather more, than their own.

Here he planted his new guest, with a repeated caution not to disturb the gentlemen by speech or motion; and a promise that he should be speedily accommodated with a cold buttock of beef, and a tankard of home-brewed. And here he left him with no other light than that which glimmered from the well-illuminated apartment within, through a sort of shuttle which accommodated the landlord with a view into it.

The situation, inconvenient enough in itself, was, on the present occasion, precisely what Julian would have selected. He wrapped himself in the weather-beaten cloak of Lance Outram, which had been stained, by age and weather, into a thousand variations from its original Lincoln green; and, with as little noise as he could, set himself to observe the two inmates, who had engrossed to themselves the whole of the apartment, which was usually open to the public. They sat by a table well covered with such costly rarities as could only have been procured by much forecast, and prepared by the exquisite Monsieur Chaubert; to which both seemed to do much justice.

Julian had little difficulty in ascertaining that one of the travellers was, as he had anticipated, the master of the said Chaubert, or, as he was called by Ganlesse, Smith; the other, who faced him, he had never seen before. This last was dressed like a gallant of the first order. His periwig, indeed, as he travelled on horseback, did not much exceed in size the bar-wig of a modern lawyer; but then the essence which he shook from it with every motion impregnated a whole apartment, which was usually only perfumed by that vulgar herb, tobacco. His riding-coat was laced in the newest and most courtly style; and Grammont himself might have envied the embroidery of his waistcoat, and the peculiar cut of his breeches, which buttoned above the knee, permitting the shape of a very handsome leg to be completely seen. This, by the proprietor thereof, had been stretched out upon a stool, and he contemplated its proportions, from time to time, with infinite satisfaction.

The conversation between these worthies was so interesting, that we propose to assign to it another chapter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

—— This is some creature of the elements,
Most like your sea gull. He can wheel and whistle
His screaming song, e'en when the storm is loudest—
Take for his sheeted couch the restless foam
Of the wild wave-crest—slumber in the calm,
And dally with the storm. Yet, 'tis a gull,
An arrant gull, with all this.

THE CHIEFTAIN.

'AND here is to thee,' said the fashionable gallant whom we have described, 'honest Tom; and a cup of welcome to thee out of Looby-land. Why, thou hast been so long in the country,

that thou hast got a bumpkinly, clod-compelling sort of look thyself. That greasy doublet fits thee as if it were thy reserved Sunday's apparel; and the points seem as if they were stay-laces bought for thy true-love Marjory. I marvel thou canst still relish a ragout. Methinks, now, to a stomach bound in such a jacket, eggs and bacon were a diet more conforming.'

'Rally away, my good lord, while wit lasts,' answered his companion; 'yours is not the sort of ammunition which will bear much expenditure. Or rather, tell me news from court, since we have met so opportunely.'

'You would have asked me these an hour ago,' said the lord, 'had not your very soul been under Chaubert's covered dishes. You remembered king's affairs will keep cool, and *entremets* must be eaten hot.'

'Not so, my lord; I only kept common talk whilst that eavesdropping rascal of a landlord was in the room; so that, now the coast is clear once more, I pray you for news from court.'

'The Plot is nonsuited,' answered the courtier—'Sir George Wakeman acquitted*—the witnesses discredited by the jury—Scroggs, who ranted on one side, is now ranting on t'other.'

'Rat the Plot, Wakeman, witnesses, Papists, and Protestants, all together! Do you think I care for such trash as that?—Till the Plot comes up the palace back-stair, and gets possession of old Rowley's own imagination, I care not a farthing who believes or disbelieves. I hang by him will bear me out.'

'Well, then,' said my lord, 'the next news is Rochester's disgrace.'

'Disgraced!—How, and for what? The morning I came off, he stood as fair as any one.'

'That's over—the epitaph† has broken his neck—and now he may write one for his own court favour, for it is dead and buried.'

'The epitaph!' exclaimed Tom; 'why, I was by when it was made; and it passed for an excellent good jest with him whom it was made upon.'

'Ay, so it did amongst ourselves,' answered his companion; 'but it got abroad, and had a run like a mill-race. It was in every coffee house, and in half the diurnals. Grammont translated it into French, too; and there is no laughing at so sharp a jest when it is dinned into your ears on all sides. So, disgraced is the author; and, but for his Grace of Buckingham, the court would be as dull as my Lord Chancellor's wig.'

'Or as the head it covers.—Well, my lord, the fewer at court, there is the more room for those that can bustle there. But there are two mainstrings of Shaftesbury's fiddle broken—the Popish Plot fallen into discredit—and Rochester disgraced. Changeful times—but here is to the little man who shall mend them.'

'I apprehend you,' replied his lordship; 'and meet your health with my love. Trust me, my lord loves you, and longs for you.—Nay, I have done you reason.—By your leave, the cup is with me. Here is to his buxom Grace of Bucks.'

'As blithe a peer,' said Smith, 'as ever turned night to day. Nay, it shall be an overflowing bumper, an you will; and I will drink it *super naculum*.—And how stands the great Madam?'‡

'Stoutly against all change,' answered my lord—'Little Anthony§ can make nought of her.'

'Then he shall bring her influence to nought. Hark in thine ear. Thou knowest'—(Here he whispered so low that Julian could not catch the sound.)

'Know him?' answered the other—'know Ned of the Island?—To be sure I do.'

'He is the man that shall knot the great fiddle-strings that have snapped. Say I told you so; and thereupon I give thee his health.'

'And thereupon I pledge thee,' said the young nobleman, 'which on any other argument I were loath to do—thinking of Ned as somewhat the cut of a villain.'

'Granted, man—granted,' said the other—'a very thorough-paced rascal; but able, my lord, able and necessary; and, in this plan, indispensable.—Pshaw!—This champagne turns stronger as it gets older, I think.'

'Hark, mine honest fellow,' said the courtier; 'I would thou wouldst give me some item of all this mystery. Thou hast it, I know; for whom do men entrust but trusty Chiffinch?'

'It is your pleasure to say so, my lord,' answered Smith (whom we shall hereafter call by his real name of Chiffinch), with much drunken gravity, for his speech had become a little altered by his copious libations in the course of the evening—'few men know more, or say less, than I do; and it well becomes my station. *Conticuere omnes*, as the grammar hath it—all men should learn to hold their tongue.'

'Except with a friend, Tom—except with a friend. Thou wilt never be such a dogbolt as to refuse a hint to a friend? Come, you get too wise and statesman-like for your office.—The ligatures of thy most peasantly jacket there are like to burst with thy secret. Come, undo a button, man; it is for the health of thy constitution—Let out a reef, and let thy chosen friend know what is meditating. Thou knowest I am as true as thyself to little Anthony, if he can but get uppermost.'

'*If*, thou lordly infidel!' said Chiffinch—'talk'st thou to me of *ifs*?—There is neither *if* nor *and* in the matter. The great Madam shall be pulled a peg down—the great Plot screwed a peg or two up. Thou knowest Ned?—Honest Ned had a brother's death to revenge.'

'I have heard so,' said the nobleman; 'and that his persevering resentment of that injury was one of the few points which seemed to be a sort of heathenish virtue in him.'

'Well,' continued Chiffinch, 'in manœuvring to bring about this revenge, which he hath

* Note S. First Check to the Plot.

† The epitaph alluded to is the celebrated epigram made by Rochester on Charles II. It was composed at the king's request, who nevertheless resented its poignancy. The lines are well known—

> Here lies our sovereign lord the King,
> Whose word no man relies on;
> Who never said a foolish thing,
> And never did a wise one.

‡ The Duchess of Portsmouth, Charles II.'s favourite mistress, very unpopular at the time of the Popish Plot, as well from her religion as her country, being a Frenchwoman and a Catholic.

§ Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, the politician and intriguer of the period.

laboured at many a day, he hath discovered a treasure.'

'What!—In the Isle of Man?' said his companion.

'Assure yourself of it.—She is a creature so lovely, that she needs but be seen to put down every one of the favourites, from Portsmouth and Cleveland down to that threepenny baggage, Mistress Nelly.'

'By my word, Chiffinch,' said my lord, 'that is a reinforcement after the fashion of thine own best tactics. But bethink thee, man! To make such a conquest, there wants more than a cherry cheek and a bright eye—there must be wit—wit, man, and manners, and a little sense besides, to keep influence when it is gotten.'

'Pshaw! will you tell me what goes to this vocation?' said Chiffinch. 'Here, pledge me her health in a brimmer—Nay, you shall do it on knees, too.—Never such a triumphant beauty was seen—I went to church on purpose, for the first time these ten years—Yet I lie, it was not to church neither—it was to chapel.'

'To chapel!—What the devil, is she a Puritan?' exclaimed the other courtier.

'To be sure she is. Do you think I would be accessory to bringing a Papist into favour in these times, when, as my good lord said in the House, there should not be a Popish man-servant, nor a Popish maid-servant, not so much as dog or cat, left to bark or mew about the King!'*

'But consider, Chiffie, the dislikelihood of her pleasing,' said the noble courtier. 'What! old Rowley, with his wit, and love of wit—his wildness, and love of wildness—he form a league with a silly, scrupulous, unidea'd Puritan!—Not if she were Venus.'

'Thou knowest nought of the matter,' answered Chiffinch. 'I tell thee, the fine contrast between the seeming saint and falling sinner will give zest to the old gentleman's inclinations. If I do not know him, who does?—Her health, my lord, on your bare knee, as you would live to be of the bedchamber.'

'I pledge you most devoutly,' answered his friend. 'But you have not told me how the acquaintance is to be made; for you cannot, I think, carry her to Whitehall.'

'Aha, my dear lord, you would have the whole secret! but that I cannot afford—I can spare a f' nd a peep at my ends, but no one must look on the means by which they are achieved.'—So saying, he shook his drunken head most wisely.

The villanous design which this discourse implied, and which his heart told him was designed against Alice Bridgenorth, stirred Julian so extremely, that he involuntarily shifted his posture, and laid his hand on his sword-hilt.

Chiffinch heard a rustling, and broke off, exclaiming, 'Hark!—Zounds, something moved—I trust I have told the tale to no ears but thine.'

'I will cut off any which have drunk in but a syllable of thy words,' said the nobleman; and, raising a candle, he took a hasty survey of the apartment. Seeing nothing that could incur his menaced resentment, he replaced the light and continued:—'Well, suppose the Belle Louise de Querouaille† shoots from her high station in the firmament, how will you rear up the downfallen Plot again—for without that same Plot, think of it as thou wilt, we have no change of hands—and matters remain as they were, with a Protestant courtesan instead of a Papist—Little Anthony can but little speed without that Plot of his—I believe, in my conscience, he begot it himself.'‡

'Whoever begot it,' said Chiffinch, 'he hath adopted it; and a thriving babe it has been to him. Well, then, though it lies out of my way, I will play Saint Peter again—up with t'other key, and unlock t'other mystery.'

'Now thou speakest like a good fellow; and I will, with my own hands, unwire this fresh flask, to begin a brimmer to the success of thy achievement.'

'Well, then,' continued the communicative Chiffinch, 'thou knowest that they have long had a nibbling at the old Countess of Derby.—So Ned was sent down—he owes her an old accompt, thou knowest—with private instructions to possess himself of the island, if he could, by help of some of his old friends. He hath ever kept up spies upon her; and happy man was he, to think his hour of vengeance was come so nigh. But he missed his blow; and the old girl, being placed on her guard, was soon in a condition to make Ned smoke for it. Out of the island he came with little advantage for having entered it; when, by some means,—for the devil, I think, stands ever his friend,—he obtained information concerning a messenger, whom her old Majesty of Man had sent to London to make party in her behalf. Ned stuck himself to this fellow—a raw, half-bred lad, son of an old blundering Cavalier of the old stamp, down in Derbyshire—and so managed the swain, that he brought him to the place where I was waiting, in anxious expectation of the pretty one I told you of. By Saint Anthony, for I will swear by no meaner oath, I stared when I saw this great lout—not that the fellow is so ill-looked neither—I stared like—like—good now, help me to a simile.'

'Like Saint Anthony's pig an it were sleek,' said the young lord; 'your eyes, Chiffie, have the very blink of one. But what hath all this to do with the Plot? Hold, I have had wine enough.'

'You shall not baulk me,' said Chiffinch; and a jingling was heard, as if he were filling his comrade's glass with a very unsteady hand. 'Hey—what the devil is the matter?—I used to carry my glass steady—very steady.'

'Well, but this stranger?'

'Why, he swept at game and ragout as he would at spring beef or summer mutton. Never saw so unnurtured a cub—Knew no more what he ate than an infidel—I cursed him by my gods when I saw Chaubert's *chef-d'œuvres* glutted down so indifferent a throat. We took the freedom to spice his goblet a little, and ease him of his packet of letters; and the fool went on

* Such was the extravagance of Shaftesbury's eloquence.

† Charles's principal mistress *en titre*. She was created Duchess of Portsmouth.

‡ Shaftesbury himself is supposed to have said that he knew not who was the inventor of the Plot, but that he himself had all the advantage of the discovery.

his way the next morning with a budget artificially filled with grey paper. Ned would have kept him, in hopes to have made a witness of him, but the boy was not of that mettle.'

'How will you prove your letters?' said the courtier.

'La you there, my lord,' said Chiffinch; 'one may see, with half an eye, for all your laced doublet, that you have been of the family of Furnival's, before your brother's death sent you to court. How prove the letters?—Why, we have but let the sparrow fly with a string round his foot—We have him again as soon as we list.'

'Why, thou art turned a very Machiavel, Chiffinch,' said his friend. 'But how if the youth proved restive?—I have heard these Peak men have hot heads and hard hands.'

'Trouble not yourself—that was cared for, my lord,' said Chiffinch—'his pistols might bark, but they could not bite.'

'Most exquisite Chiffinch, thou art turned micher as well as padder—Canst both rob a man and kidnap him!'

'Micher and padder—what terms be these?' said Chiffinch. 'Methinks these are sounds to lug out upon. You will have me angry to the degree of falling foul—robber and kidnapper!'

'You mistake verb for noun-substantive,' replied his lordship; 'I said *rob* and *kidnap*—a man may do either once and away without being professional.'

'But not without spilling a little foolish noble blood, or some such red-coloured gear,' said Chiffinch, starting up.

'O yes,' said his lordship; 'all this may be without these direful consequences, and as you will find to-morrow, when you return to England; for at present you are in the land of Champagne, Chiffie; and as you may continue so, I drink thee this parting cup to line thy night-cap.'

'I do not refuse your pledge,' said Chiffinch; 'but I drink to thee in dudgeon and in hostility—It is a cup of wrath, and a gage of battle. To-morrow, by dawn, I will have thee at point of fox, wert thou the last of the Savilles. —What the devil! think you I fear you because you are a lord?'

'Not so, Chiffinch,' answered his companion. 'I know thou fearest nothing but beans and bacon, washed down with bumpkin like beer.—Adieu, sweet Chiffinch—to bed—Chiffinch—to bed.'

So saying, he lifted a candle, and left the apartment. And Chiffinch, whom the last draught had nearly overpowered, had just strength enough left to do the same, muttering, as he staggered out, 'Yes, he shall answer it. —Dawn of day? D—n me—It is come already—Yonder's the dawn—No, d—n me, 'tis the fire glancing on the cursed red lattice—I am whistled drunk, I think—This comes of a country inn—It is the smell of the brandy in this cursed room—It could not be the wine—Well, old Rowley shall send me no more errands to the country again—Steady, steady.'

So saying, he reeled out of the apartment, leaving Peveril to think over the extraordinary conversation he had just heard.

The name of Chiffinch, the well-known minister of Charles's pleasures, was nearly allied to the part which he seemed about to play in the present intrigue; but that Christian, whom he had always supposed a Puritan as strict as his brother-in-law, Bridgenorth, should be associated with him in a plot so infamous, seemed alike unnatural and monstrous. The near relationship might blind Bridgenorth, and warrant him in confiding his daughter to such a man's charge; but what a wretch he must be, that could coolly meditate such an ignominious abuse of his trust! In doubt whether he could credit for a moment the tale which Chiffinch had revealed, he hastily examined his packet, and found that the sealskin case in which it had been wrapped up now only contained an equal quantity of waste-paper. If he had wanted further confirmation, the failure of the shot which he had fired at Bridgenorth, and of which the wadding only struck him, showed that his arms had been tampered with. He examined the pistol which still remained charged; and found that the ball had been drawn. 'May I perish,' said he to himself, 'amid these villanous intrigues, but thou shalt be more surely loaded, and to better purpose! The contents of these papers may undo my benefactress—their having been found on me, may ruin my father—that I have been the bearer of them, may cost, in these fiery times, my own life—that I care least for—they form a branch of the scheme laid against the honour and happiness of a creature so innocent, that it is almost sin to think of her within the neighbourhood of such infamous knaves. I will recover the letters at all risks—But how?—that is to be thought on. —Lance is stout and trusty; and when a bold deed is once resolved upon, there never yet lacked the means of executing it.'

His host now entered, with an apology for his long absence; and, after providing Peveril with some refreshments, invited him to accept, for his night-quarters, the accommodation of a remote hay-loft, which he was to share with his comrade; professing, at the same time, he could hardly have afforded them this courtesy, but out of deference to the exquisite talents of Lance Outram as assistant at the tap; where, indeed, it seems probable that he, as well as the admiring landlord, did that evening contrive to drink nearly as much liquor as they drew.

But Lance was a seasoned vessel, on whom liquor made no lasting impression; so that, when Peveril awaked that trusty follower at dawn, he found him cool enough to comprehend and enter into the design which he expressed, of recovering the letters which had been abstracted from his person.

Having considered the whole matter with much attention, Lance shrugged, grinned, and scratched his head; and at length manfully expressed his resolution. 'Well, my nauy speaks truth in her old saw,

> He that serves Peveril munna be slack,
> Neither for weather, nor yet for wrack.

And then, again, my good dame was wont to say, that whenever Peveril was in a broil, Outram was in a stew; so I will never bear base mind, but even hold a part with you as

my fathers have done with yours, for four generations, whatever more.'

'Spoken like a most gallant Outram,' said Julian; 'and were we but rid of that puppy lord and his retinue, we two could easily deal with the other three.'

'Two Londoners and a Frenchman!' said Lance,—'I would take them in mine own hand. And as for my Lord Saville, as they call him, I heard word last night that he and all his men of gilded gingerbread—that looked at an honest fellow like me, as if they were the ore and I the dross—are all to be off this morning to some races, or such-like junketings, about Tutbury. It was that brought him down here, where he met that other civet-cat by accident.'

In truth, even as Lance spoke, a trampling was heard of horses in the yard; and from the hatch of their hay-loft they beheld Lord Saville's attendants mustered, and ready to set out as soon as he should make his appearance.

'So ho, Master Jeremy,' said one of the fellows to a sort of principal attendant, who just came out of the house, 'methinks the wine has proved a sleeping cup to my lord this morning.'

'No,' answered Jeremy, 'he hath been up before light writing letters for London; and to punish thy irreverence, thou, Jonathan, shalt be the man to ride back with them.'

'And so to miss the race!' said Jonathan sulkily; 'I thank you for this good turn, good Master Jeremy; and hang me if I forget it.'

Further discussion was cut short by the appearance of the young nobleman, who, as he came out of the inn, said to Jeremy, 'These be the letters. Let one of the knaves ride to London for life and death, and deliver them as directed; and the rest of them get to horse and follow me.'

Jeremy gave Jonathan the packet with a malicious smile; and the disappointed groom turned his horse's head sullenly towards London, while Lord Saville, and the rest of his retinue, rode briskly off in an opposite direction, pursued by the benedictions of the host and his family, who stood bowing and curtseying at the door, in gratitude, doubtless, for the receipt of an unconscionable reckoning.

It was full three hours after their departure, that Chiffinch lounged into the room in which they had supped, in a brocade night-gown and green velvet cap, turned up with the most costly Brussels lace. He seemed but half awake; and it was with drowsy voice that he called for a cup of cold small beer. His manner and appearance were those of a man who had wrestled hard with Bacchus on the preceding evening, and had scarce recovered the effects of his contest with the jolly god. Lance, instructed by his master to watch the motions of the courtier, officiously attended with the cooling beverage he called for, pleading, as an excuse to the landlord, his wish to see a Londoner in his morning-gown and cap.

No sooner had Chiffinch taken his morning draught, than he inquired after Lord Saville.

'His lordship was mounted and away by peep of dawn,' was Lance's reply.

'What the devil!' exclaimed Chiffinch; 'why, this is scarce civil.—What! off for the races with his whole retinue?'

'All but one,' replied Lance, 'whom his lordship sent back to London with letters.'

'To London with letters!' said Chiffinch. 'Why, I am for London, and could have saved his express a labour.—But stop—hold—I begin to recollect—d—n, can I have blabbed?—I have—I have—I remember it all now—I have blabbed; and to the very weasel of the court, who sucks the yelk out of every man's secret. Furies and fire—that my afternoons should ruin my mornings thus!—I must turn boon companion and good fellow in my cups—and have my confidences and my quarrels—my friends and my enemies, with a plague to me, as if any one could do a man much good or harm but his own self. His messenger must be stopped, though—I will put a spoke in his wheel.—Hark ye, drawer-fellow—call my groom hither—call Tom Beacon.'

Lance obeyed; but failed not, when he had introduced the domestic, to remain in the apartment, in order to hear what should pass betwixt him and his master.

'Hark ye, Tom,' said Chiffinch, 'here are five pieces for you.'

'What's to be done now, I trow?' said Tom, without even the ceremony of returning thanks, which he was probably well aware would not be received even in part payment of the debt he was incurring.

'Mount your fleet nag, Tom—ride like the devil—overtake the groom whom Lord Saville despatched to London this morning—lame his horse—break his bones—fill him as drunk as the Baltic Sea; or do whatever may best and most effectually stop his journey.—Why does the lout stand there without answering me? Dost understand me?'

'Why, ay, Master Chiffinch,' said Tom; 'and so I am thinking doth this honest man here, who need not have heard quite so much of your counsel, an it had been your will.'

'I am bewitched this morning,' said Chiffinch to himself, 'or else the champagne runs in my head still. My brain has become the very Lowlands of Holland—a gill cup would inundate it.—Hark thee, fellow,' he added, addressing Lance, 'keep my counsel—there is a wager betwixt Lord Saville and me, which of us shall first have a letter in London. Here is to drink my health, and bring luck on my side. Say nothing of it; but help Tom to his nag.—Tom, e'er thou startest come for thy credentials—I will give thee a letter to the Duke of Bucks, that may be evidence thou wert first in town.'

Tom Beacon ducked and exit; and Lance, after having made some show of helping him to horse, ran back to tell his master the joyful intelligence that a lucky accident had abated Chiffinch's party to their own number.

Peveril immediately ordered his horses to be got ready; and, so soon as Tom Beacon was despatched towards London, on a rapid trot, had the satisfaction to observe Chiffinch, with his favourite Chaubert, mount to pursue the same journey, though at a more moderate rate. He permitted them to attain such a distance, that they might be dodged without suspicion; then paid his reckoning, mounted his horse, and followed, keeping his men carefully in view, until

he should come to a place proper for the enterprise which he meditated.

It had been Peveril's intention that, when they came to some solitary part of the road, they should gradually mend their pace, until they overtook Chaubert—that Lance Outram should then drop behind, in order to assail the man of spits and stoves, while he himself, spurring onwards, should grapple with Chiffinch. But this scheme presupposed that the master and servant should travel in the usual manner—the latter riding a few yards behind the former. Whereas, such and so interesting were the subjects of discussion betwixt Chiffinch and the French cook, that, without heeding the rules of etiquette, they rode on together, amicably abreast, carrying on a conversation on the mysteries of the table, which the ancient Comus, or a modern gastronome, might have listened to with pleasure. It was therefore necessary to venture on them both at once.

For this purpose, when they saw a long tract of road before them, unvaried by the least appearance of man, beast, or human habitation, they began to mend their pace, that they might come up to Chiffinch, without giving him any alarm by a sudden and suspicious increase of haste. In this manner they lessened the distance which separated them till they were within about twenty yards, when Peveril, afraid that Chiffinch might recognise him at a nearer approach, and so trust to his horse's heels, made Lance the signal to charge.

At the sudden increase of their speed, and the noise with which it was necessarily attended, Chiffinch looked around, but had time to do no more, for Lance, who had pricked his pony (which was much more speedy than Julian's horse) into full gallop, dashed, without ceremony, betwixt the courtier and his attendant; and ere Chaubert had time for more than one exclamation, he upset both horse and Frenchman—*mortbleu!* thrilling from his tongue as he rolled on the ground amongst the various articles of his occupation, which, escaping from the budget in which he bore them, lay tumbled upon the highway in strange disorder; while Lance, springing from his palfrey, commanded his foeman to be still, under no less a penalty than that of death, if he attempted to rise.

Before Chiffinch could avenge his trusty follower's downfall, his own bridle was seized by Julian, who presented a pistol with the other hand, and commanded him to stand or die.

Chiffinch, though effeminate, was no coward. He stood still as commanded, and said, with firmness, 'Rogue, you have taken me at surprise. If you are a highwayman, there is my purse. Do us no bodily harm, and spare the budget of spices and sauces.'

'Look you, Master Chiffinch,' said Peveril, 'this is no time for dallying. I am no highwayman, but a man of honour. Give me back that packet which you stole from me the other night; or, by all that is good, I will send a brace of balls through you, and search for it at leisure.'

'What night?—What packet?' answered Chiffinch, confused; yet willing to protract the time for the chance of assistance, or to put Peveril off his guard. 'I know nothing of what you mean. If you are a man of honour, let me draw my sword, and I will do you right, as a gentleman should do to another.'

'Dishonourable rascal!' said Peveril, 'you escape not in this manner. You plundered me when you had me at odds; and I am not the fool to let my advantage escape, now that my turn is come. Yield up the packet; and then, if you will, I will fight you on equal terms. But first,' he reiterated, 'yield up the packet, or I will instantly send you where the tenor of your life will be hard to answer for.'

The tone of Peveril's voice, the fierceness of his eye, and the manner in which he held the loaded weapon, within a hand's-breadth of Chiffinch's head, convinced the last there was neither room for compromise, nor time for trifling. He thrust his hand into a side pocket of his cloak, and with visible reluctance produced those papers and despatches with which Julian had been entrusted by the Countess of Derby.

'They are five in number,' said Julian; 'and you have given me only four. Your life depends on full restitution.'

'It escaped from my hand,' said Chiffinch, producing the missing document—'There it is. Now, sir, your pleasure is fulfilled, unless,' he added sulkily, 'you design either murder or further robbery.'

'Base wretch!' said Peveril, withdrawing his pistol, yet keeping a watchful eye on Chiffinch's motions, 'thou art unworthy any honest man's sword; and yet, if you dare draw your own, as you proposed but now, I am willing to give you a chance upon fair equality of terms.'

'Equality!' said Chiffinch sneeringly; 'yes, a proper equality—sword and pistol against single rapier, and two men upon one, for Chaubert is no fighter. No, sir; I shall seek amends upon some more fitting occasion, and with more equal weapons.'

'By backbiting, or by poison, base pander!' said Julian; 'these are thy means of vengeance. But mark me—I know your vile purpose respecting a lady who is too worthy that her name should be uttered in such a worthless ear. Thou hast done me one injury, and thou see'st I have repaid it. But prosecute this further villany, and be assured I will put thee to death like a foul reptile, whose very slaver is fatal to humanity. Rely upon this, as if Machiavel had sworn it; for so surely as you keep your purpose, so surely will I prosecute my revenge.—Follow me, Lance, and leave him to think on what I have told him.'

Lance had, after the first shock, sustained a very easy part in this rencontre; for all he had to do was to point the butt of his whip, in the manner of a gun, at the intimidated Frenchman, who, lying on his back, and gazing at random on the skies, had as little the power or purpose of resistance, as any pig which had ever come under his own slaughter-knife.

Summoned by his master from the easy duty of guarding such an unresisting prisoner, Lance remounted his horse, and they both rode off, leaving their discomfited antagonists to console themselves for their misadventure as they best could. But consolation was hard to come by in the circumstances. The French artist had to lament the dispersion of his spices, and the

destruction of his magazine of sauces—an enchanter despoiled of his magic wand and talisman could scarce have been in more desperate extremity. Chiffinch had to mourn the downfall of his intrigue, and its premature discovery. 'To this fellow, at least,' he thought, 'I can have bragged none—here my evil genius alone has betrayed me. With this infernal discovery, which may cost me so dear on all hands, champagne had nought to do. If there be a flask left unbroken, I will drink it after dinner, and try if it may not even yet suggest some scheme of redemption and of revenge.'

With this manly resolution, he prosecuted his journey to London.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

> A man so various, that he seem'd to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
> Stiff in opinions—always in the wrong
> Was everything by starts, but nothing long;
> Who, in the course of one revolving moon,
> Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
> Then, all for women, painting, fiddling, drinking;
> Besides a thousand freaks that died in thinking.
>
> DRYDEN.

We must now transport the reader to the magnificent hotel in —— Street, inhabited at this time by the celebrated George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, whom Dryden has doomed to a painful immortality by the few lines which we have prefixed to this chapter. Amid the gay and the licentious of the laughing court of Charles, the duke was the most licentious and most gay; yet, while expending a princely fortune, a strong constitution, and excellent talents, in pursuit of frivolous pleasures, he nevertheless nourished deeper and more extensive designs; in which he only failed from want of that fixed purpose and regulated perseverance essential to all important enterprises, but particularly in politics.

It was long past noon; and the usual hour of the duke's levee—if anything could be termed usual where all was irregular—had been long past. His hall was filled with lackeys and footmen, in the most splendid liveries; the interior apartments, with the gentlemen and pages of his household, arrayed as persons of the first quality, and, in that respect, rather exceeding than falling short of the duke in personal splendour. But his antechamber, in particular, might be compared to a gathering of eagles to the slaughter, were not the simile too dignified to express that vile race, who, by a hundred devices all tending to one common end, live upon the wants of needy greatness, or administer to the pleasures of summer-teeming luxury, or stimulate the wild wishes of lavish and wasteful extravagance, by devising new modes and fresh motives of profusion. There stood the projector, with his mysterious brow, promising unbounded wealth to whomsoever might choose to furnish the small preliminary sum necessary to change egg-shells into the great *arcanum*. There was Captain Seagull, undertaker for a foreign settlement, with the map under his arm of Indian or American kingdoms, beautiful as the primitive Eden, waiting the bold occupants for whom a generous patron should equip two brigantines and a fly-boat. Thither came, fast and frequent, the gamesters, in their different forms and calling. This, light, young, gay in appearance, the thoughtless youth of wit and pleasure—the pigeon rather than the rook—but at heart the same sly, shrewd, cold-blooded calculator, as yonder old hard-featured professor of the same science, whose eyes are grown dim with watching the dice at midnight; and whose fingers are even now assisting his mental computation of chances and of odds. The fine arts, too,—I would it were otherwise,—have their professors amongst this sordid train. The poor poet, half ashamed, in spite of habit, of the part which he is about to perform, and abashed by consciousness at once of his base motive and his shabby black coat, lurks in yonder corner for the favourable moment to offer his dedication. Much better attired, the architect presents his splendid vision of front and wings, and designs a palace, the expense of which may transfer his employer to a jail. But, uppermost of all, the favourite musician, or singer, who waits on my lord to receive, in solid gold, the value of the dulcet sounds which solaced the banquet of the preceding evening.

Such, and many such-like, were the morning attendants of the Duke of Buckingham—all genuine descendants of the daughter of the horse leech, whose cry is 'Give, give.'

But the levee of his Grace contained other and very different characters; and was indeed as various as his own opinions and pursuits. Besides many of the young nobility and wealthy gentry of England, who made his Grace the glass at which they dressed themselves for the day, and who learned from him how to travel, with the newest and best grace, the general Road to Ruin; there were others of a graver character—discarded statesmen, political spies, opposition orators, servile tools of administration, men who met not elsewhere, but who regarded the duke's mansion as a sort of neutral ground; sure that, if he was not of their opinion to-day, this very circumstance rendered it most likely he should think with them to-morrow. The Puritans themselves did not shun intercourse with a man whose talents must have rendered him formidable, even if they had not been united with high rank and an immense fortune. Several grave personages, with black suits, short cloaks, and band-strings of a formal cut, were mingled, as we see their portraits in a gallery of paintings, among the gallants who ruffled in silk and embroidery. It is true, they escaped the scandal of being thought intimates of the duke, by their business being supposed to refer to money matters. Whether these grave and professing citizens mixed politics with money-lending was not known; but it had been long observed, that the Jews, who in general confine themselves to the latter department, had become for some time faithful attendants at the duke's levee.

It was high-tide in the antechamber, and had been so for more than an hour, ere the duke's gentleman in ordinary ventured into his bedchamber, carefully darkened, so as to make

midnight at noon-day, to know his Grace's pleasure. His soft and serene whisper, in which he asked whether it were his Grace's pleasure to rise, was briefly and sharply answered by the counter questions, 'Who waits?—What's o'clock?'

'It is Jerningham, your Grace,' said the attendant. 'It is one afternoon; and your Grace appointed some of the people without at eleven.'

'Who are they?—What do they want?'

'A message from Whitehall, your Grace.'

'Pshaw! it will keep cold. Those who make all others wait, will be the better of waiting in their turn. Were I to be guilty of ill-breeding, it should rather be to a king than a beggar.'

'The gentlemen from the city.'

'I am tired of them—tired of their all cant, and no religion—all Protestantism, and no charity. Tell them to go to Shaftesbury—to Aldersgate Street with them—that's the best market for their wares.'

'Jockey, my lord, from Newmarket.'

'Let him ride to the devil—he has horse of mine, and spurs of his own. Any more?'

'The whole antechamber is full, my lord—knights and squires, doctors and dicers.'

'The dicers, with their doctors * in their pockets, I presume.'

'Counts, captains, and clergymen.'

'You are alliterative, Jerningham,' said the duke; 'and that is a proof you are poetical. Hand me my writing things.'

Getting half out of bed—thrusting one arm into a brocade night-gown, deeply furred with sables, and one foot into a velvet slipper, while the other pressed in primitive nudity the rich carpet—his Grace, without thinking further on the assembly without, began to pen a few lines of a satirical poem; then suddenly stopped—threw the pen into the chimney—exclaimed that the humour was past—and asked his attendant if there were any letters. Jerningham produced a huge packet.

'What the devil!' said his Grace, 'do you think I will read all these? I am like Clarence, who asked a cup of wine, and was soused into a butt of sack. I mean, is there anything which presses?'

'This letter, your Grace,' said Jerningham, 'concerning the Yorkshire mortgage.'

'Did I not bid thee carry it to old Gatheral, my steward?'

'I did, my lord,' answered the other; 'but Gatheral says there are difficulties.'

'Let the usurers foreclose, then—there is no difficulty in that; and out of a hundred manors I shall scarce miss one,' answered the duke. 'And hark ye, bring me my chocolate.'

'Nay, my lord, Gatheral does not say it is impossible—only difficult.'

'And what is the use of him, if he cannot make it easy? But you are all born to make difficulties,' replied the duke.

'Nay, if your Grace approves the terms in this schedule, and pleases to sign it, Gatheral will undertake for the matter,' answered Jerningham.

'And could you not have said so at first, you blockhead?' said the duke, signing the paper without looking at the contents.—'What other letters? And, remember, I must be plagued with no more business.'

'Billets-doux, my lord—five or six of them. This left at the porter's lodge by a vizard mask.'

'Pshaw!' answered the duke, tossing them over, while his attendant assisted in dressing him—'an acquaintance of a quarter's standing.'

'This given to one of the pages by my Lady ——'s waiting-woman.'

'Plague on it—a Jeremiade on the subject of perjury and treachery, and not a single new line to the old tune,' said the duke, glancing over the billet. 'Here is the old cant—*cruel man—broken vows—Heaven's just revenge.* Why, the woman is thinking of murder—not of love. No one should pretend to write upon so threadbare a topic without having at least some novelty of expression. *The despairing Araminta*—Lie there, fair desperate. And this—how comes it?'

'Flung into the window of the hall, by a fellow who ran off at full speed,' answered Jerningham.

'This is a better text,' said the duke; 'and yet it is an old one too—three weeks old at least—The little Countess with the jealous lord—I should not care a farthing for her, save for that same jealous lord—Plague on't, and he's gone down to the country—*this evening—in silence and safety—written with a quill pulled from the wing of Cupid*—Your ladyship has left him pen-feathers enough to fly away with—better clipped his wings when you had caught him, my lady—and *so confident of her Buckingham's faith,*—I hate confidence in a young person—She must be taught better—I will not go.'

'Your Grace will not be so cruel!' said Jerningham.

'Thou art a compassionate fellow, Jerningham; but conceit must be punished.'

'But if your lordship should resume your fancy for her?'

'Why, then, you must swear the billet-doux miscarried,' answered the duke. 'And stay, a thought strikes me—it shall miscarry in great style. Hark ye—Is—what is the fellow's name—the poet—is he yonder?'

'There are six gentlemen, sir, who, from the reams of paper in their pockets, and the threadbare seams at their elbows, appear to wear the livery of the Muses.'

'Poetical once more, Jerningham. He, I mean, who wrote the last lampoon,' said the duke.

'To whom your Grace said you owed five pieces and a beating?' replied Jerningham.

'The money for his satire, and the cudgel for his praise—Good—find him—give him the five pieces, and thrust the Countess's billet-doux—Hold—take Araminta's and the rest of them—thrust them all into his portfolio—All will come out at the Wits' Coffee-house; and if the promulgator be not cudgelled into all the colours of the rainbow, there is no spite in woman, no rat in crabtree, or pith in heart of oak—Araminta's wrath alone would overburden one pair of mortal shoulders.'

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* Doctor, a cant name for false dice.

'But, my lord Duke,' said his attendant, 'this Settle * is so dull a rascal, that nothing he can write will take.'

'Then, as we have given him steel to head the arrow,' said the duke, 'we will give him wings to waft it with—wood, he has enough of his own to make a shaft or bolt of. Hand me my own unfinished lampoon—give it to him with the letters—let him make what he can of them all.'

'My lord Duke—I crave pardon—but your Grace's style will be discovered; and though the ladies' names are not at the letters, yet they will be traced.'

'I would have it so, you blockhead. Have you lived with me so long, and cannot discover that the *éclat* of an intrigue is, with me, worth all the rest of it?'

'But the danger, my lord Duke?' replied Jerningham. 'There are husbands, brothers, friends, whose revenge may be awakened.'

'And beaten to sleep again,' said Buckingham haughtily. 'I have Black Will and his cudgel for plebeian grumblers; and those of quality I can deal with myself. I lack breathing and exercise of late.' †

'But yet, your Grace'——

'Hold your peace, fool! I tell you that your poor dwarfish spirit cannot measure the scope of mine. I tell thee I would have the course of my life a torrent—I am weary of easy achievements, and wish for obstacles, that I can sweep before my irresistible course.'

Another gentleman now entered the apartment. 'I humbly crave your Grace's pardon,' he said; 'but Master Christian is so importunate for admission instantly, that I am obliged to take your Grace's pleasure.'

'Tell him to call three hours hence. Damn his politic pate, that would make all men dance after his pipe!'

'I thank thee for the compliment, my lord Duke,' said Christian, entering the apartment in somewhat a more courtly garb, but with the same unpretending and undistinguished mien, and in the same placid and indifferent manner, with which he had accosted Julian Peveril upon different occasions during his journey to London. 'It is precisely my present object to pipe to you; and you may dance to your own profit if you will.'

'On my word, Master Christian,' said the duke haughtily, 'the affair should be weighty, that removes ceremony so entirely from betwixt us. If it relates to the subject of our last conversation, I must request our interview be postponed to some further opportunity. I am engaged in an affair of some weight.' Then, turning his back on Christian, he went on with his conversation with Jerningham. 'Find the person you wot of, and give him the papers; and hark ye, give him this gold to pay for the shaft of his arrow—the steel-head and peacock's wing we have already provided.'

'This is all well, my lord,' said Christian calmly, and taking his seat at the same time in an easy-chair at some distance; 'but your Grace's levity is no match for my equanimity. It is necessary I should speak with you; and I will await your Grace's leisure in the apartment.'

'*Very* well, sir,' said the duke peevishly; 'if an evil is to be undergone, the sooner it is over the better—I can take measures to prevent its being renewed. So let me hear your errand without further delay.'

'I will wait till your Grace's toilet is completed,' said Christian, with the indifferent tone which was natural to him. 'What I have to say must be between ourselves.'

'Begone, Jerningham; and remain without till I call. Leave my doublet on the couch.—How now! I have worn this cloth of silver a hundred times.'

'Only twice, if it please your Grace,' replied Jerningham.

'As well twenty times—keep it for yourself, or give it to my valet, if you are too proud of your gentility.'

'Your Grace has made better men than me wear your cast clothes,' said Jerningham submissively.

'Thou art sharp, Jerningham,' said the duke —'in one sense I have, and I may again. So now, that pearl-coloured thing will do with the ribbon and George. Get away with thee.—And now that he is gone, Master Christian, may I once more crave your pleasure?'

'My lord Duke,' said Christian, 'you are a worshipper of difficulties in State affairs, as in love matters.'

'I trust you have been no eavesdropper, Master Christian,' replied the duke; 'it scarce argues the respect due to me, or to my roof.'

'I know not what you mean, my lord,' replied Christian.

'Nay, I care not if the whole world heard what I said but now to Jerningham. But to the matter,' replied the Duke of Buckingham.

'Your Grace is so much occupied with conquests over the fair and over the witty, that you have perhaps forgotten what a stake you have in the little Island of Man.'

'Not a whit, Master Christian. I remember well enough that my Roundheaded father-in-law, Fairfax, had the island from the Long Parliament; and was ass enough to quit hold of it at the Restoration, when, if he had closed his clutches, and held fast, like a true bird of prey, as he should have done, he might have kept it for him and his. It had been a rare thing to have had a little kingdom—made laws of my own—had my chamberlain with his white staff—I would have taught Jerningham, in half a day, to look as wise, walk as stiffly, and speak as sillily, as Harry Bennet.' ‡

'You might have done this, and more, if it had pleased your Grace.'

'Ay, and if it had pleased my Grace, thou, Ned Christian, shouldst have been the Jack Ketch of my dominions.'

'*I* your Jack Ketch, my lord!' said Christian, more in a tone of surprise than of displeasure.

'Why, ay; thou hast been perpetually intrigu-

might choose to

[illegible] Settle, the unworthy scribbler whom the envy .. Rochester and others tried to raise to public estimation, as a rival to Dryden; a circumstance which has been the means of elevating him to a very painful species of immortality.

† Note T. Employment of Assassins in England.

‡ Note U. Earl of Arlington.

ing against the life of yonder poor old woman. It were a kingdom to thee to gratify thy spleen with thy own hands.'

'I only seek justice against the Countess,' said Christian.

'And the end of justice is always a gibbet,' said the duke.

'Be it so,' answered Christian. 'Well, the Countess is in the Plot.'

'The devil confound the Plot, as I believe he first invented it!' said the Duke of Buckingham; 'I have heard of nothing else for months. If one must go to hell, I would it were by some new road, and in gentlemen's company. I should not like to travel with Oates, Bedloe, and the rest of that famous cloud of witnesses.'

'Your Grace is then resolved to forego all the advantages which may arise? If the House of Derby fall under forfeiture, the grant to Fairfax, now worthily represented by your Duchess, revives, and you become the lord and sovereign of Man.'

'In right of a woman,' said the duke; 'but, in troth, my godly dame owes me some advantage for having lived the first year of our marriage with her and old Black Tom, her grim, fighting, puritanic father. A man might as well have married the devil's daughter, and set up housekeeping with his father-in-law.'

'I understand you are willing, then, to join your interest for a heave at the House of Derby, my lord Duke?'

'As they are unlawfully possessed of my wife's kingdom, they certainly can expect no favour at my hand. But thou knowest there is an interest at Whitehall predominant over mine.'

'That is only by your Grace's sufferance,' said Christian.

'No, no, I tell thee a hundred times, no,' said the duke, rousing himself to anger at the recollection. 'I tell thee that base courtesan, the Duchess of Portsmouth, hath impudently set herself to thwart and contradict me; and Charles has given me both cloudy looks and hard words before the court. I would he could but guess what is the offence between her and me! I would he knew but that! But I will have her plumes picked, or my name is not Villiers. A worthless French *fille-de-joie* to brave me thus!—Christian, thou art right; there is no passion so spirit-stirring as revenge. I will patronize the Plot, if it be but to spite her, and make it impossible for the King to uphold her.'

As the duke spoke, he gradually wrought himself into a passion, and traversed the apartment with as much vehemence as if the only object he had on earth was to deprive the duchess of her power and favour with the king. Christian smiled internally to see him approach the state of mind in which he was most easily worked upon, and judiciously kept silence, until the duke called out to him in a pet, 'Well, Sir Oracle, you that have laid so many schemes to supplant this she-wolf of Gaul, where are all your contrivances now?—Where is the exquisite beauty who was to catch the sovereign's eye at the first glance?—Chiffinch, hath he seen her?—and what does he say, that exquisite critic in beauty and blancmange, women and wine?'

'He has *seen* and approves, but has not yet heard her; and her speech answers to all the rest. We came here yesterday; and to-day I intend to introduce Chiffinch to her, the instant he arrives from the country; and I expect him every hour. I am but afraid of the damsel's peevish virtue, for she hath been brought up after the fashion of our grandmothers—our mothers had better sense.'

'What! so fair, so young, so quick-witted, and so difficult?' said the duke. 'By your leave, you shall introduce me as well as Chiffinch.'

'That your Grace may cure her of her intractable modesty?' said Christian.

'Why,' replied the duke, 'it will but teach her to stand in her own light. Kings do not love to court and sue; they should have their game run down for them.'

'Under your Grace's favour,' said Christian, 'this cannot be—*Non omnibus dormio*—Your Grace knows the classic allusion. If this maiden become a prince's favourite, rank gilds the shame and the sin. But to any under Majesty she must not vail topsail.'

'Why, thou suspicious fool, I was but in jest,' said the duke. 'Do you think I would interfere to spoil a plan so much to my own advantage as that which you have laid before me?'

Christian smiled and shook his head. 'My lord,' he said, 'I know your Grace as well, or better, perhaps, than you know yourself. To spoil a well-concerted intrigue by some cross stroke of your own, would give you more pleasure, than to bring it to a successful termination according to the plans of others. But Shaftesbury, and all concerned, have determined that our scheme shall at least have fair play. We reckon, therefore, on your help; and, forgive me when I say so—we will not permit ourselves to be impeded by your levity and fickleness of purpose.'

'Who? I light and fickle of purpose?' said the duke. 'You see me here as resolved as any of you to dispossess the mistress, and to carry on the Plot; these are the only two things I live for in this world. No one can play the man of business like me, when I please, to the very filing and labelling of my letters. I am regular as a scrivener.'

'You have Chiffinch's letter from the country; he told me he had written to you about some passages betwixt him and the young Lord Saville.'

'He did so—he did so,' said the duke, looking among his letters; 'but I see not his letter just now—I scarcely noted the contents—I was busy when it came—but I have it safely.'

'You should have acted on it,' answered Christian. 'The fool suffered himself to be choused out of his secret, and prayed you to see that my lord's messenger got not to the Duchess with some despatches which he sent up from Derbyshire, betraying our mystery.'

The duke was now alarmed, and rang the bell hastily. Jerningham appeared. 'Where is the letter I had from Master Chiffinch some hours since?'

* Mary, daughter of Thomas, Lord Fairfax, was wedded to the Duke of Buckingham, whose versatility made him capable of rendering himself for a time as agreeable to his father-in-law, though a rigid Presbyterian, as to the gay Charles II.

'If it be not amongst those your Grace has before you, I know nothing of it,' said Jerningham. 'I saw none such arrive.'

'You lie, you rascal,' said Buckingham; 'have you a right to remember better than I do?'

'If your Grace will forgive me reminding you, you have scarce opened a letter this week,' said his gentleman.

'Did you ever hear such a provoking rascal?' said the duke. 'He might be a witness in the Plot. He has knocked my character for regularity entirely on the head with his damned counter-evidence.'

'Your Grace's talent and capacity will at least remain unimpeached,' said Christian; 'and it is those that must serve yourself and your friends. If I might advise, you will hasten to court, and lay some foundation for the impression we wish to make. If your Grace can take the first word, and throw out a hint to cross-bite Saville, it will be well. But, above all, keep the King's ear employed, which no one can do so well as you. Leave Chiffinch to fill his heart with a proper object. Another thing is, there is a blockhead of an old Cavalier, who must needs be a bustler in the Countess of Derby's behalf—he is fast in hold with a whole tribe of witnesses at his haunches.'

'Nay, then, take him, Topham.'

'Topham has taken him already, my lord,' said Christian; 'and there is, besides, a young gallant, a son of the said knight, who was bred in the household of the Countess of Derby, and who has brought letters from her to the Provincial of the Jesuits, and others in London.'

'What are their names?' said the duke dryly.

'Sir Geoffrey Peveril of Martindale Castle, in Derbyshire, and his son Julian.'

'What! Peveril of the Peak,' said the duke,—'a stout old Cavalier as ever swore an oath—A Worcester man, too—and, in truth, a man of all work, when blows were going. I will not consent to his ruin, Christian. These fellows must be flogged off such false scents—flogged in every sense they must, and will be, when the nation comes to its eyesight again.'

'It is of more than the last importance, in the meantime, to the furtherance of our plan,' said Christian, 'that your Grace should stand for a space between them and the King's favour. The youth hath influence with the maiden, which we should find scarce favourable to our views; besides, her father holds him as high as he can any one who is no such puritanic fool as himself.'

'Well, most Christian Christian,' said the duke, 'I have heard your commands at length. I will endeavour to stop the earths under the throne, that neither the lord, knight, nor squire in question, shall find it possible to burrow there. For the fair one, I must leave Chiffinch and you to manage her introduction to her high destinies, since I am not to be trusted. Adieu, most Christian Christian.'

He fixed his eyes on him, and then exclaimed, as he shut the door of the apartment,—'Most profligate and damnable villain! And what provokes me most of all, is the knave's composed insolence. Your Grace will do this—and your Grace will condescend to do that—A pretty puppet I should be, to play the second part, or rather the third, in such a scheme! No, they shall all walk according to my purpose, or I will cross them. I will find this girl out in spite of them, and judge if their scheme is likely to be successful. If so, she shall be mine—mine entirely, before she becomes the King's; and I will command her who is to guide Charles.—Jerningham' * (his gentleman entered), 'cause Christian to be dogged wherever he goes, for the next four-and-twenty hours, and find out where he visits a female newly come to town.—You smile, you knave?'

'I did but suspect a fresh rival to Araminta and the little Countess,' said Jerningham.

'Away to your business, knave,' said the duke, 'and let me think of mine.—To subdue a Puritan *in esse*—a King's favourite *in posse*—the very muster of western beauties—that is point first. The impudence of this Manx mongrel to be corrected—the pride of Madame la Duchesse to be pulled down—an important State intrigue to be furthered, or baffled, as circumstances render most to my own honour and glory—I wished for business but now, and I have got enough of it. But Buckingham will keep his own steerage-way through shoal and through weather.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

—— Mark you this, Bassanio—
The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose.
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

After leaving the proud mansion of the Duke of Buckingham, Christian, full of the deep and treacherous schemes which he meditated, hastened to the city, where, in a decent inn, kept by a person of his own persuasion, he had been unexpectedly summoned to meet with Ralph Bridgenorth of Moultrassie. He was not disappointed—the major had arrived that morning, and anxiously expected him. The usual gloom of his countenance was darkened into a yet deeper shade of anxiety, which was scarcely relieved even while, in answer to his inquiry after his daughter, Christian gave the most favourable account of her health and spirits, naturally and unaffectedly intermingled with such praises of her beauty and her disposition as were likely to be most grateful to a father's ear.

But Christian had too much cunning to expatiate on this theme, however soothing. He stopped short exactly at the point where, as an affectionate relative, he might be supposed to have said enough. 'The lady,' he said, 'with whom he had placed Alice, was delighted with her aspect and manners, and undertook to be responsible for her health and happiness. He had not, he said, deserved so little confidence at the hand of his brother Bridgenorth, as that the major should, contrary to his purpose, and to the plan which they had adjusted together, have hurried up from the country, as if his own presence were necessary for Alice's protection.'

'Brother Christian,' said Bridgenorth in reply, 'I must see my child—I must see this person with whom she is entrusted.'

* Note V. Letter from the Dead to the Living.

'To what purpose?' answered Christian. 'Have you not often confessed that the over excess of the carnal affection which you have entertained for your daughter, hath been a snare to you?—Have you not, more than once, been on the point of resigning those great designs which should place righteousness as a counsellor beside the throne, because you desired to gratify your daughter's girlish passion for this descendant of your old persecutor—this Julian Peveril?'

'I own it,' said Bridgenorth; 'and worlds would I have given, and would yet give, to clasp that youth to my bosom, and call him my son. The spirit of his mother looks from his eye, and his stately step is as that of his father, when he daily spoke comfort to me in my distress, and said, "The child liveth."'

'But the youth walks,' said Christian, 'after his own lights, and mistakes the meteor of the marsh for the polar star. Ralph Bridgenorth, I will speak to thee in friendly sincerity. Thou must not think to serve both the good cause and Baal. Obey, if thou wilt, thine own carnal affections, summon this Julian Peveril to thy house, and let him wed thy daughter—But mark the reception she will meet with from the proud old knight, whose spirit is now, even now, as little broken with his chains, as after the sword of the saints had prevailed at Worcester. Thou wilt see thy daughter spurned from his feet like an outcast.'

'Christian,' said Bridgenorth, interrupting him, 'thou dost urge me hard; but thou dost it in love, my brother, and I forgive thee—Alice shall never be spurned.—But this friend of thine—this lady—thou art my child's uncle; and after me, thou art next to her in love and affection—Still, thou art not her father—hast not her father's fears. Art thou sure of the character of this woman to whom my child is entrusted?'

'Am I sure of my own?—Am I sure that my name is Christian—yours Bridgenorth?—Is it a thing I am likely to be insecure in?—Have I not dwelt for many years in this city?—Do I not know this court?—And am I likely to be imposed upon? For I will not think you can fear my imposing upon you.'

'Thou art my brother, said Bridgenorth—'the blood and bone of my departed saint—and I am determined that I will trust thee in this matter.'

'Thou dost well,' said Christian; 'and who knows what reward may be in store for thee?—I cannot look upon Alice, but it is strongly borne in on my mind, that there will be work for a creature so excellent beyond ordinary women. Courageous Judith freed Bethulia by her valour, and the comely features of Esther made her a safeguard and a defence to her people in the land of captivity, when she found favour in the sight of King Ahasuerus.'

'Be it with her as Heaven wills,' said Bridgenorth; 'and now tell me what progress there is in the great work.'

'The people are weary of the iniquity of this court,' said Christian; 'and if this man will continue to reign, it must be by calling to his councils men of another stamp. The alarm excited by the damnable practices of the Papists has called up men's souls, and awakened their eyes to the dangers of their state.—He himself—for he will give up brother and wife to save himself—is not averse to a change of measures; and though we cannot at first see the court purged as with a winnowing fan, yet there will be enough of the good to control the bad—enough of the sober party to compel the grant of that universal toleration, for which we have sighed so long, as a maiden for her beloved. Time and opportunity will lead the way to more thorough reformation; and that will be done without stroke of sword, which our friends failed to establish on a sure foundation, even when their victorious blades were in their hands.'

May God grant it!' said Bridgenorth; 'for I fear me I should scruple to do aught which should once more unsheath the civil sword; but welcome all that comes in a peaceful and parliamentary way.'

'Ay,' said Christian, 'and which will bring with it the bitter amends which our enemies have so long merited at our hands. How long hath our brother's blood cried for vengeance from the altar!—Now shall that cruel Frenchwoman find that neither lapse of years, nor her powerful friends, nor the name of Stanley, nor the sovereignty of Man, shall stop the stern course of the pursuer of blood. Her name shall be struck from the noble, and her heritage shall another take.'

'Nay, but, brother Christian,' said Bridgenorth, 'art thou not over eager in pursuing this thing?—It is thy duty as a Christian to forgive thine enemies.'

'Ay, but not the enemies of Heaven—not those who shed the blood of the saints,' said Christian, his eyes kindling with that vehement and fiery expression which at times gave to his uninteresting countenance the only character of passion which it ever exhibited. 'No, Bridgenorth,' he continued; 'I esteem this purpose of revenge holy—I account it a propitiatory sacrifice for what may have been evil in my life. I have submitted to be spurned by the haughty—I have humbled myself to be as a servant; but in my breast was the proud thought, I who do this—do it that I may avenge my brother's blood.'

'Still, my brother,' said Bridgenorth, 'although I participate thy purpose, and have aided thee against this Moabitish woman, I cannot but think thy revenge is more after the law of Moses than after the law of love.'

'This comes well from thee, Ralph Bridgenorth,' answered Christian; 'from thee, who hast just smiled over the downfall of thine own enemy.'

'If you mean Sir Geoffrey Peveril,' said Bridgenorth, 'I smile not on his ruin. It is well he is abased; but if it lies with me, I may humble his pride, but will never ruin his house.'

'You know your purpose best,' said Christian; 'and I do justice, brother Bridgenorth, to the purity of your principles; but men who see with but worldly eyes, would discern little purpose of mercy in the strict magistrate and severe creditor—and such have you been to Peveril.'

'And, brother Christian,' said Bridgenorth, his colour rising as he spoke, 'neither do I doubt your purpose, nor deny the surprising address with which you have procured such perfect

information concerning the purposes of yonder woman of Ammon. But it is free to me to think, that in your intercourse with the court, and with courtiers, you may, in your carnal and worldly policy, sink the value of those spiritual gifts, for which you were once so much celebrated among the brethren.'

'Do not apprehend it,' said Christian, recovering his temper, which had been a little ruffled by the previous discussion. 'Let us but work together as heretofore; and I trust each of us shall be found doing the work of a faithful servant to that good old cause for which we have heretofore drawn the sword.'

So saying, he took his hat, and, bidding Bridgenorth farewell, declared his intention of returning in the evening.

'Fare thee well!' said Bridgenorth. 'To that cause wilt thou find me ever a true and devoted adherent. I will act by that counsel of thine, and will not even ask thee—though it may grieve my heart as a parent—with whom, or where, thou hast entrusted my child. I will try to cut off, and cast from me, even my right hand, and my right eye; but for thee, Christian, if thou dost deal otherwise than prudently and honestly in this matter, it is what God and man will require at thy hand.'

'Fear not me,' said Christian hastily, and left the place, agitated by reflections of no pleasant kind.

'I ought to have persuaded him to return,' he said, as he stepped out into the street. 'Even his hovering in this neighbourhood may spoil the plan on which depends the rise of my fortunes—ay, and of his child's. Will men say I have ruined her, when I shall have raised her to the dazzling height of the Duchess of Portsmouth, and perhaps made her a mother to a long line of princes? Chiffinch hath vouched for opportunity; and the voluptuary's fortune depends upon his gratifying the taste of his master for variety. If she makes an impression, it must be a deep one; and, once seated in his affections, I fear not her being supplanted.—What will her father say? Will he, like a prudent man, put his shame in his pocket, because it is well gilded? or will he think it fitting to make a display of moral wrath and parental frenzy? I fear the latter—He has ever kept too strict a course to admit his conniving at such licence. But what will his anger avail?—I need not be seen in the matter—those who are will care little for the resentment of a country Puritan. And, after all, what I am labouring to bring about is best for himself, the wench, and above all, for me, Edward Christian.'

With such base opiates did this unhappy wretch stifle his own conscience, while anticipating the disgrace of his friend's family, and the ruin of a near relative, committed in confidence to his charge. The character of this man was of no common description; nor was it by an ordinary road that he had arrived at the present climax of unfeeling and infamous selfishness.

Edward Christian, as the reader is aware, was the brother of that William Christian, who was the principal instrument in delivering up the Isle of Man to the Republic, and who became the victim of the Countess of Derby's revenge on that account. Both had been educated as Puritans, but William was a soldier, which somewhat modified the strictness of his religious opinions; Edward, a civilian, seemed to entertain these principles in the utmost rigour. But it was only seeming. The exactness of deportment, which procured him great honour and influence among the *sober party*, as they were wont to term themselves, covered a voluptuous disposition, the gratification of which was sweet to him as stolen waters, and pleasant as bread eaten in secret. While, therefore, his seeming godliness brought him worldly gain, his secret pleasures compensated for his outward austerity; until the Restoration, and the countess's violent proceedings against his brother, interrupted the course of both. He then fled from his native island, burning with the desire of revenging his brother's death—the only passion foreign to his own gratification which he was ever known to cherish, and which was also, at least, partly selfish, since it concerned the restoration of his own fortunes.

He found easy access to Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who, in right of his duchess, claimed such of the Derby estate as had been bestowed by the Parliament on his celebrated father-in-law, Lord Fairfax. His influence at the court of Charles, where a jest was a better plea than a long claim of faithful service, was so successfully exerted, as to contribute greatly to the depression of that loyal and ill-rewarded family. But Buckingham was incapable, even for his own interest, of pursuing the steady course which Christian suggested to him; and his vacillation probably saved the remnant of the large estates of the Earl of Derby.

Meantime, Christian was too useful a follower to be dismissed. From Buckingham, and others of that stamp, he did not affect to conceal the laxity of his morals; but, towards the numerous and powerful party to which he belonged, he was able to disguise them by a seeming gravity of exterior, which he never laid aside. Indeed, so wide and absolute was then the distinction betwixt the court and the city, that a man might have for some time played two several parts, as in two different spheres, without its being discovered in the one that he exhibited himself in a different light in the other. Besides, when a man of talent shows himself an able and useful partisan, his party will continue to protect and accredit him, in spite of conduct the most contradictory to their own principles. Some facts are, in such cases, denied—some are glossed over—and party zeal is permitted to cover at least as many defects as ever doth charity.

Edward Christian had often need of the partial indulgence of his friends; but he experienced it, for he was eminently useful. Buckingham, and other courtiers of the same class, however dissolute in their lives, were desirous of keeping some connection with the dissenting or Puritanic party, as it was termed; thereby to strengthen themselves against their opponents at court. In such intrigues Christian was a notable agent; and at one time had nearly procured an absolute union between a class which professed the most rigid principles of religion and morality, and the latitudinarian courtiers, who set all principle at defiance.

Amidst the vicissitudes of a life of intrigue, during which Buckingham's ambitious scheme, and his own, repeatedly sent him across the Atlantic, it was Edward Christian's boast that he never lost sight of his principal object—revenge on the Countess of Derby. He maintained a close and intimate correspondence with his native island, so as to be perfectly informed of whatever took place there; and he stimulated, on every favourable opportunity, the cupidity of Buckingham to possess himself of this petty kingdom, by procuring the forfeiture of its present lord. It was not difficult to keep his patron's wild wishes alive on this topic, for his own mercurial imagination attached particular charms to the idea of becoming a sort of sovereign even in this little island; and he was, like Catiline, as covetous of the property of others, as he was profuse of his own.

But it was not until the pretended discovery of the Papist Plot that the schemes of Christian could be brought to ripen; and then, so odious were the Catholics in the eyes of the credulous people of England, that, upon the accusation of the most infamous of mankind, common informers, the scourings of jails, and the refuse of the whipping-post, the most atrocious charges against persons of the highest rank and fairest character were readily received and credited.

This was a period which Christian did not fail to improve. He drew close his intimacy with Bridgenorth, which had indeed never been interrupted, and readily engaged him in his schemes, which, in the eyes of his brother-in-law, were alike honourable and patriotic. But, while he flattered Bridgenorth with the achieving a complete reformation in the State—checking the profligacy of the court—relieving the consciences of the dissenters from the pressure of the penal laws—amending, in fine, the crying grievances of the time—while he showed him also, in prospect, revenge upon the Countess of Derby, and a humbling dispensation on the house of Peveril, from whom Bridgenorth had suffered such indignity, Christian did not neglect, in the meanwhile, to consider how he could best benefit himself by the confidence reposed in him by his unsuspicious relation.

The extreme beauty of Alice Bridgenorth—the great wealth which time and economy had accumulated on her father—pointed her out as a most desirable match to repair the wasted fortunes of some of the followers of the court; and he flattered himself that he could conduct such a negotiation so as to be in a high degree conducive to his own advantage. He found there would be little difficulty in prevailing on Major Bridgenorth to entrust him with the guardianship of his daughter. That unfortunate gentleman had accustomed himself, from the very period of her birth, to regard the presence of his child as a worldly indulgence too great to be allowed to him; and Christian had little trouble in convincing him that the strong inclination which he felt to bestow her on Julian Peveril, provided he could be brought over to his own political opinions, was a blameable compromise with his more severe principles. Late circumstances had taught him the incapacity and unfitness of Dame Debbitch for the sole charge of so dear a pledge; and he readily and thankfully embraced the kind offer of her maternal uncle, Christian, to place Alice under the protection of a lady of rank in London, whilst he himself was to be engaged in the scenes of bustle and blood, which, in common with all good Protestants, he expected were speedily to take place on a general rising of the Papists, unless prevented by the active and energetic measures of the good people of England. He even confessed his fears, that his partial regard for Alice's happiness might enervate his efforts in behalf of his country; and Christian had little trouble in eliciting from him a promise, that he would forbear to inquire after her for some time.

Thus certain of being the temporary guardian of his niece for a space long enough, he flattered himself, for the execution of his purpose, Christian endeavoured to pave the way by consulting Chiffinch, whose known skill in court policy qualified him best as an adviser on this occasion. But this worthy person—being, in fact, a purveyor for his Majesty's pleasures, and on that account high in his good graces—thought it fell within the line of his duty to suggest another scheme than that on which Christian consulted him. A woman of such exquisite beauty as Alice was described, he deemed more worthy to be a partaker of the affections of the Merry Monarch, whose taste in female beauty was so exquisite, than to be made the wife of some worn-out prodigal of quality. And then, doing perfect justice to his own character, he felt it would not be one whit impaired, while his fortune would be, in every respect, greatly amended, if, after sharing the short reign of the Gwyns, the Davises, the Robertses, and so forth, Alice Bridgenorth should retire from the state of a royal favourite into the humble condition of Mrs. Chiffinch.

After cautiously sounding Christian, and finding that the near prospect of interest to himself effectually prevented his starting at this iniquitous scheme, Chiffinch detailed it to him fully, carefully keeping the final termination out of sight, and talking of the favour to be acquired by the fair Alice as no passing caprice, but the commencement of a reign as long and absolute as that of the Duchess of Portsmouth, of whose avarice and domineering temper Charles was now understood to be much tired, though the force of habit rendered him unequal to free himself of her yoke.

Thus chalked out, the scene prepared was no longer the intrigue of a court pander, and a villanous resolution for the ruin of an innocent girl, but became a State intrigue, for the removal of an obnoxious favourite, and the subsequent change of the king's sentiments upon various material points, in which he was at present influenced by the Duchess of Portsmouth. In this light it was exhibited to the Duke of Buckingham, who, either to sustain his character for daring gallantry, or in order to gratify some capricious fancy, had at one time made love to the reigning favourite, and experienced a repulse which he had never forgiven.

But one scheme was too little to occupy the active and enterprising spirit of the duke. An appendix of the Popish Plot was easily so con-

trived as to involve the Countess of Derby, who, from character and religion, was precisely the person whom the credulous part of the public were inclined to suppose the likely accomplice of such a conspiracy. Christian and Bridgenorth undertook the perilous commission of attacking her even in her own little kingdom of Man, and had commissions for this purpose, which were only to be produced in case of their scheme taking effect.

It miscarried, as the reader is aware, from the countess's alert preparations for defence; and neither Christian nor Bridgenorth held it sound policy to practise openly, even under parliamentary authority, against a lady so little liable to hesitate upon the measures most likely to secure her feudal sovereignty; wisely considering that even the omnipotence, as it has been somewhat too largely styled, of Parliament might fail to relieve them from the personal consequences of a failure.

On the continent of Britain, however, no opposition was to be feared; and so well was Christian acquainted with all the motions in the interior of the countess's little court, or household, that Peveril would have been arrested the instant he set foot on shore, but for the gale of wind, which obliged the vessel in which he was a passenger, to run for Liverpool. Here Christian, under the name of Ganlesse, unexpectedly met with him, and preserved him from the fangs of the well-breathed witnesses of the Plot, with the purpose of securing his despatches, or, if necessary, his person also, in such a manner as to place him at his own discretion—a narrow and perilous game, which he thought it better, however, to undertake, than to permit these subordinate agents, who were always ready to mutiny against all in league with them, to obtain the credit which they must have done by the seizure of the Countess of Derby's despatches. It was, besides, essential to Buckingham's schemes that these should not pass into the hands of a public officer like Topham, who, however pompous and stupid, was upright and well-intentioned, until they had undergone the revisal of a private committee, where something might have probably been suppressed, even supposing that nothing had been added.

In short, Christian, in carrying on his own separate and peculiar intrigue, by the agency of the Great Popish Plot, as it was called, acted just like an engineer, who derives the principle of motion which turns his machinery by means of a steam-engine, or large water-wheel, constructed to drive a separate and larger engine. Accordingly, he was determined that, while he took all the advantage he could from their supposed discoveries, no one should be admitted to tamper or interfere with his own plans of profit and revenge.

Chiffinch, who, desirous of satisfying himself with his own eyes of that excellent beauty which had been so highly extolled, had gone down to Derbyshire on purpose, was infinitely delighted, when, during the course of a two hours' sermon at the dissenting chapel in Liverpool, which afforded him ample leisure for a deliberate survey, he arrived at the conclusion that he had never seen a form or face more captivating. His eyes having confirmed what was told him, he hurried back to the little inn which formed their place of rendezvous, and there awaited Christian and his niece, with a degree of confidence in the success of their project which he had not before entertained; and with an apparatus of luxury, calculated, as he thought, to make a favourable impression on the mind of a rustic girl. He was somewhat surprised, when, instead of Alice Bridgenorth, to whom he expected that night to have been introduced, he found that Christian was accompanied by Julian Peveril. It was indeed a severe disappointment, for he had prevailed on his own indolence to venture thus far from the court, in order that he might judge, with his own paramount taste, whether Alice was really the prodigy which her uncle's praises had bespoken her, and, as such, a victim worthy of the fate to which she was destined.

A few words betwixt the worthy confederates determined them on the plan of stripping Peveril of the countess's despatches; Chiffinch absolutely refusing to take any share in arresting him, as a matter of which his master's approbation might be very uncertain.

Christian had also his own reasons for abstaining from so decisive a step. It was by no means likely to be agreeable to Bridgenorth, whom it was necessary to keep in good humour;—it was not necessary, for the countess's despatches were of far more importance than the person of Julian. Lastly, it was superfluous in this respect also, that Julian was on the road to his father's castle, where it was likely he would be seized, as a matter of course, along with the other suspicious persons who fell under Topham's warrant, and the denunciations of his infamous companions. He, therefore, far from using any violence to Peveril, assumed towards him such a friendly tone, as might seem to warn him against receiving damage from others, and vindicate himself from having any share in depriving him of his charge. This last manœuvre was achieved by an infusion of a strong narcotic into Julian's wine; under the influence of which he slumbered so soundly, that the confederates were easily able to accomplish their inhospitable purpose.

The events of the succeeding days are already known to the reader. Chiffinch set forward to return to London, with the packet, which it was desirable should be in Buckingham's hands as soon as possible; while Christian went to Moultrassie, to receive Alice from her father, and convey her safely to London—his accomplice agreeing to defer his curiosity to see more of her until they should have arrived in that city.

Before parting with Bridgenorth, Christian had exerted his utmost address to prevail on him to remain at Moultrassie; he had even overstepped the bounds of prudence, and, by his urgency, awakened some suspicions of an indefinite nature, which he found it difficult to allay. Bridgenorth, therefore, followed his brother-in-law to London; and the reader has already been made acquainted with the arts which Christian used to prevent his further interference with the destinies of his daughter, or the unhallowed schemes of her ill-chosen guardian. Still Christian, as he strode along the street in profound reflection, saw that his undertaking was attended

with a thousand perils; and the drops stood like beads on his brow when he thought of the presumptuous levity and fickle temper of Buckingham—the frivolity and intemperance of Chiffinch—the suspicions of the melancholy and bigoted, yet sagacious and honest Bridgenorth. 'Had I,' he thought, 'but tools fitted, each to their portion of the work, how easily could I heave asunder and disjoint the strength that opposes me! But with these frail and insufficient implements, I am in daily, hourly, momentary danger, that one lever or other gives way, and that the whole ruin recoils on my own head. And yet, were it not for those failings I complain of, how were it possible for me to have acquired that power over them all which constitutes them my passive tools, even when they seem most to exert their own free will? Yes, the bigots have some right when they affirm that all is for the best.'

It may seem strange that, amidst the various subjects of Christian's apprehension, he was never visited by any long or permanent doubt that the virtue of his niece might prove the shoal on which his voyage should be wrecked. But he was an arrant rogue as well as a hardened libertine; and, in both characters, a professed disbeliever in the virtue of the fair sex.

CHAPTER XXX.

As for John Dryden's Charles, I own that King
Was never any very mighty thing;
And yet he was a devilish honest fellow—
Enjoy'd his friend and bottle, and got mellow.

DR. WOLCOT.

LONDON, the grand central point of intrigues of every description, had now attracted within its dark and shadowy region the greater number of the personages whom we have had occasion to mention.

Julian Peveril, amongst others of the *dramatis personæ*, had arrived, and taken up his abode in a remote inn in the suburbs. His business, he conceived, was to remain incognito until he should have communicated in private with the friends who were most likely to lend assistance to his parents, as well as to his patroness, in their present situation of doubt and danger. Amongst these, the most powerful was the Duke of Ormond, whose faithful services, high rank, and acknowledged worth and virtue, still preserved an ascendancy in that very court, where, in general, he was regarded as out of favour. Indeed, so much consciousness did Charles display in his demeanour towards that celebrated noble, and servant of his father, that Buckingham once took the freedom to ask the king whether the Duke of Ormond had lost his Majesty's favour, or his Majesty the duke's? since, whenever they chanced to meet, the king appeared the more embarrassed of the two. But it was not Peveril's good fortune to obtain the advice or countenance of this distinguished person. His Grace of Ormond was not at that time in London.

The letter, about the delivery of which the countess had seemed most anxious after that to the Duke of Ormond, was addressed to Captain Barstow (a Jesuit, whose real name was Fenwicke), to be found, or at least to be heard of, in the house of one Martin Christal in the Savoy. To this place hastened Peveril, upon learning the absence of the Duke of Ormond. He was not ignorant of the danger which he personally incurred, by thus becoming a medium of communication betwixt a Popish priest and a suspected Catholic. But when he undertook the perilous commission of his patroness, he had done so frankly, and with the unreserved resolution of serving her in the manner in which she most desired her affairs to be conducted. Yet he could not forbear some secret apprehension, when he felt himself engaged in the labyrinth of passages and galleries, which led to different obscure sets of apartments in the ancient building termed the Savoy.

This antiquated and almost ruinous pile occupied a part of the site of the public offices in the Strand, commonly called Somerset House. The Savoy had been formerly a palace, and took its name from an Earl of Savoy, by whom it was founded. It had been the habitation of John of Gaunt, and various persons of distinction—had become a convent, a hospital, and finally, in Charles II.'s time, a waste of dilapidated buildings and ruinous apartments, inhabited chiefly by those who had some connection with, or dependence upon, the neighbouring palace of Somerset House, which, more fortunate than the Savoy, had still retained its royal title, and was the abode of a part of the court, and occasionally of the king himself, who had apartments there.

It was not without several inquiries, and more than one mistake, that, at the end of a long and dusky passage, composed of boards so wasted by time that they threatened to give way under his feet, Julian at length found the name of Martin Christal, broker and appraiser, upon a shattered door. He was about to knock, when some one pulled his cloak; and, looking round, to his great astonishment, which indeed almost amounted to fear, he saw the little mute damsel, who had accompanied him for a part of the way on his voyage from the Isle of Man. 'Fenella!' he exclaimed, forgetting that she could neither hear nor reply,—'Fenella! Can this be you?'

Fenella, assuming the air of warning and authority which she had heretofore endeavoured to adopt towards him, interposed betwixt Julian and the door at which he was about to knock—pointed with her finger towards it in a prohibiting manner, and at the same time bent her brows, and shook her head sternly.

After a moment's consideration, Julian could place but one interpretation upon Fenella's appearance and conduct, and that was, by supposing her lady had come up to London, and had despatched this mute attendant, as a confidential person, to apprise him of some change of her intended operations, which might render the delivery of her letters to Barstow, *alias* Fenwicke, superfluous, or perhaps dangerous. He made signs to Fenella, demanding to know whether she had any commission from the countess. She nodded. 'Had she any letter?'

he continued, by the same mode of inquiry. She shook her head impatiently, and, walking hastily along the passage, made a signal to him to follow. He did so, having little doubt that he was about to be conducted into the countess's presence; but his surprise, at first excited by Fenella's appearance, was increased by the rapidity and ease with which she seemed to track the dusky and decayed mazes of the dilapidated Savoy, equal to that with which he had seen her formerly lead the way through the gloomy vaults of Castle Rushin in the Isle of Man.

When he recollected, however, that Fenella had accompanied the countess on a long visit to London, it appeared not improbable that she might then have acquired this local knowledge which seemed so accurate. Many foreigners, dependent on the Queen or Queen Dowager, had apartments in the Savoy. Many Catholic priests also found refuge in its recesses under various disguises, and in defiance of the severity of the laws against Popery. What was more likely, than that the Countess of Derby, a Catholic and a Frenchwoman, should have had secret commissions amongst such people; and that the execution of such should be entrusted, at least occasionally, to Fenella?

Thus reflecting, Julian continued to follow her light and active footsteps as she glided from the Strand to Spring Garden, and thence into the Park.

It was still early in the morning, and the Mall was untenanted, save by a few walkers, who frequented these shades for the wholesome purposes of air and exercise. Splendour, gaiety, and display did not come forth, at that period, until noon was approaching. All readers have heard that the whole space where the Horse Guards are now built, made, in the time of Charles II., a part of Saint James's Park; and that the old building, now called the Treasury, was a part of the ancient Palace of Whitehall, which was thus immediately connected with the Park. The canal had been constructed, by the celebrated Le Notre, for the purpose of draining the Park; and it communicated with the Thames by a decoy, stocked with a quantity of the rarer waterfowl. It was towards this decoy that Fenella bent her way with unabated speed; and they were approaching a group of two or three gentlemen, who sauntered by its banks, when, on looking closely at him who appeared to be the chief of the party, Julian felt his heart beat uncommonly thick, as if conscious of approaching some one of the highest consequence.

The person whom he looked upon was past the middle age of life, of a dark complexion, corresponding with the long, black, full-bottomed periwig, which he wore instead of his own hair. His dress was plain black velvet, with a diamond star, however, on his cloak, which hung carelessly over one shoulder. His features, strongly lined, even to harshness, had yet an expression of dignified good-humour; he was well and strongly built, walked upright and yet easily, and had upon the whole the air of a person of the highest consideration. He kept rather in advance of his companions, but turned and spoke to them, from time to time, with much affability, and probably with some liveliness, judging by the smiles, and sometimes the scarce restrained laughter, by which some of his sallies were received by his attendants. They also wore only morning dresses; but their looks and manner were those of men of rank, in presence of one in station still more elevated. They shared the attention of their principal in common with seven or eight little black curly-haired spaniels, or rather, as they are now called, cockers, which attended their master as closely, and perhaps with as deep sentiments of attachment, as the bipeds of the group; and whose gambols, which seemed to afford him much amusement, he sometimes checked, and sometimes encouraged. In addition to this pastime, a lackey, or groom, was also in attendance, with one or two little baskets and bags, from which the gentleman we have described took, from time to time, a handful of seeds, and amused himself with throwing them to the waterfowl.

This, the king's favourite occupation, together with his remarkable countenance, and the deportment of the rest of the company towards him, satisfied Julian Peveril that he was approaching, perhaps indecorously, near to the person of Charles Stuart, the second of that unhappy name.

While he hesitated to follow his dumb guide any nearer, and felt the embarrassment of being unable to communicate to her his repugnance to further intrusion, a person in the royal retinue touched a light and lively air on the flageolet, at a signal from the king, who desired to have some tune repeated which had struck him in the theatre on the preceding evening. While the good-natured monarch marked time with his foot, and with the motion of his hand, Fenella continued to approach him, and threw into her manner the appearance of one who was attracted, as it were in spite of herself, by the sounds of the instrument.

Anxious to know how this was to end, and astonished to see the dumb girl imitate so accurately the manner of one who actually heard the musical notes, Peveril also drew near, though at somewhat greater distance.

The king looked good-humouredly at both, as if he admitted their musical enthusiasm as an excuse for their intrusion; but his eyes became riveted on Fenella, whose face and appearance, although rather singular than beautiful, had something in them wild, fantastic, and, as being so, even captivating, to an eye which had been gratified perhaps to satiety with the ordinary forms of female beauty. She did not appear to notice how closely she was observed; but, as if acting under an irresistible impulse, derived from the sounds to which she seemed to listen, she undid the bodkin round which her long tresses were winded, and flinging them suddenly over her slender person, as if using them as a natural veil, she began to dance, with infinite grace and agility, to the tune which the flageolet played.

Peveril lost almost his sense of the king's presence, when he observed with what wonderful grace and agility Fenella kept time to notes which could only be known to her by the motions of the musician's fingers. He had heard, indeed, among other prodigies, of a person in Fenella's

unhappy situation acquiring, by some unaccountable and mysterious tact, the power of acting as an instrumental musician, nay, becoming so accurate a performer as to be capable of leading a musical band; and he had also heard of deaf and dumb persons dancing with sufficient accuracy, by observing the motions of their partner. But Fenella's performance seemed more wonderful than either, since the musician was guided by his written notes, and the dancer by the motions of the others; whereas Fenella had no intimation, save what she seemed to gather, with infinite accuracy, by observing the motion of the artist's fingers on his small instrument.

As for the king, who was ignorant of the particular circumstances which rendered Fenella's performance almost marvellous, he was contented, at her first commencement, to authorize what seemed to him the frolic of this singular-looking damsel, by a good-humoured smile, but when he perceived the exquisite truth and justice, as well as the wonderful combination of grace and agility, with which she executed to his favourite air a dance which was perfectly new to him, Charles turned his mere acquiescence into something like enthusiastic applause. He bore time to her motions with the movement of his foot—applauded with head and with hand—and seemed, like herself, carried away by the enthusiasm of the gestic art.

After a rapid yet graceful succession of *entrechats*, Fenella introduced a slow movement, which terminated the dance; then, dropping a profound curtsey, she continued to stand motionless before the king, her arms folded on her bosom, her head stooped, and her eyes cast down, after the manner of an Oriental slave; while, through the misty veil of her shadowy locks, it might be observed that the colour which exercise had called to her cheeks was dying fast away, and resigning them to their native dusky hue.

'By my honour,' exclaimed the king, 'she is like a fairy who trips it in moonlight. There must be more of air and fire than of earth in her composition. It is well poor Nelly Gwyn saw her not, or she would have died of grief and envy.—Come, gentlemen, which of you contrived this pretty piece of morning pastime?'

The courtiers looked at each other, but none of them felt authorized to claim the merit of a service so agreeable.

'We must ask the quick-eyed nymph herself, then,' said the king; and, looking at Fenella, he added, 'Tell us, my pretty one, to whom we owe the pleasure of seeing you? I suspect the Duke of Buckingham; for it is exactly a *tour de son métier*.'

Fenella, on observing that the king addressed her, bowed low, and shook her head, in signal that she did not understand what he said.

'Oddsfish, that is true,' said the king; 'she must perforce be a foreigner—her complexion and agility speak it. France or Italy has had the moulding of these elastic limbs, dark cheek, and eye of fire.' He then put to her in French, and again in Italian, the question, 'By whom she had been sent hither?'

At the second repetition, Fenella threw back her veiling tresses, so as to show the melancholy which sat on her brow; while she sadly shook her head, and intimated by imperfect muttering, but of the softest and most plaintive kind, her organic deficiency.

'Is it possible Nature can have made such a fault?' said Charles. 'Can she have left so curious a piece as thou art without the melody of voice, whilst she has made thee so exquisitely sensible to the beauty of sound.—Stay: what means this? and what young fellow are you bringing up there? O, the master of the show, I suppose.—Friend,' he added, addressing himself to Peveril, who, on the signal of Fenella, stepped forward almost instinctively, and kneeled down, 'we thank thee for the pleasure of this morning.—My lord Marquis, you rooked me at piquet last night; for which disloyal deed thou shalt now atone, by giving a couple of pieces to this honest youth, and five to the girl.'

As the nobleman drew out his purse and came forward to perform the king's generous commission, Julian felt some embarrassment ere he was able to explain that he had no title to be benefited by the young person's performance, and that his Majesty had mistaken his character.

'And who art thou, then, my friend?' said Charles; 'but, above all, and particularly, who is this dancing nymph, whom thou standest waiting on like an attendant faun?'

'The young person is a retainer of the Countess-Dowager of Derby, so please your Majesty,' said Peveril, in a low tone of voice; 'and I am'——

'Hold, hold,' said the king; 'this is a dance to another tune, and not fit for place so public. Hark thee, friend; do thou and the young woman follow Empson where he will conduct thee.—Empson, carry them—hark in thy ear.'

'May it please your Majesty, I ought to say,' said Peveril, 'that I am guiltless of any purpose of intrusion'——

'Now a plague on him who can take no hint,' said the king, cutting short his apology. 'Oddsfish, man, there are times when civility is the greatest impertinence in the world. Do thou follow Empson, and amuse thyself for a half-hour's space with the fairy's company, till we shall send for you.'

Charles spoke this not without casting an anxious eye around, and in a tone which intimated apprehension of being overheard. Julian could only bow obedience, and follow Empson, who was the same person that played so rarely on the flageolet.

When they were out of sight of the king and his party, the musician wished to enter into conversation with his companions, and addressed himself first to Fenella with a broad compliment of, 'By the mass, ye dance rarely—ne'er a slut on the boards shows such a shank! I would be content to play to you till my throat were as dry as my whistle. Come, be a little free—old Rowley will not quit the Park till nine. I will carry you to Spring Gardens, and bestow sweet cakes and a quart of Rhenish on both of you; and we'll be cameradoes.—What the devil! no answer?—How's this, brother?—Is this neat wench of yours deaf, or dumb, or both? I should laugh at that, and she trip it so well to the flageolet.'

To rid himself of this fellow's discourse,

Peveril answered him in French, that he was a foreigner and spoke no English; glad to escape, though at the expense of a fiction, from the additional embarrassment of a fool, who was likely to ask more questions than his own wisdom might have enabled him to answer.

'*Etranger*,—that means stranger,' muttered their guide; 'more French dogs and jades come to lick the good English butter off our bread, or perhaps an Italian puppet show. Well, if it were not that they have a mortal enmity to the whole gamut, this were enough to make any honest fellow turn Puritan. But if I am to play to her at the Duchess's, I'll be d—d but I put her out in the tune, just to teach her to have the impudence to come to England, and to speak no English.'

Having muttered to himself this truly British resolution, the musician walked briskly on towards a large house near the bottom of Saint James's Street, and entered the court, by a grated door, from the Park, of which the mansion commanded an extensive prospect.

Peveril, finding himself in front of a handsome portico, under which opened a stately pair of folding doors, was about to ascend the steps that led to the main entrance, when his guide seized him by the arm, exclaiming, 'Hold, Mounseer! What! you'll lose nothing, I see, for want of courage; but you must keep the back way, for all your fine doublet. Here it is not, knock and it shall be opened; but may be instead, knock and you shall be knocked.'

Suffering himself to be guided by Empson, Julian deviated from the principal door, to one which opened, with less ostentation, in an angle of the court-yard. On a modest tap from the flute-player, admittance was afforded him and his companions by a footman, who conducted them through a variety of stone passages, to a very handsome summer parlour, where a lady, or something resembling one, dressed in a style of extra elegance, was trifling with a play book while she finished her chocolate. It would not be easy to describe her, but by weighing her natural good qualities against the affectations which counterbalanced them. She would have been handsome, but for rouge and *minauderie*—would have been civil, but for overstrained airs of patronage and condescension—would have had an agreeable voice, had she spoken in her natural tone—and fine eyes, had she not made such desperate hard use of them. She could only spoil a pretty ankle by too liberal display; but her shape, though she could not yet be thirty years old, had the *embonpoint* which might have suited better with ten years more advanced. She pointed Empson to a seat with the air of a duchess, and asked him languidly, how he did this age, that she had not seen him; and what folks these were he had brought with him.

'Foreigners, madam; d—d foreigners,' answered Empson; 'starving beggars, that our old friend has picked up in the Park this morning—the wench dances, and the fellow plays on the Jew's trump, I believe. On my life, madam, I begin to be ashamed of old Rowley; I must discard him, unless he keeps better company in future.'

'Fie, Empson!' said the lady; 'consider it is our duty to countenance him, and keep him afloat; and indeed I always make a principle of it. Hark ye, he comes not hither this morning?'

'He will be here,' answered Empson, 'in the walking of a minuet.'

'My God!' exclaimed the lady, with unaffected alarm; and, starting up with utter neglect of her usual and graceful languor, she tripped as swiftly as a milkmaid into an adjoining apartment, where they heard presently a few words of eager and animated discussion.

'Something to be put out of the way, I suppose,' said Empson. 'Well for madam I gave her the hint. There he goes, the happy swain.'

Julian was so situated, that he could, from the same casement through which Empson was peeping, observe a man in a laced roquelaure, and carrying his rapier under his arm, glide from the door by which he had himself entered, and out of the court, keeping as much as possible under the shade of the buildings.

The lady re-entered at this moment, and, observing how Empson's eyes were directed, said, with a slight appearance of hurry, 'A gentleman of the Duchess of Portsmouth's with a billet; and so tiresomely pressing for an answer, that I was obliged to write without my diamond pen. I have daubed my fingers, I daresay,' she added, looking at a very pretty hand, and presently after dipping her fingers in a little silver vase of rose water. 'But that little exotic monster of yours, Empson, I hope she really understands no English?—On my life she coloured!—Is she such a rare dancer?—I must see her dance, and hear him play on the Jew's harp.'

'Dance!' replied Empson; 'she danced well enough when *I* played to her. I can make anything dance. Old Counsellor Clubfoot danced when he had a fit of the gout; you have seen no such *pas seul* in the theatre. I would engage to make the Archbishop of Canterbury dance the hays like a Frenchman. There is nothing in dancing; it all lies in the music. Rowley does not know that now. He saw this poor wench dance, and thought so much on't, when it was all along of me. I would have defied her to sit still. And Rowley gives her the credit of it, and *five* pieces to boot; and I have only two for my morning's work!'

'True, Master Empson,' said the lady; 'but you are of the family, though in a lower station; and you ought to consider'——

'By G—, madam,' answered Empson, 'all I consider is, that I play the best flageolet in England; and that they can no more supply my place, if they were to discard me, than they could fill Thames from Fleet Ditch.'

'Well, Master Empson, I do not dispute but you are a man of talents,' replied the lady; 'still, I say, mind the main chance—you please the ear to day—another has the advantage of you to morrow.'

'Never, mistress, while ears have the heavenly power of distinguishing one note from another.'

'Heavenly power, say you, Master Empson?' said the lady.

'Ay, madam, heavenly; for some very neat verses which we had at our festival say,

What know we of the blest above,
But that they sing and that they love?

It is Master Waller wrote them, as I think; who, upon my word, ought to be encouraged.'

'And so should you, my dear Empson,' said the dame, yawning, 'were it only for the honour you do to your own profession. But, in the meantime, will you ask these people to have some refreshment?—and will you take some yourself?—the chocolate is that which the Ambassador Portuguese fellow brought over to the Queen.'

'If it be genuine,' said the musician.

'How, sir,' said the fair one, half rising from her pile of cushions—'Not genuine, and in this house!—Let me understand you, Master Empson—I think, when I first saw you, you scarce knew chocolate from coffee.'

'By G—, madam,' answered the flageolet-player, 'you are perfectly right. And how can I show better how much I have profited by your ladyship's excellent cheer, except by being critical?'

'You stand excused, Master Empson,' said the *petite maîtresse*, sinking gently back on the downy couch, from which a momentary irritation had startled her.—'I think the chocolate will please you, though scarce equal to what we had from the Spanish resident Mendoza.—But we must offer these strange people something. Will you ask them if they would have coffee and chocolate, or cold wildfowl, fruit, and wine? They must be treated, so as to show them where they are, since here they are.'

'Unquestionably, madam,' said Empson; 'but I have just at this instant forgot the French for chocolate, hot bread, coffee, game, and drinkables.'

'It is odd,' said the lady; 'and I have forgot my French and Italian at the same moment. But it signifies little—I will order the things to be brought, and they will remember the names of them themselves.'

Empson laughed loudly at this jest, and pawned his soul that the cold sirloin which entered immediately after was the best emblem of roast-beef all the world over. Plentiful refreshments were offered to all the party, of which both Fenella and Peveril partook.

In the meanwhile, the flageolet-player drew closer to the side of the lady of the mansion—their intimacy was cemented, and their spirits set afloat, by a glass of liqueur, which gave them additional confidence in discussing the characters, as well of the superior attendants of the court, as of the inferior rank, to which they themselves might be supposed to belong.

The lady, indeed, during this conversation, frequently exerted her complete and absolute superiority over Master Empson; in which that musical gentleman humbly acquiesced whenever the circumstance was recalled to his attention, whether in the way of blunt contradiction, sarcastic insinuation, downright assumption of higher importance, or in any of the other various modes by which such superiority is usually asserted and maintained. But the lady's obvious love of scandal was the lure which very soon brought her again down from the dignified part which for a moment she assumed, and placed her once more on a gossiping level with her companion.

Their conversation was too trivial, and too much allied to petty court intrigues, with which he was totally unacquainted, to be in the least interesting to Julian. As it continued for more than an hour, he soon ceased to pay the least attention to a discourse consisting of nicknames, patchwork, and innuendo; and employed himself in reflecting on his own complicated affairs, and the probable issue of his approaching audience with the king, which had been brought about by so singular an agent, and by means so unexpected. He often looked to his guide, Fenella; and observed that she was, for the greater part of the time, drowned in deep and abstracted meditation. But three or four times—and it was when the assumed airs and affected importance of the musician and their hostess rose to the most extravagant excess—he observed that Fenella dealt askance on them some of those bitter and almost blighting elfin looks, which in the Isle of Man were held to imply contemptuous execration. There was something in all her manner so extraordinary, joined to her sudden appearance, and her demeanour in the king's presence, so oddly, yet so well contrived to procure him a private audience—which he might, by graver means, have sought in vain—that it almost justified the idea, though he smiled at it internally, that the little mute agent was aided in her machinations by the kindred imps, to whom, according to Manx superstition, her genealogy was to be traced.

Another idea sometimes occurred to Julian, though he rejected the question, as being equally wild with those doubts which referred Fenella to a race different from that of mortals—'Was she really afflicted with those organical imperfections which had always seemed to sever her from humanity?—if not, what could be the motives of so young a creature practising so dreadful a penance for such an unremitted term of years? And how formidable must be the strength of mind which could condemn itself to so terrific a sacrifice—How deep and strong the purpose for which it was undertaken!'

But a brief recollection of past events enabled him to dismiss this conjecture as altogether wild and visionary. He had but to call to memory the various stratagems practised by his light-hearted companion, the young Earl of Derby, upon this forlorn girl—the conversations held in her presence, in which the character of a creature so irritable and sensitive upon all occasions was freely, and sometimes satirically discussed, without her expressing the least acquaintance with what was going forward, to convince him that so deep a deception could never have been practised for so many years, by a being of a turn of mind so peculiarly jealous and irascible.

He renounced, therefore, the idea, and turned his thoughts to his own affairs, and his approaching interview with his sovereign; in which meditation we propose to leave him until we briefly review the changes which had taken place in the situation of Alice Bridgenorth.

CHAPTER XXXI.

I fear the devil worst when gown and cassock,
Or, in the lack of them, old Calvin's cloak,
Conceals his cloven hoof.

ANONYMOUS.

JULIAN PEVERIL had scarce set sail for Whitehaven, when Alice Bridgenorth and her governante, at the hasty command of her father, were embarked with equal speed and secrecy on board of a bark bound for Liverpool. Christian accompanied them on their voyage, as the friend to whose guardianship Alice was to be consigned during any future separation from her father, and whose amusing conversation, joined to his pleasing though cold manners, as well as his near relationship, induced Alice, in her forlorn situation, to consider her fate as fortunate in having such a guardian.

At Liverpool, as the reader already knows, Christian took the first overt step in the villany which he had contrived against the innocent girl, by exposing her at a meeting-house to the unhallowed gaze of Chiffinch, in order to convince him she was possessed of such uncommon beauty as might well deserve the infamous promotion to which they meditated to raise her.

Highly satisfied with her personal appearance, Chiffinch was no less so with the sense and delicacy of her conversation, when he met her in company with her uncle afterwards in London. The simplicity, and at the same time the spirit of her remarks, made him regard her as his scientific attendant the cook might have done a newly-invented sauce sufficiently *piquante* in its qualities to awaken the jaded appetite of a cloyed and gorged epicure. She was, he said and swore, the very corner-stone on which, with proper management, and with his instructions, a few honest fellows might build a court fortune.

That the necessary introduction might take place, the confederates judged fit she should be put under the charge of an experienced lady, whom some called Mrs. Chiffinch, and others Chiffinch's mistress — one of those obliging creatures who are willing to discharge all the duties of a wife, without the inconvenient and indissoluble ceremony.

It was one, and not perhaps the least prejudicial consequence of the licence of that ill-governed time, that the bounds betwixt virtue and vice were so far smoothed down and levelled, that the frail wife, or the tender friend who was no wife, did not necessarily lose their place in society; but, on the contrary, if they moved in the higher circles, were permitted and encouraged to mingle with women whose rank was certain, and whose reputation was untainted.

A regular *liaison*, like that of Chiffinch and his fair one, inferred little scandal; and such was his influence, as prime minister of his master's pleasures, that, as Charles himself expressed it, the lady whom we introduced to our readers in the last chapter had obtained a brevet commission to rank as a married woman. And, to do the gentle dame justice, no wife could have been more attentive to forward his plans, or future, ... in disposing of his income.

... set of apartments called Chiffinch's—the scene of many an intrigue, both of love and politics; and where Charles often held his private parties for the evening, when, as frequently happened, the ill-humour of the Duchess of Portsmouth, his reigning Sultana, prevented his supping with her. The hold which such an arrangement gave a man like Chiffinch, used as he well knew how to use it, made him of too much consequence to be slighted even by the first persons in the State, unless they stood aloof from all manner of politics and court intrigue.

In the charge of Mrs. Chiffinch, and of him whose name she bore, Edward Christian placed the daughter of his sister and of his confiding friend, calmly contemplating her ruin as an event certain to follow; and hoping to ground upon it his own chance of a more assured fortune than a life spent in intrigue had hitherto been able to procure for him.

The innocent Alice, without being able to discover what was wrong either in the scenes of unusual luxury with which she was surrounded, or in the manners of her hostess, which, both from nature and policy, were kind and caressing, felt nevertheless an instinctive apprehension that all was not right — a feeling in the human mind, allied, perhaps, to that sense of danger which animals exhibit when placed in the vicinity of the natural enemies of their race, and which makes birds cower when the hawk is in the air, and beasts tremble when the tiger is abroad in the desert. There was a heaviness at her heart which she could not dispel; and the few hours which she had already spent at Chiffinch's were like those passed in prison by one unconscious of the cause or event of his captivity. It was the third morning after her arrival in London, that the scene took place which we now recur to.

The impertinence and vulgarity of Empson, which was permitted to him as an unrivalled performer upon his instrument, were exhausting themselves at the expense of all other musical professors, and Mrs. Chiffinch was listening with careless indifference, when some one was heard speaking loudly, and with animation, in the inner apartment.

'O, gemini and gilliflower water!' exclaimed the damsel, startled out of her fine airs into her natural vulgarity of exclamation, and running to the door of communication—'if he has not come back again after all!—and if old Rowley'——

A tap at the farther and opposite door here arrested her attention—she quitted the handle of that which she was about to open as speedily as if it had burnt her fingers, and, moving back towards her couch, asked, 'Who is there?'

'Old Rowley himself, madam,' said the king, entering the apartment with his usual air of easy composure.

'O crimini!—your Majesty!—I thought'——

'That I was out of hearing, doubtless,' said the king; 'and spoke of me as folk speak of absent friends. Make no apology. I think I have heard ladies say of their lace that a rent is better than a darn.—Nay, be seated.—Where is Chiffinch?'

'He is down at York House, your Majesty,' said the dame, recovering, though with no small

difficulty, the calm affectation of her usual demeanour. 'Shall I send your Majesty's commands?'

'I will wait his return,' said the king—'Permit me to taste your chocolate.'

'There is some fresh frothed in the office,' said the lady; and, using a little silver call, or whistle, a black boy, superbly dressed, like an Oriental page, with gold bracelets on his naked arms, and a gold collar around his equally bare neck, attended with the favourite beverage of the morning in an apparatus of the richest china.

While he sipped his cup of chocolate, the king looked round the apartment, and, observing Fenella, Peveril, and the musician, who remained standing beside a large Indian screen, he continued, addressing Mrs. Chiffinch, though with polite indifference, 'I sent you the fiddles this morning—or rather the flute—Empson, and a fairy elf whom I met in the Park, who dances divinely. She has brought us the very newest saraband from the court of Queen Mab, and I sent her here, that you may see it at leisure.'

'Your Majesty does me by far too much honour,' said Chiffinch, her eyes properly cast down, and her accents minced into becoming humility.

'Nay, little Chiffinch,' answered the king, in a tone of as contemptuous familiarity as was consistent with his good breeding, 'it was not altogether for thine own private ear, though quite deserving of all sweet sounds; but I thought Nelly had been with thee this morning.'

'I can send Bajazet for her, your Majesty,' answered the lady.

'Nay, I will not trouble your little heathen sultan to go so far. Still, it strikes me that Chiffinch said you had company—some country cousin, or such a matter.—Is there not such a person?'

'There is a young person from the country,' said Mrs. Chiffinch, striving to conceal a considerable portion of embarrassment; 'but she is unprepared for such an honour as to be admitted into your Majesty's presence, and'——

'And therefore the fitter to receive it, Chiffinch. There is nothing in nature so beautiful as the first blush of a little rustic between joy and fear, and wonder and curiosity. It is the down on the peach—pity it decays so soon!—the fruit remains, but the first high colouring and exquisite flavour are gone.—Never put up thy lip for the matter, Chiffinch, for it is as I tell you; so pray let us have *la belle cousine*.'

Mrs. Chiffinch, more embarrassed than ever, again advanced towards the door of communication, which she had been in the act of opening when his Majesty entered. But just as she coughed pretty loudly, perhaps as a signal to some one within, voices were again heard in a raised tone of altercation—the door was flung open, and Alice rushed out of the inner apartment, followed to the door of it by the enterprising Duke of Buckingham, who stood fixed with astonishment on finding his pursuit of the flying fair one had hurried him into the presence of the king.

Alice Bridgenorth appeared too much transported with anger to permit her to pay attention to the rank or character of the company into which she had thus suddenly entered. 'I remain no longer here, madam,' she said to Mrs. Chiffinch, in a tone of uncontrollable resolution; 'I leave instantly a house where I am exposed to company which I detest, and to solicitations which I despise.'

The dismayed Mrs. Chiffinch could only implore her, in broken whispers, to be silent; adding, while she pointed to Charles, who stood with his eyes fixed rather on his audacious courtier than on the game which he pursued, 'The King—the King!'

'If I am in the King's presence,' said Alice aloud, and in the same torrent of passionate feeling, while her eye sparkled through tears of resentment and insulted modesty, 'it is the better—it is his Majesty's duty to protect me; and on his protection I throw myself.'

These words, which were spoken aloud, and boldly, at once recalled Julian to himself, who had hitherto stood, as it were, bewildered. He approached Alice, and, whispering in her ear that she had beside her one who would defend her with his life, implored her to trust to his guardianship in this emergency.

Clinging to his arm in all the ecstasy of gratitude and joy, the spirit which had so lately invigorated Alice in her own defence, gave way in a flood of tears, when she saw herself supported by him whom perhaps she most wished to recognise as her protector. She permitted Peveril gently to draw her back towards the screen before which he had been standing; where, holding by his arm, but at the same time endeavouring to conceal herself behind him, they waited the conclusion of a scene so singular.

The king seemed at first so much surprised at the unexpected apparition of the Duke of Buckingham, as to pay little or no attention to Alice, who had been the means of thus unceremoniously introducing his Grace into the presence at a most unsuitable moment. In that intriguing court, it had not been the first time that the duke had ventured to enter the lists of gallantry in rivalry of his sovereign, which made the present insult the more intolerable. His purpose of lying concealed in those private apartments was explained by the exclamations of Alice; and Charles, notwithstanding the placidity of his disposition, and his habitual guard over his passions, resented the attempt to seduce his destined mistress, as an Eastern sultan would have done the insolence of a vizier, who anticipated his intended purchases of captive beauty in the slave-market. The swarthy features of Charles reddened, and the strong lines on his dark visage seemed to become inflated, as he said, in a voice which faltered with passion, 'Buckingham, you dared not have thus insulted your equal! To your master you may securely offer any affront, since his rank glues his sword to the scabbard.'

The haughty duke did not brook this taunt unanswered. 'My sword,' he said, with emphasis, 'was never in the scabbard, when your Majesty's service required it should be unsheathed.'

'Your Grace means, when its service was

required for its master's interest,' said the king, 'for you could only gain the coronet of a duke by fighting for the royal crown. But it is over—I have treated you as a friend—a companion—almost an equal—you have repaid me with insolence and ingratitude.'

'Sire,' answered the duke firmly, but respectfully, 'I am unhappy in your displeasure; yet thus far fortunate, that while your words can confer honour, they cannot impair or take it away.—It is hard,' he added, lowering his voice, so as only to be heard by the king—'It is hard that the squall of a peevish wench should cancel the services of so many years!'

'It is harder,' said the king, in the same subdued tone, which both preserved through the rest of the conversation, 'that a wench's bright eyes can make a nobleman forget the decencies due to his sovereign's privacy.'

'May I presume to ask your Majesty what decencies are those?' said the duke.

Charles bit his lip to keep himself from smiling. 'Buckingham,' he said, 'this is a foolish business; and we must not forget (as we have nearly done), that we have an audience to witness this scene, and should walk the stage with dignity. I will show you your fault in private.'

'It is enough that your Majesty has been displeased, and that I have unhappily been the occasion,' said the duke, kneeling; 'although quite ignorant of any purpose beyond a few words of gallantry, and I sue thus low for your Majesty's pardon.'

So saying, he kneeled gracefully down. 'Thou hast it, George,' said the placable prince. 'I believe thou wilt be sooner tired of offending than I of forgiving.'

'Long may your Majesty live to give the offence, with which it is your royal pleasure at present to charge my innocence,' said the duke.

'What mean you by that, my lord?' said Charles, the angry shade returning to his brow for a moment.

'My liege,' replied the duke, 'you are too honourable to deny your custom of shooting with Cupid's bird-bolts in other men's warrens. You have ta'en the royal right of free forestry over every man's park. It is hard that you should be so much displeased at hearing a chance arrow whizz near your own pales.'

'No more on't,' said the king; 'but let us see where the dove has harboured.'

'The Helen has found a Paris while we were quarrelling,' replied the duke.

'Rather an Orpheus,' said the king; 'and, what is worse, one that is already provided with a Eurydice.—She is clinging to the fiddler.'

'It is mere fright,' said Buckingham, 'like Rochester's, when he crept into the bass viol to hide himself from Sir Dermot O'Cleaver.'

'We must make the people show their talents,' said the king, 'and stop their mouths with money and civility, or we shall have this foolish encounter over half the town.'

The king then approached Julian, and desired him to take his instrument, and cause his female companion to perform a saraband.

'I had already the honour to inform your Majesty,' said Julian, 'that I cannot contribute to your pleasure in the way you command me; and that this young person is'——

'A retainer of the Lady Powis,' said the king, upon whose mind things not connected with his pleasure made a very slight impression. 'Poor lady, she is in trouble about the lords in the Tower.'

'Pardon me, sir,' said Julian, 'she is a dependent of the Countess of Derby.'

'True, true,' answered Charles; 'it is indeed of Lady Derby, who hath also her own distresses in these times. Do you know who taught the young person to dance? Some of her steps mightily resemble Le Jeune's of Paris.'

'I presume she was taught abroad, sir,' said Julian; 'for myself, I am charged with some weighty business by the countess, which I would willingly communicate to your Majesty.'

'We will send you to our Secretary of State,' said the king. 'But this dancing envoy will oblige us once more, will she not? Empson, now that I remember, it was to your pipe that she danced. Strike up, man, and put mettle into her feet.'

Empson began to play a well-known measure, and, as he had threatened, made more than one false note, until the king, whose ear was very accurate, rebuked him with 'Sirrah, art thou drunk at this early hour, or must thou too be playing thy slippery tricks with me? Thou thinkest thou art born to beat time, but I will have time beat into thee.'

The hint was sufficient, and Empson took good care so to perform his part as to merit his high and deserved reputation. But on Fenella it made not the slightest impression. She rather leant than stood against the wall of the apartment; her countenance as pale as death, her arms and hands hanging down as if stiffened, and her existence only testified by the sobs which agitated her bosom, and the tears which flowed from her half-closed eyes.

'A plague on it,' said the king, 'some evil spirit is abroad this morning; and the wenches are all bewitched, I think. Cheer up, my girl. What, in the devil's name, has changed thee at once from a Nymph to a Niobe? If thou standest there longer, thou wilt grow to the very marble wall. Or—oddsfish, George, have you been bird-bolting in this quarter also?'

Ere Buckingham could answer to this charge, Julian again kneeled down to the king, and prayed to be heard, were it only for five minutes. 'The young woman,' he said, 'had been long in attendance on the Countess of Derby. She was bereaved of the faculties of speech and hearing.'

'Oddsfish, man, and dances so well?' said the king. 'Nay, all Gresham College shall never make me believe that.'

'I would have thought it equally impossible, but for what I to-day witnessed,' said Julian; 'but only permit me, sir, to deliver the petition of my lady the Countess.'

'And who art thou thyself, man?' said the sovereign; 'for though everything which wears bodice and breast-knot has a right to speak to a king, and be answered, I know not that they have a title to audience through an envoy extraordinary.'

'I am Julian Peveril of Derbyshire,' answered

the supplicant, 'the son of Sir Geoffrey Peveril of Martindale Castle, who'——

'Body of me—the old Worcester man?' said the King. 'Oddsfish, I remember him well—some harm has happened to him, I think—Is he not dead, or very sick at least?'

'Ill at ease, an it please your Majesty, but not ill in health. He has been imprisoned on account of an alleged accession to this Plot.'

'Look you there,' said the king; 'I knew he was in trouble; and yet how to help the stout old knight, I can hardly tell. I can scarce escape suspicion of the Plot myself, though the principal object of it is to take away my own life. Were I to stir to save a plotter, I should certainly be brought in as an accessary. Buckingham, thou hast some interest with those who built this fine State engine, or at least who have driven it on be good-natured for once, though it is scarcely thy wont, and interfere to shelter our old Worcester friend, Sir Godfrey. You have not forgot him?'

'No, sir,' answered the duke; 'for I never heard the name.'

'It is Sir Geoffrey his Majesty would say,' said Julian.

'And if his Majesty *did* say Sir Geoffrey, Master Peveril, I cannot see of what use I can be to your father,' replied the duke coldly. 'He is accused of a heavy crime; and a British subject so accused can have no shelter either from prince or peer, but must stand to the award and deliverance of God and his country.'

'Now, Heaven forgive thee thy hypocrisy, George,' said the king hastily. 'I would rather hear the devil preach religion than thee teach patriotism. Thou knowest as well as I, that the nation is in a scarlet fever for fear of the poor Catholics, who are not two men to five hundred; and that the public mind is so harassed with new narrations of conspiracy, and fresh horrors every day, that people have as little real sense of what is just or unjust, as men who talk in their sleep of what is sense or nonsense. I have borne, and borne with it—I have seen blood flow on the scaffold, fearing to thwart the nation in its fury—and I pray to God that I or mine be not called on to answer for it. I will no longer swim with the torrent, which honour and conscience call upon me to stem—I will act the part of a sovereign, and save my people from doing injustice, even in their own despite.'

Charles walked hastily up and down the room as he expressed these unwonted sentiments, with energy equally unwonted. After a momentary pause, the duke answered him gravely, 'Spoken like a royal King, sir, but—pardon me—not like a King of England.'

Charles paused, as the duke spoke, beside a window which looked full on Whitehall, and his eye was involuntarily attracted by the fatal window of the Banqueting House out of which his unhappy father was conducted to execution. Charles was naturally, or, more properly, constitutionally brave; but a life of pleasure, together with the habit of governing his course rather by what was expedient than by what was right, rendered him unapt to dare the same scene of danger or of martyrdom which had closed his father's life and reign; and the thought came over his half-formed resolution, like the rain upon a kindling beacon. In another man, his perplexity would have seemed almost ludicrous; but Charles would not lose, even under these circumstances, the dignity and grace which were as natural to him as his indifference and good humour. 'Our Council must decide in this matter,' he said, looking to the duke; 'and be assured, young man,' he added, addressing Julian, 'your father shall not want an intercessor in his King, so far as the laws will permit my interference in his behalf.'

Julian was about to retire, when Fenella, with a marked look, put into his hand a slip of paper, on which she had hastily written, 'The packet—give him the packet.'

After a moment's hesitation, during which he reflected that Fenella was the organ of the countess's pleasure, Julian resolved to obey. 'Permit me, then, sire,' he said, 'to place in your royal hands this packet, entrusted to me by the Countess of Derby. The letters have already been once taken from me; and I have little hope that I can now deliver them as they are addressed. I place them, therefore, in your royal hands, certain that they will evince the innocence of the writer.'

The king shook his head as he took the packet reluctantly. 'It is no safe office you have undertaken, young man. A messenger has sometimes his throat cut for the sake of his despatches—But give them to me; and, Chiffinch, give me wax and a taper.' He employed himself in folding the countess's packet in another envelope. 'Buckingham,' he said, 'you are evidence that I do not read them till the Council shall see them.'

Buckingham approached and offered his services in folding the parcel, but Charles rejected his assistance; and, having finished his task, he sealed the packet with his own signet-ring. The duke bit his lip and retired.

'And now, young man,' said the king, 'your errand is sped, so far as it can at present be forwarded.'

Julian bowed deeply, as to take leave at these words, which he rightly interpreted as a signal for his departure. Alice Bridgenorth still clung to his arm, and motioned to withdraw along with him. The king and Buckingham [illegible] at each other in conscious astonishment, a[illegible] not without a desire to smile, so strange di[illegible] seem to them that a prize, for which, an instant before, they had been mutually contending, should thus glide out of their grasp, or rather be borne off by a third and very inferior competitor.

'Mrs. Chiffinch,' said the king, with a hesitation which he could not disguise, 'I hope your fair charge is not about to leave you?'

'Certainly not, your Majesty,' answered Chiffinch. 'Alice, my love, you mistake—that opposite door leads to your apartments.'

'Pardon me, madam,' answered Alice; 'I have indeed mistaken my road, but it was when I came hither.'

'The errant damozel,' said Buckingham, looking at Charles with as much intelligence as etiquette permitted him to throw into his eye,

and then turning it towards Alice, as she still held by Julian's arm, 'is resolved not to mistake her road a second time. She has chosen a sufficient guide.'

'And yet stories tell that such guides have led maidens astray,' said the king.

Alice blushed deeply, but instantly recovered her composure as soon as she saw that her liberty was likely to depend upon the immediate exercise of resolution. She quitted, from a sense of insulted delicacy, the arm of Julian, to which she had hitherto clung; but, as she spoke, she continued to retain a slight grasp of his cloak. 'I have indeed mistaken my way,' she repeated, still addressing Mrs. Chiffinch, 'but it was when I crossed this threshold. The usage to which I have been exposed in your house has determined me to quit it instantly.'

'I will not permit that, my young mistress,' answered Mrs. Chiffinch, 'until your uncle, who placed you under my care, shall relieve me of the charge of you.'

'I will answer for my conduct, both to my uncle, and, what is of more importance, to my father,' said Alice. 'You must permit me to depart, madam; I am free-born, and you have no right to detain me.'

'Pardon me, my young madam,' said Mrs. Chiffinch, 'I have a right, and I will maintain it too.'

'I will know that before quitting this presence,' said Alice firmly; and, advancing a step or two, she dropped on her knee before the king. 'Your Majesty,' said she, 'if indeed I kneel before King Charles, is the father of your subjects.'

'Of a good many of them,' said the Duke of Buckingham, apart.

'I demand protection of you in the name of God, and of the oath your Majesty swore when you placed on your head the crown of this kingdom!'

'You have my protection,' said the king, a little confused by an appeal so unexpected and so solemn. 'Do but remain quiet with this lady, with whom your parents have placed you; neither Buckingham nor any one else shall intrude on you.'

'His Majesty,' added Buckingham, in the same tone, and speaking from the restless and mischief-making spirit of contradiction, which he never could restrain, even when indulging it was most contrary, not only to propriety, but to his own interest,—'His Majesty will protect you, fair lady, from all intrusion save what must not be termed such.'

Alice darted a keen look on the duke, as if to read his meaning; another on Charles, to know whether she had guessed it rightly. There was a guilty confession on the king's brow, which confirmed Alice's determination to depart. 'Your Majesty will forgive me,' she said; 'it is not here that I can enjoy the advantage of your royal protection. I am resolved to leave this house. If I am detained, it must be by violence, which I trust no one dare offer to me in your Majesty's presence. This gentleman, whom I have long known, will conduct me to my friends.'

'We make but an indifferent figure in this scene, methinks,' said the king, addressing the Duke of Buckingham, and speaking in a whisper; 'but she must go—I neither will, nor dare, stop her from returning to her father.'

'And if she does,' swore the duke internally, 'I would, as Sir Andrew Smith saith, I might never touch fair lady's hand.' And, stepping back, he spoke a few words with Empson the musician, who left the apartment for a few minutes, and presently returned.

The king seemed irresolute concerning the part he should act under circumstances so peculiar. To be foiled in a gallant intrigue, was to subject himself to the ridicule of his gay court; to persist in it by any means which approached to constraint, would have been tyrannical; and, what perhaps he might judge as severe an imputation, it would have been unbecoming a gentleman. 'Upon my honour, young lady,' he said, with an emphasis, 'you have nothing to fear in this house. But it is improper, for your own sake, that you should leave it in this abrupt manner. If you will have the goodness to wait but a quarter of an hour, Mrs. Chiffinch's coach will be placed at your command, to transport you where you will. Spare yourself the ridicule, and me the pain, of seeing you leave the house of one of my servants, as if you were escaping from a prison.'

The king spoke in good-natured sincerity, and Alice was inclined for an instant to listen to his advice; but recollecting that she had to search for her father and uncle, or, failing them, for some suitable place of secure residence, it rushed on her mind that the attendants of Mrs. Chiffinch were not likely to prove trusty guides or assistants in such a purpose. Firmly and respectfully she announced her purpose of instant departure. She needed no other escort, she said, than what this gentleman, Master Julian Peveril, who was well known to her father, would willingly afford her; nor did she need that further than until she had reached her father's residence.

'Farewell, then, lady, a God's name!' said the king; 'I am sorry so much beauty should be wedded to so many shrewish suspicions.—For you, Master Peveril, I should have thought you had enough to do with your own affairs without interfering with the humours of the fair sex. The duty of conducting all strayed damsels into the right path, is, as matters go in this good city, rather too weighty an undertaking for your youth and inexperience.'

Julian, eager to conduct Alice from a place of which he began fully to appreciate the perils, answered nothing to this taunt, but, bowing reverently, led her from the apartment. Her sudden appearance, and the animated scene which followed, had entirely absorbed, for the moment, the recollection of his father, and of the Countess of Derby; and while the dumb attendant of the latter remained in the room, a silent, and, as it were, stunned spectator of all that had happened, Peveril had become, in the predominating interest of Alice's critical situation, totally forgetful of her presence. But no sooner had he left the room without noticing or attending to her, than Fenella, starting as from a trance, drew herself up, and looked

wildly around, like one waking from a dream, as if to assure herself that her companion was gone, and gone without paying the slightest attention to her. She folded her hands together, and cast her eyes upwards, with an expression of such agony as explained to Charles (as he thought) what painful ideas were passing in her mind. 'This Peveril is a perfect pattern of successful perfidy,' said the king; 'he has not only succeeded at first sight in carrying off this Queen of the Amazons, but he has left us, I think, a disconsolate Ariadne in her place.—But weep not, my princess of pretty movements,' he said, addressing himself to Fenella; 'if we cannot call in Bacchus to console you, we will commit you to the care of Empson, who shall drink with *Liber Pater* for a thousand pounds, and I will say done first.'

As the king spoke these words, Fenella rushed past him with her wonted rapidity of step, and, with much less courtesy than was due to the royal presence, hurried down-stairs, and out of the house, without attempting to open any communication with the monarch. He saw her abrupt departure with more surprise than displeasure; and presently afterwards, bursting into a fit of laughter, he said to the duke, 'Oddsfish, George, this young spark might teach the best of us how to manage the wenches. I have had my own experience, but I could never yet contrive either to win or lose them with so little ceremony.'

'Experience, sir,' replied the duke, 'cannot be acquired without years.'

'True, George; and you would, I suppose, insinuate,' said Charles, 'that the gallant who acquires it loses as much in youth as he gains in art? I defy your insinuation, George. You cannot overreach your master, old as you think him, either in love or politics. You have not the secret *plumer la poule sans la faire crier*, witness this morning's work. I will give you odds at all games—ay, and at the Mall, too, if thou darest accept my challenge.—Chiffinch, what for dost thou convulse thy pretty throat and face with sobbing and hatching tears, which seem rather unwilling to make their appearance?'

'It is for fear,' whined Chiffinch, 'that your Majesty should think—that you should expect'——

'That I should expect gratitude from a courtier, or faith from a woman!' answered the king, patting her at the same time under the chin, to make her raise her face—'Tush! chicken, I am not so superfluous.'

'There it is, now,' said Chiffinch, continuing to sob the more bitterly, as she felt herself unable to produce any tears; 'I see your Majesty is determined to lay all the blame on me, when I am innocent as an unborn babe—I will be judged by his Grace.'

'No doubt, no doubt, Chiffie,' said the king. 'His Grace and you will be excellent judges in each other's cause, and as good witnesses in each other's favour. But to investigate the matter impartially, we must examine our evidence apart.—My lord Duke, we meet at the Mall at noon, if your Grace dare accept my challenge.'

His Grace of Buckingham bowed, and retired.

CHAPTER XXXII.

But when the bully, with assuming pace,
Cocks his broad hat, edged round with tarnish'd lace,
Yield not the way—defy his strutting pride,
And thrust him to the muddy kennel's side,
Yet rather bear the shower and toils of mud,
Than in the doubtful quarrel risk thy blood.
GAY'S TRIVIA.

JULIAN PEVERIL, half-leading, half-supporting Alice Bridgenorth, had reached the middle of Saint James's Street ere the doubt occurred to him which way they should bend their course. He then asked Alice whither he should conduct her, and learned, to his surprise and embarrassment, that, far from knowing where her father was to be found, she had no certain knowledge that he was in London, and only hoped that he had arrived, from the expressions which he had used at parting. She mentioned her uncle Christian's address, but it was with doubt and hesitation, arising from the hands in which he had already placed her; and her reluctance to go again under his protection was strongly confirmed by her youthful guide, when a few words had established to his conviction the identity of Ganlesse and Christian.—What then was to be done?

'Alice,' said Julian, after a moment's reflection, 'you must seek your earliest and best friend—I mean my mother. She has now no castle in which to receive you—she has but a miserable lodging, so near the jail in which my father is confined, that it seems almost a cell of the same prison. I have not seen her since my coming hither; but thus much have I learned by inquiry. We will now go to her apartment; such as it is, I know she will share it with one so innocent and so unprotected as you are.'

'Gracious Heaven!' said the poor girl, 'am I then so totally deserted, that I must throw myself on the mercy of her who of all the world has most reason to spurn me from her?—Julian, can you advise me to this?—Is there none else who will afford me a few hours' refuge, till I can hear from my father?—No other protectress but her whose ruin has, I fear, been accelerated by —— Julian, I dare not appear before your mother! she must hate me for my family, and despise me for my meanness. To be a second time cast on her protection, when the first has been so evil repaid—Julian, I dare not go with you.'

'She has never ceased to love you, Alice,' said her conductor, whose steps she continued to attend, even while declaring her resolution not to go with him; 'she never felt anything but kindness towards you, nay, towards your father; for, though his dealings with us have been harsh, she can allow much for the provocation which he has received. Believe me, with her you will be safe as with a mother—perhaps it may be the means of reconciling the divisions by which we have suffered so much.'

'Might God grant it!' said Alice. 'Yet how shall I face your mother? And will she be able to protect me against these powerful men—against my uncle Christian? Alas, that I must call him my worst enemy!'

'She has the ascendancy which honour hath

over infamy, and virtue over vice,' said Julian, 'and to no human power but your father's will she resign you, if you consent to choose her for your protectress. Come, then, with me, Alice, and ——'

Julian was interrupted by some one, who, laying an unceremonious hold of his cloak, pulled it with so much force as compelled him to stop and lay his hand on his sword He turned at the same time, and, when he turned, beheld Fenella The cheek of the mute glowed like fire; her eyes sparkled, and her lips were forcibly drawn together, as if she had difficulty to repress those wild screams which usually attended her agonies of passion, and which, uttered in the open street, must instantly have collected a crowd As it was, her appearance was so singular, and her emotion so evident that men gazed as they came on and looked back after they had passed, at the singular vivacity of her gestures, while, holding Peveril's cloak with one hand, she made with the other the most eager and imperious signs that he should leave Alice Bridgenorth and follow her She touched the plume in her bonnet, to remind him of the earl—pointed to her heart, to intimate the countess—raised her closed hand, as if to command him in their name—and next moment folded both, as if to supplicate him in her own, while pointing to Alice with an expression at once of angry and scornful derision, she waved her hand repeatedly and disdainfully to intimate that Peveril ought to cast her off as something undeserving his protection

Frightened, she knew not why at these wild gestures, Alice clung closer to Julian's arm than she had at first dared to do and this mark of confidence in his protection seemed to increase the passion of Fenella

Julian was dreadfully embarrassed his situation was sufficiently precarious even before Fenella's ungovernable passions threatened to ruin the only plan which he had been able to suggest What she wanted with him how far the fate of the earl and countess might depend on his following her, he could not even conjecture, but, be the call how peremptory soever he resolved not to comply with it until he had seen Alice placed in safety In the meantime he determined not to lose sight of Fenella and, persuading her repeated, disdainful and impetuous rejection of the hand which he offered her, he at length seemed so far to have soothed her, that she seized upon his right arm, and, as if despairing of his following her path, appeared reconciled to attend him on that which he himself should choose

Thus, with a youthful female clinging to each arm, and both remarkably calculated to attract the public eye, though from very different reasons, Julian resolved to make the shortest road to the water side, and there to take boat for Blackfriars, as the nearest point of landing to Newgate, where he concluded that Lance had already announced his arrival in London to Sir Geoffrey, then inhabiting that dismal region, and to his lady, who, so far as the jailor's rigour permitted, shared and softened his imprisonment.

Julian's embarrassment in passing Charing Cross and Northumberland House was so great as to excite the attention of the passengers, for he had to compose his steps so as to moderate the unequal and rapid pace of Fenella to the timid and faint progress of his left hand companion, and while it would have been needless to address himself to the former, who could not comprehend him, he dared not speak himself to Alice, for fear of awakening into frenzy the jealousy, or at least the impatience, of Fenella.

Many passengers looked at them with wonder, and some with smiles, but Julian remarked that there were two who never lost sight of them, and to whom his situation, and the demeanour of his companions, seemed to afford matter of undisguised merriment These were young men, such as may be seen in the same precincts in the present day, allowing for the difference in the fashion of their apparel They abounded in periwig, and fluttered with many hundred yards of ribbon, disposed in bow knots upon their sleeves, their breeches, and their waistcoats in the very extremity of the existing mode A quantity of lace and embroidery made their habits rather fine than tasteful In a word they were dressed in that caricature of the fashion which sometimes denotes a harebrained man of quality who has a mind to be distinguished as a fop of the first order, but is much more frequently the disguise of those who desire to be esteemed men of rank on account of their dress having no other pretension to the distinction

These two gallants passed Peveril more than once, linked arm in arm, then sauntered so as to oblige him to pass them in turn, laughing and whispering during these manoeuvres—staring broadly at Peveril and his female companions—and affording them as they came into contact, none of those facilities of giving place which are required on such occasions by the ordinary rules of the pavé

Peveril did not immediately observe their impertinence but when it was too gross to escape his notice his gall began to arise, and, in addition to all the other embarrassments of his situation he had to combat the longing desire which he felt to cudgel handsomely the two coxcombs who seemed thus determined on insulting him Patience and sufferance were indeed strongly imposed on him by circumstances but at length it became scarcely possible to observe their dictates any longer

When for the third time Julian found himself obliged, with his companions, to pass this troublesome brace of fops, they kept walking close behind him, speaking so loud as to be heard and in a tone of perfect indifference whether he listened to them or not

'This is bumpkin's best luck,' said the taller of the two (who was indeed a man of remarkable size alluding to the plainness of Peveril's dress, which was scarce fit for the streets of London)—'Two such fine wenches, and under guard of a grey frock and an oaken riding rod!'

'Nay, Puritan's luck, rather, and more than enough of it,' said his companion 'You may read Puritan in his pace and in his patience.'

'Right as a pint bumper, Tom,' said his friend—'Issachar is an ass that stoopeth between two burdens.'

'I have a mind to ease long-eared Laurence of one of his encumbrances,' said the shorter fellow. 'That black-eyed sparkler looks as if she had a mind to run away from him.'

'Ay,' answered the taller, 'and the blue-eyed trembler looks as if she would fall behind into my loving arms.'

At these words, Alice, holding still closer by Peveril's arm than formerly, mended her pace almost to running, in order to escape from men whose language was so alarming; and Fenella walked hastily forward in the same manner, having perhaps caught, from the men's gestures and demeanour, that apprehension which Alice had taken from their language.

Fearful of the consequences of a fray in the streets, which must necessarily separate him from these unprotected females, Peveril endeavoured to compound betwixt the prudence necessary for their protection and his own rising resentment; and as this troublesome pair of attendants endeavoured again to pass them close to Hungerford Stairs, he said to them, with constrained calmness, 'Gentlemen, I owe you something for the attention you have bestowed on the affairs of a stranger. If you have any pretension to the name I have given you, you will tell me where you are to be found.'

'And with what purpose,' said the taller of the two, sneeringly, 'does your most rustic gravity, or your most grave rusticity, require of us such information?'

So saying, they both faced about, in such a manner as to make it impossible for Julian to advance any farther.

'Make for the stairs, Alice,' he said; 'I will be with you in an instant.' Then, freeing himself with difficulty from the grasp of his companions, he cast his cloak hastily round his left arm, and said sternly to his opponents, 'Will you give me your names, sirs; or will you be pleased to make way?'

'Not till we know for whom we are to give place?' said one of them.

'For one who will else teach you what you want—good manners,' said Peveril, and advanced as if to push between them.

They separated, but one of them stretched forth his foot before Peveril, as if he meant to trip him. The blood of his ancestors was already boiling within him; he struck the man on the face with the oaken rod which he had just sneered at, and, throwing it from him, instantly unsheathed his sword. Both the others drew, and pushed at once; but he caught the point of the one rapier in his cloak, and parried the other thrust with his own weapon. He might have been less lucky in the second close, but a cry arose among the watermen, of 'Shame, shame! two upon one!'

'They are men of the Duke of Buckingham's,' said one fellow—'there's no safe meddling with them.'

'They may be the devil's men, if they will,' said an ancient Triton, flourishing his stretcher; 'but I say fair play, and Old England for ever; and, I say, knock the gold-laced puppies down, unless they will fight turn about with grey-jerkin, like honest fellows. One down—t'other come on.'

The lower orders of London have in all times been remarkable for the delight which they have taken in club-law, or fist-law; and for the equity and impartiality with which they see it administered. The noble science of defence was then so generally known, that a bout at single rapier excited at that time as much interest and as little wonder as a boxing-match in our own days. The bystanders, experienced in such affrays, presently formed a ring, within which Peveril and the taller and more forward of his antagonists were soon engaged in close combat with their swords, whilst the other, overawed by the spectators, was prevented from interfering.

'Well done the tall fellow!'—'Well thrust, long-legs!'—'Huzza for two ells and a quarter!' were the sounds with which the fray was at first cheered; for Peveril's opponent not only showed great activity in skill and fence, but had also a decided advantage, from the anxiety with which Julian looked out for Alice Bridgenorth; the care for whose safety diverted him in the beginning of the onset from that which he ought to have exclusively bestowed on the defence of his own life. A slight flesh-wound in the side at once punished and warned him of his inadvertence; when, turning his whole thoughts on the business in which he was engaged, and animated with anger against his impertinent intruder, the rencontre speedily began to assume another face, amidst cries of 'Well done, grey-jerkin!'—'Try the metal of his gold doublet!'—'Finely thrust!'—'Curiously parried!'—'There went another eyelet hole to his broidered jerkin!'—'Fairly pinked, by G—d!' In fact, the last exclamation was uttered amid a general roar of applause, accompanying a successful and conclusive lunge, by which Peveril ran his gigantic antagonist through the body. He looked at his prostrate foe for a moment; then, recovering himself, called loudly to know what had become of the lady.

'Never mind the lady, if you be wise,' said one of the watermen; 'the constable will be here in an instant. I'll give your honour a cast across the water in a moment. It may be as much as your neck's worth. Shall only charge a jacobus.'

'You be d—d!' said one of his rivals in profession, 'as your father was before you; for a jacobus, I'll set the gentleman into Alsatia,* where neither bailiff nor constable dare trespass.'

'The lady, you scoundrels, the lady!' exclaimed Peveril—'Where is the lady?'

'I'll carry your honour where you shall have enough of ladies, if that be your want,' said the old Triton; and, as he spoke, the clamour amongst the watermen was renewed, each hoping to cut his own profit out of the emergency of Julian's situation.

'A sculler will be least suspected, your honour,' said one fellow.

'A pair of oars will carry you through the water like a wild-duck,' said another.

'But you have got never a tilt, brother,' said a third. 'Now I can put the gentlem[illegible] as if he were under hatches.' [illegible] she be able

In the midst of the oatl[illegible] powerful men—
[illegible] Alas, that I must

[illegible] which honour hath

* Alsatia, a low district n[illegible] of debtors, cheats, and gan[illegible]

ing this aquatic controversy for his custom, Peveril at length made them understand that he would bestow a jacobus, not on him whose boat was first oars, but on whomsoever should inform him of the fate of the lady.

'Of which lady?' said a sharp fellow; 'for, to my thought, there was a pair on them.'

'Of both, of both,' answered Peveril; 'but first, of the fair-haired lady?'

'Ay, ay, that was she that shrieked so when gold-jacket's companion handed her into No. 20.'

'Who—what—who dared to hand her?' exclaimed Peveril.

'Nay, master, you have heard enough of my tale without a fee,' said the waterman.

'Sordid rascal!' said Peveril, giving him a gold piece, 'speak out, or I'll run my sword through you!'

'For the matter of that, master,' answered the fellow, 'not while I can handle this trunnion—but a bargain's a bargain; and so I'll tell you, for your gold piece, that the comrade of the fellow forced one of your wenches, her with the fair hair, will she nill she, into Tickling Tom's wherry; and they are far enough up Thames by this time, with wind and tide.'

'Sacred Heaven, and I stand here!' exclaimed Julian.

'Why, that is because your honour will not take a boat.'

'You are right, my friend—a boat—a boat instantly!'

'Follow me, then, squire.—Here, Tom, bear a hand—the gentleman is our fare.'

A volley of water language was exchanged betwixt the successful candidate for Peveril's custom and his disappointed brethren, which concluded by the ancient Triton's bellowing out, in a tone above them all, 'that the gentleman was in a fair way to make a voyage to the isle of gulls, for that sly Jack was only bantering him—No. 20 had rowed for York Buildings.'

'To the isle of gallows,' cried another; 'for here comes one who will mar his trip up Thames, and carry him down to Execution Dock.'

In fact, as he spoke the word, a constable, with three or four of his assistants, armed with the old-fashioned brown bills, which were still used for arming those guardians of the peace, cut off our hero's farther progress to the water's edge, by arresting him in the king's name. To attempt resistance would have been madness, as he was surrounded on all sides; so Peveril was disarmed, and carried before the nearest justice of the peace, for examination and committal.

The legal sage before whom Julian was taken [illegible] a man very honest in his intentions, very bounded in his talents, and rather timid in his disposition. Before the general alarm given to England, and to the city of London in particular, by the notable discovery of the Popish Plot, Master Maulstatute had taken serene and undisturbed pride and pleasure in the discharge of his duties as a justice of the peace, with the exercise of all its honorary privileges and awful authority. Geoffrey, then [illegible]of Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey had to his lady, who, so [illegible]an indelible impression on mitted, shared and s[illegible]lked the Courts of Themis

Julian's embarrassi[illegible]ng after that memorable Cross and Northumber[illegible]

Having a high idea of his official importance, and rather an exalted notion of his personal consequence, his honour saw nothing from that time but cords and daggers before his eyes, and never stepped out of his own house, which he fortified, and in some measure garrisoned, with half-a-dozen tall watchmen and constables, without seeing himself watched by a Papist in disguise, with a drawn sword under his cloak. It was even whispered that, in the agonies of his fears, the worshipful Master Maulstatute mistook the kitchen-wench with a tinder-box for a Jesuit with a pistol; but if any one dared to laugh at such an error, he would have done well to conceal his mirth, lest he fell under the heavy inculpation of being a banterer and stifler of the Plot—a crime almost as deep as that of being himself a plotter. In fact, the fears of the honest justice, however ridiculously exorbitant, were kept so much in countenance by the outcry of the day, and the general nervous fever which afflicted every good Protestant, that Master Maulstatute was accounted the bolder man and the better magistrate, while, under the terror of the air-drawn dagger which fancy placed continually before his eyes, he continued to dole forth justice in the recesses of his private chamber, nay, occasionally to attend quarter-sessions, when the hall was guarded by a sufficient body of the militia. Such was the wight at whose door, well chained and doubly bolted, the constable who had Julian in custody now gave his important and well-known knock.

Notwithstanding this official signal, the party was not admitted until the clerk, who acted the part of high-warder, had reconnoitred them through a grated wicket; for who could say whether the Papists might not have made themselves master of Master Constable's sign, and have prepared a pseudo-watch to burst in and murder the justice, under pretence of bringing a criminal before him?—Less hopeful projects had figured in the Narrative of the Popish Plot.

All being found right, the key was turned, the bolts were drawn, and the chain unhooked, so as to permit entrance to the constable, the prisoner, and the assistants; and the door was then as suddenly shut against the witnesses, who, as less trustworthy persons, were requested (through the wicket) to remain in the yard, until they should be called in their respective turns.

Had Julian been inclined for mirth, as was far from being the case, he must have smiled at the incongruity of the clerk's apparel, who had belted over his black buckram suit a buff baldric, sustaining a broadsword and a pair of huge horse-pistols; and, instead of the low, flat hat, which, coming in place of the city cap, completed the dress of a scrivener, had placed on his greasy locks a rusted steel-cap, which had seen Marston Moor; across which projected his well-used quill, in the guise of a plume—the shape of the morion not admitting of its being stuck, as usual, behind his ear.

This whimsical figure conducted the constable, his assistants, and the prisoner, into the low hall, where his principal dealt forth justice; who presented an appearance still more singular than that of his dependant.

Sundry good Protestants, who thought so highly of themselves as to suppose they were worthy to be distinguished as objects of Catholic cruelty, had taken to defensive arms on the occasion. But it was quickly found that a breast-plate and back-plate of proof, fastened together with iron clasps, was no convenient enclosure for a man who meant to eat venison and custard; and that a buff coat or shirt of mail was scarcely more accommodating to the exertions necessary on such active occasions. Besides, there were other objections, as the alarming and menacing aspects which such warlike habiliments gave to the Exchange, and other places where merchants most do congregate; and excoriations were bitterly complained of by many, who, not belonging to the artillery company, or trained bands, had no experience in bearing defensive armour.

To obviate these objections, and, at the same time, to secure the persons of all true Protestant citizens against open force or privy assassinations on the part of the Papists, some ingenious artist, belonging, we may presume, to the worshipful Mercers' Company, had contrived a species of armour, of which neither the horse armoury in the Tower, nor Gwynnap's Gothic Hall, no, nor Doctor Meyrick's invaluable collection of ancient arms, has preserved any specimen. It was called silk armour,* being composed of a doublet and breeches of quilted silk, so closely stitched, and of such thickness, as to be proof against either bullet or steel; while a thick bonnet of the same materials, with ear-flaps attached to it, and, on the whole, much resembling a night-cap, completed the equipment, and ascertained the security of the wearer from the head to the knee.

Master Maulstatute, among other worthy citizens, had adopted this singular panoply, which had the advantage of being soft, and warm, and flexible, as well as safe. And he now sat in his judicial elbow-chair a short, round figure, hung round, as it were, with cushions, for such was the appearance of the quilted garments; and with a nose protruded from under the silken casque, the size of which, together with the unwieldiness of the whole figure, gave his worship no indifferent resemblance to the sign of the Hog in Armour, which was considerably improved by the defensive garment being of a dusty orange colour, not altogether unlike the hue of those half-wild swine which are to be found in the forests of Hampshire.

Secure in these invulnerable envelopments, his worship had rested content, although severed from his own death-doing weapons, of rapier, poniard, and pistols, which were placed, nevertheless, at no great distance from his chair. One offensive implement, indeed, he thought it prudent to keep on the table beside his huge Coke upon Lyttleton. This was a sort of pocket-flail, consisting of a piece of strong ash, about eighteen inches long, to which was attached a swinging club of *lignum-vitæ*, nearly twice as long as the handle, but jointed so as to be easily folded up. This instrument, which bore at that time the singular name of the Protestant flail, might be concealed under the coat, until circumstances demanded its public appearance. A better precaution against surprise than his arms, whether offensive or defensive, was a strong iron grating, which, crossing the room in front of the justice's table, and communicating by a grated door, which was usually kept locked, effectually separated the accused party from his judge.

Justice Maulstatute, such as we have described him, chose to hear the accusation of the witnesses before calling on Peveril for his defence. The detail of the affray was briefly given by the bystanders, and seemed deeply to touch the spirit of the examinator. He shook his silken casque emphatically, when he understood that, after some language betwixt the parties, which the witnesses did not quite understand, the young man in custody struck the first blow, and drew his sword before the wounded party had unsheathed his weapon. Again he shook his crested head yet more solemnly, when the result of the conflict was known; and yet again, when one of the witnesses declared that, to the best of his knowledge, the sufferer in the fray was a gentleman belonging to the household of his Grace the Duke of Buckingham.

'A worthy peer,' quoth the armed magistrate —'a true Protestant, and a friend to his country. Mercy on us, to what a height of audacity hath this age arisen! We see well, and could, were we as blind as a mole, out of what quiver this shaft hath been drawn.'

He then put on his spectacles, and, having desired Julian to be brought forward, he glared upon him awfully with those glazen eyes, from under the shade of his quilted turban.

'So young,' he said, 'and so hardened—lack-a-day! and a Papist, I'll warrant.'

Peveril had time enough to recollect the necessity of his being at large, if he could possibly obtain his freedom, and interposed here a civil contradiction of his worship's gracious supposition. 'He was no Catholic,' he said, 'but an unworthy member of the Church of England.'

'Perhaps but a lukewarm Protestant, notwithstanding,' said the sage justice; 'there are those amongst us who ride tantivy to Rome, and have already made out half the journey—ahem!'

Peveril disowned his being any such.

'And who art thou, then?' said the justice; 'for, friend, to tell you plainly, I like not your visage—ahem!'

These short and emphatic coughs were accompanied each by a succinct nod, intimating the perfect conviction of the speaker that he had made the best, the wisest, and the most acute observation of which the premises admitted.

Julian, irritated by the whole circumstances of his detention, answered the justice's interrogation in rather a lofty tone. 'My name is Julian Peveril!'

'Now, Heaven be around us!' said the terrified justice—'the son of that black-hearted Papist and traitor, Sir Geoffrey Peveril, now in hands, and on the verge of trial!'

'How, sir!' exclaimed Julian, forgetting his situation, and, stepping forward to the grating, with a violence which made the bars clatter, he so startled the appalled justice, that, snatching his Protestant flail, Master Maulstatute aimed a

* Note W. Silk Armour.

blow at his prisoner, to repel what he apprehended was a premeditated attack. But whether it was owing to the justice's hurry of mind, or inexperience in managing the weapon, he not only missed his aim, but brought the swinging part of the machine round his own skull, with such a severe counter-buff, as completely to try the efficacy of his cushioned helmet, and, in spite of its defence, to convey a stunning sensation, which he rather hastily imputed to the consequence of a blow received from Peveril.

His assistants did not directly confirm the opinion which the justice had so unwarrantably adopted; but all with one voice agreed, that, but for their own active and instantaneous interference, there was no knowing what mischief might have been done by a person so dangerous as the prisoner. The general opinion that he meant to proceed in the matter of his own rescue, *par voie du fait*, was indeed so deeply impressed on all present, that Julian saw it would be in vain to offer any defence, especially being but too conscious that the alarming, and probably the fatal consequences of his rencontre with the bully, rendered his commitment inevitable. He contented himself with asking into what prison he was to be thrown; and when the formidable word Newgate was returned as full answer, he had at least the satisfaction to reflect that, stern and dangerous as was the shelter of that roof, he should at least enjoy it in company with his father; and that, by some means or other, they might perhaps obtain the satisfaction of a melancholy meeting, under the circumstances of mutual calamity, which seemed impending over their house.

Assuming the virtue of more patience than he actually possessed, Julian gave the magistrate (to whom all the mildness of his demeanour could not, however, reconcile him) the direction to the house where he lodged, together with a request that his servant, Lance Outram, might be permitted to send him his money and wearing apparel; adding, that all which might be in his possession, either of arms or writings—the former amounting to a pair of travelling pistols, and the last to a few memoranda of little consequence, he willingly consented to place at the disposal of the magistrate. It was in that moment that he entertained, with sincere satisfaction, the comforting reflection that the important papers of Lady Derby were already in the possession of the sovereign.

The justice promised attention to his requests; but reminded him, with great dignity, that his present complaisant and submissive behaviour ought, for his own sake, to have been adopted from the beginning, instead of disturbing the presence of magistracy with such atrocious marks of the malignant, rebellious, and murderous spirit of Popery, as he had at first exhibited. 'Yet,' he said, 'as he was a goodly young man, and of honourable quality, he would not suffer him to be dragged through the streets as a felon, but had ordered a coach for his accommodation.'

His honour, Master Maulstatute, uttered the word 'coach' with the importance of one who, as Doctor Johnson saith of later date, is conscious of the dignity of putting horses to his chariot. The worshipful Master Maulstatute did not, however, on this occasion, do Julian the honour of yoking to his huge family caroche the two 'frampal jades' (to use the term of the period) which were wont to drag that ark to the meeting-house of pure and precious Master Howlaglass, on a Thursday evening for lecture, and on a Sunday for a four hours' sermon. He had recourse to a leathern convenience, then more rare, but just introduced, with every prospect of the great facility which has since been afforded by hackney coaches, to all manner of communication, honest and dishonest, legal and illegal. Our friend Julian, hitherto much more accustomed to the saddle than to any other conveyance, soon found himself in a hackney carriage, with the constable and two assistants for his companions, armed up to the teeth—the port of destination being, as they had already intimated, the ancient fortress of Newgate.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

'Tis the black ban-dog of our jail—Pray look on him,
But at a wary distance—rouse him not—
He bays not till he worries.
— THE BLACK DOG OF NEWGATE.

THE coach stopped before those tremendous gates, which resemble those of Tartarus, save only that they rather more frequently permit safe and honourable egress; although at the price of the same anxiety and labour with which Hercules and one or two of the demi-gods extricated themselves from the hell of the ancient mythology, and sometimes, it is said, by the assistance of the golden boughs.

Julian stepped out of the vehicle, carefully supported on either side by his companions, and also by one or two turnkeys, whom the first summons of the deep bell at the gate had called to their assistance. That attention, it may be guessed, was not bestowed lest he should make a false step, so much as for fear of his attempting an escape, of which he had no intentions. A few prentices and straggling boys of the neighbouring market, which derived considerable advantage from increase of custom, in consequence of the numerous committals on account of the Popish Plot, and who therefore were zealous Protestants, saluted him on his descent with jubilee shouts of 'Whoop, Papist! whoop, Papist! D——n to the Pope, and all his adherents!'

Under such auspices, Peveril was ushered in beneath that gloomy gateway, where so many bid adieu on their entrance at once to honour and to life. The dark and dismal arch under which he soon found himself opened upon a large court-yard, where a number of debtors were employed in playing at hand-ball, pitch-and-toss, hustle-cap, and other games, for which relaxations the rigour of their creditors afforded them full leisure, while it debarred them the means of pursuing the honest labour by which they might have redeemed their affairs, and maintained their starving and beggared families.

But with this careless and desperate group Julian was not to be numbered, being led, or

rather forced, by his conductors into a low arched door, which, carefully secured by bolts and bars, opened for his reception on one side of the arch way, and closed, with all its fastenings, the moment after his hasty entrance. He was then conducted along two or three gloomy passages, which, where they intersected each other, were guarded by as many strong wickets, one of iron grates, and the others of stout oak, clenched with plates, and studded with nails of the same metal. He was not allowed to pause until he found himself hurried into a little round vaulted room, which several of these passages opened into, and which seemed, with respect to the labyrinth through part of which he had passed, to resemble the central point of a spider's web, in which the main lines of that reptile's curious maze are always found to terminate.

The resemblance did not end here, for in this small vaulted apartment, the walls of which were hung round with musketoons, pistols, cutlasses, and other weapons, as well as with many sets of fetters and irons of different construction, all disposed in great order, and ready for employment, a person sat, who might not inaptly be compared to a huge bloated and bottled spider, placed there to secure the prey which had fallen into his toils.

This official had originally been a very strong and square built man, of large size, but was now so overgrown from over feeding, perhaps, and want of exercise as to bear the same resemblance to his former self which a stall fed ox still retains to a wild bull. The look of no man is so inauspicious as a fat man upon whose features ill nature has marked a habitual stamp. He seems to have reversed the old proverb of 'laugh and be fat,' and to have thriven under the influence of the worst affections of the mind. Passionate we can allow a jolly mortal to be, but it seems unnatural to his goodly case to be sulky and brutal. Now this man's features, surly and tallow coloured, his limbs, swelled and disproportioned, his huge paunch and unwieldy carcass suggested the idea, that, having once found his way into this central recess, he had there battened, like the weasel in the fable, and fed largely and foully, until he had become incapable of retreating through any of the narrow paths that terminated at his cell, and was thus compelled to remain, like a toad under the cold stone, fattening amid the squalid airs of the dungeons by which he was surrounded, which would have proved pestiferous to any other than such a congenial inhabitant. Huge iron clasped books lay before this ominous specimen of pinguitude—the records of the realm of misery, in which office he officiated as prime minister; and had Peveril come thither as an unconcerned visitor, his heart would have sunk within him at considering the mass of human wretchedness which must needs be registered in these fatal volumes. But his own distresses sat heavy on his mind so permit any general [illegible]ctions of this nature

The constable and this bulky official whispered together, after the former had delivered to the latter the warrant of Julian's commitment. The word *whispered* is not quite accurate, for their communication was carried on less by words than by looks and expressive signs, by which, in all such situations, men learn to supply the use of language, and to add mystery to what is in itself sufficiently terrible to the captive. The only words which could be heard were those of the warden, or, as he was called then, the captain of the jail, 'Another bird to the cage!'——

'Who will whistle "Pretty Pope of Rome" with any starling in your Knight's ward,' answered the constable, with a facetious air, checked, however, by the due respect to the superior presence in which he stood.

The Grim Feature relaxed into something like a smile as he heard the officer's observation; but, instantly composing himself into the stern solemnity which for an instant had been disturbed, he looked fiercely at his new guest, and pronounced with an awful and emphatic, yet rather an under voice, the single and impressive word '*Garnish!*'

Julian Peveril replied with assumed composure, for he had heard of the customs of such places, and was resolved to comply with them, so as, if possible, to obtain the favour of seeing his father, which he shrewdly guessed must depend on his gratifying the avarice of the keeper. 'I am quite ready,' he said, 'to accede to the customs of the place in which I unhappily find myself. You have but to name your demands, and I will satisfy them.'

So saying, he drew out his purse, thinking himself at the same time fortunate that he had retained about him a considerable sum of gold. The captain remarked its width, depth, its extension and depression, with an involuntary smile, which had scarce contorted his hanging underlip, and the wiry and greasy moustache which thatched the upper, when it was checked by the recollection that there were regulations which set bounds to his rapacity, and prevented him from pouncing on his prey like a kite, and swooping it all off at once.

This chilling reflection produced the following sullen reply to Peveril—'There were sundry rates. Gentlemen must choose for themselves. He asked nothing but his fees. But ci[illegible]' he muttered, 'must be paid for.'

'And shall, if I can have
nd the justice,
said Peveril, 'but the price, m like not your
price?'
He spoke with some degree of were accom-
was the less anxious to repress, that mating the
in this jail, his purse gave him an at he had
powerful influence over his jailor. most acute
The captain seemed to feel the submitted.
spoke, he plucked from his head, a circumstances.
tarily, a sort of scalded fur cap, ice's interrog
for covering. But his fingers, name is Julian
unusual an act of complaisance
nify themselves by scrat us!' said the terrified
head, as he muttered hat black-hearted Papist
softened growling of any Peveril, now in hands,
to bay the intruder wall!'
'There are different ied Julian, forgetting his
Ease, for common fees forward to the grating,
and the common sewer ade the bars clatter, he
gentlemen object to the justice, that, snatching
padders and michers. ter Maulstatute aimed a
—the garnish came to

stowed there but who were in for murder at the least'

'Name your highest price, sir, and take it,' was Julian's concise reply

'Three pieces for the Knight's ward,' answered the governor of this terrestrial Tartarus

'Take five, and place me with Sir Geoffrey,' was again Julian's answer, throwing down the money upon the desk before him

'Sir Geoffrey?—Hum! ay, Sir Geoffrey,' said the jailor, as if meditating what he ought to do 'Well, many a man has paid money to see Sir Geoffrey—Scarce so much as you have, though But then you are like to see the last of him —Ha, ha, ha!'

These broken muttered exclamations which terminated somewhat like the joyous growl of a tiger over his meal, Julian could not comprehend and only replied by repeating his request to be placed in the same cell with Sir Geoffrey

'Ay, master,' said the jailor, 'never fear I'll keep word with you, as you seem to know something of what belongs to your station and mine And hark ye, Jem Clink will fetch you the darbies'

'Derby!' interrupted Julian 'Has the Earl or Countess ——'

'Earl or Countess!—Ha, ha, ha!' again laughed, or rather growled the warder 'What is your head running on? You are a high fellow, belike! but all is one here The darbies are the fetlocks the first keeper's my boy, the Earl for good behaviour, my darling and if you are not the more conforming, I can add you a steel night cap and a curious bosom friend to keep you warm of a winter night But don't be disheartened, you have behaved genteel, and you shall not be put upon And as for this here matter, ten to one it will turn out chance medley or manslaughter at the worst on it and then it is but a singed thumb instead of a twisted neck always if there be no Papistry about it for then I warrant nothing —Take the gentleman's worship away Clink'

A turnkey, who was one of the party that had ushered Peveril into the presence of this Cerberus, now conveyed him out in silence and under his
quence, he the prisoner was carried through a
disposal of the of passages with cells opening
moment that he nat which was destined for his
faction, the cor
portant papers rough this sad region the turn
the possession nce ejaculated 'Why, the gentle
The justice stark mad! Could have had the
but reminded to himself for less than half the
present compl must pay double to plague him with Sir
ought for his ha!—Is Sir Geoffrey akin to you,
from the begin make free to ask?'
presence of mag answered Peveril sternly, in
of the malignant same curb on the fellow's im
of Popery, he had man only laughed louder
he said, as he was a goo
honourable quality, he worst of all—Why, you
be dragged through the street ten if you be an
had ordered a coach for his!—Ha, ha, ha!'
His honour, Master Maurence,' said Julian
word 'coach' with the impudent title to insult me!'
Doctor Johnson saith of turnkey, smothering
of the dignity of putting a, perhaps, that the
The worshipful Master exhausted. 'I only

laughed because you said you were Sir Geoffrey's son But no matter—'tis a wise child that knows his own father And here is Sir Geoffrey's cell, so you and he may settle the fatherhood between you'

So saying, he ushered his prisoner into a cell, or rather a strong room of the better order, in which there were four chairs, a truckle bed, and one or two other articles of furniture

Julian looked eagerly around for his father; but to his surprise the room appeared totally empty He turned with anger on the turnkey, and charged him with misleading him, but the fellow answered, 'No no, master, I have kept faith with you Your father, if you call him so, is only tappiced in some corner A small hole will hide him, but I'll rouse him out presently for you —Here hoicks! Turn out, Sir Geoffrey! —Here is ha ha ha!—your son—or your wife's son—for I think you can have but little share in him—come to wait on you'

Peveril knew not how to resent the man's insolence and indeed his anxiety and apprehension of some strange mistake mingled with, and in some degree neutralized his anger He looked again and again around and around the room, until at length he became aware of something rolled up in a dark corner, which rather resembled a small bundle of crimson cloth than any living creature At the vociferation of the turnkey, however the object seemed to acquire life and motion uncoil'd itself in some degree and, after an effort or two gained an erect posture, still covered from top to toe with the crimson drapery in which it was at first wrapped Julian, at the first glance imagined from the size that he saw a child of five years old but a shrill and peculiar tone of voice soon assured him of his mistake

'Warder,' said this unearthly sound, 'what is the meaning of this disturbance? Have you more insults to heap on the head of one who hath ever been the butt of fortune's malice? But I have a soul that can wrestle with all my misfortunes it is as large as any of your bodies'

'Nay, Sir Geoffrey, if this be the way you welcome your own son,' said the turnkey, 'but you quality folks know your own ways best'

'My son!' exclaimed the little figure. Audacious ——

'Here is some strange mistake,' said Peveril, in the same breath 'I sought Sir Geoffrey'——

'And you have him before you, young man,' said the pigmy tenant of the cell, with an air of dignity, at the same time casting on the floor his crimson cloak, and standing before them in his full dignity of three feet six inches of height 'I, who was the favoured servant of three successive sovereigns of the crown of England, am now the tenant of this dungeon, and the sport of its brutal keepers I am Sir Geoffrey Hudson'

Julian, though he had never before seen this important personage had no difficulty in recognising from description, the celebrated dwarf of Henrietta Maria, who had survived the dangers of civil war and private quarrel—the murder of his royal master, Charles I, and the exile of his widow—to fall upon evil tongues and evil days, amidst the unsparing accusations connected with the Popish Plot He bowed to the unhappy old man, and hastened to explain to him, and to the

turnkey, that it was Sir Geoffrey Peveril of Martindale Castle in Derbyshire, whose prison he had desired to share.

'You should have said that before you parted with the gold dust, my master,' answered the turnkey; 'for t'other Sir Geoffrey, that is the big, tall, grey-haired man, was sent to the Tower last night; and the captain will think he has kept his word well enow with you, by lodging you with this here Sir Geoffrey Hudson, who is the better show of the two.'

'I pray you go to your master,' said Peveril; 'explain the mistake; and say to him I beg to be sent to the Tower.'

'The Tower!—Ha, ha, ha!' exclaimed the fellow. 'The Tower is for lords and knights, and not for squires of low degree—for high treason, and not for ruffling on the streets with rapier and dagger; and there must go a secretary's warrant to send you there.'

'At least let me not be a burden on this gentleman,' said Julian. 'There can be no use in quartering us together, since we are not even acquainted. Go tell your master of the mistake.'

'Why, so I should,' said Clink, still grinning, 'if I were not sure that he knew it already. You paid to be sent to Sir Geoffrey, and he sent you to Sir Geoffrey. You are so put down in the register, and he will blot it for no man. Come, come, be conformable, and you shall have light and easy irons—that's all I can do for you.'

Resistance and expostulation being out of the question, Peveril submitted to have a light pair of fetters secured on his ankles, which allowed him, nevertheless, the power of traversing the apartment.

During this operation, he reflected that the jailor, who had taken the advantage of the equivoque betwixt the two Sir Geoffreys, must have acted as his assistant had hinted, and cheated him from *malice prepense*, since the warrant of committal described him as the son of Sir Geoffrey Peveril. It was therefore in vain, as well as degrading, to make further application to such a man on the subject. Julian determined to submit to his fate, as what could not be averted by any effort of his own.

Even the turnkey was moved in some degree by his youth, good mien, and the patience with which, after the first effervescence of disappointment, the new prisoner resigned himself to his situation. 'You seem a brave young gentleman,' he said; 'and shall at least have a good dinner, and as good a pallet to sleep on, as is within the walls of Newgate.—And, Master Sir Geoffrey, you ought to make much of him, since you do not like tall fellows; for I can tell you that Master Peveril is in for pinking long Jack Jenkins, that was the master of defence—as tall a man as is in London, always excepting the King's porter, Master Evans, that carried you about in his pocket, Sir Geoffrey, as all the world has heard tell.'

'Begone, fellow!' answered the dwarf. 'Fellow, I scorn you!'

The turnkey sneered, withdrew, and locked the door behind him.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Degenerate youth, and not of Tydeus' kind,
Whose little body lodged a mighty mind.
ILIAD.

Left quiet at least, if not alone, for the time after the events of this troubled and varied day, Julian threw himself on an old oaken seat, beside the embers of a sea-coal fire, and began to muse on the miserable situation of anxiety and danger in which he was placed; where, whether he contemplated the interests of his love, his family affections, or his friendships, all seemed such a prospect as that of a sailor who looks upon breakers on every hand from the deck of a vessel which no longer obeys the helm.

As Peveril sat sunk in despondency, his companion in misfortune drew a chair to the opposite side of the chimney-corner, and began to gaze at him with a sort of solemn earnestness, which at length compelled him, though almost in spite of himself, to pay some attention to the singular figure who seemed so much engrossed with contemplating him.

Geoffrey Hudson (we drop occasionally the title of knighthood, which the king had bestowed on him in a frolic, but which might introduce some confusion into our history), although a dwarf of the least possible size, had nothing positively ugly in his countenance, or actually distorted in his limbs. His head, hands, and feet were indeed large, and disproportioned to the height of his body, and his body itself much thicker than was consistent with symmetry, but in a degree which was rather ludicrous than disagreeable to look upon. His countenance, in particular, had he been a little taller, would have been accounted in youth handsome, and now, in age, striking and expressive; it was but the uncommon disproportion betwixt the head and the trunk which made the features seem whimsical and bizarre—an effect which was considerably increased by the dwarf's moustaches, which it was his pleasure to wear so large that they almost twisted back amongst, and mingled with, his grizzled hair.

The dress of this singular wight announced that he was not entirely free from the unhappy taste which frequently induces those whom nature has marked by personal deformity, to distinguish, and at the same time to render themselves ridiculous, by the use of showy colours, and garments fantastically and extraordinarily fashioned. But poor Geoffrey Hudson's laces, embroideries, and the rest of his finery, were sorely worn and tarnished by the time which he had spent in jail, under the vague and malicious accusation that he was somehow or other an accomplice in this all-involving, all-devouring whirlpool of a Popish conspiracy—an impeachment which, if pronounced by a mouth the foulest and most malicious, was at that time sufficiently predominant to sully the fairest reputation. It will presently appear that, in the poor man's manner of thinking and tone of conversation, there was something analogous to his absurd fashion of apparel; for, as in the latter, stuff and valuable decorations were

ludicrous by the fantastic fashion in which they were made up, so, such glimmerings of good sense and honourable feeling as the little man often evinced, were made ridiculous by a restless desire to assume certain airs of importance, and a great jealousy of being despised on account of the peculiarity of his outward form.

After the fellow prisoners had looked at each other for some time in silence, the dwarf, conscious of his dignity as first owner of their joint apartment, thought it necessary to do the honours of it to the new comer. 'Sir,' he said, modifying the alternate harsh and squeaking tones of his voice into accents as harmonious as they could attain, 'I understand you to be the son of my worthy namesake, and ancient acquaintance, the stout Sir Geoffrey Peveril of the Peak. I promise you, I have seen your father where blows have been going more plenty than gold pieces; and for a tall heavy man, who lacked, as we martial artists thought, some of the lightness and activity of our more slightly made Cavaliers, he performed his duty as a man might desire. I am happy to see you, his son; and, though by a mistake, I am glad we are to share this comfortless cabin together.'

Julian bowed, and thanked his courtesy; and Geoffrey Hudson having broken the ice, proceeded to question him without further ceremony. 'You are no courtier, I presume, young gentleman?'

Julian replied in the negative.

'I thought so,' continued the dwarf; 'for although I have now no official duty at court, the region in which my early years were spent, and where I once held a considerable office, yet I still, when I had my liberty, visited the Presence from time to time, as in duty bound for former service; and am wont, from old habit, to take some note of the courtly gallants, those choice spirits of the age, among whom I was once enrolled. You are, not to compliment you, a marked figure, Master Peveril—though something of the tallest, as was your father's case; I think I could scarce have seen you anywhere without remembering you.'

Peveril thought he might, with great justice, have returned the compliment, but contented himself with saying, 'he had scarce seen the British court.'

''Tis pity,' said Hudson; 'a gallant can hardly be formed without frequenting it. But you have been perhaps in a rougher school; you have served, doubtless?'

'My Maker, I hope,' said Julian.

'Fie on it, you mistake. I meant,' said Hudson, '*à la Françoise*,—you have served in the army?'

'No. I have not yet had that honour,' said Julian.

'What! neither courtier nor soldier, Master Peveril?' said the important little man. 'Your father is to blame. By cock and pie he is, Master Peveril! How shall a man be known, or distinguished, unless by his bearing in peace and war? I tell you, sir, that at Newberry, where I charged with my troop abreast with Prince Rupert, and when, as you may have heard, we were both beaten off by those cuckoldly hinds the Trained Bands of London,—we did what men could; and I think it was a matter of three or four minutes after most of our gentlemen had been driven off, that his Highness and I continued to cut at their long pikes with our swords; and I think might have broken in, but that I had a tall, long-legged brute of a horse, and my sword was somewhat short,—in fine, at last we were obliged to make volte face, and then, as I was going to say, the fellows were so glad to get rid of us, that they set up a great jubilee cry of 'There goes Prince Robin and Cock Robin!' Ay, ay, every scoundrel among them knew me well. But those days are over.—And where were you educated, young gentleman?'

Peveril named the household of the Countess of Derby.

'A most honourable lady, upon my word as a gentleman,' said Hudson.—'I knew the noble Countess well, when I was about the person of my royal mistress, Henrietta Maria. She was then the very mirror of all that was noble, loyal, and lovely. She was indeed one of the fifteen fair ones of the court whom I permitted to call me Piccoluomini—a foolish jest on my somewhat diminutive figure, which always distinguished me from ordinary beings, even when I was young—I have now lost much stature by stooping; but always the ladies had their jest at me.—Perhaps, young man, I had my own amends of some of them somewhere, and somehow or other. I *say* nothing if I had or no, far less do I insinuate disrespect to the noble Countess. She was daughter of the Duc de la Tremouille, or more correctly, Des Thouars. But certainly to serve the ladies, and condescend to their humours, even when somewhat too free, or too fantastic, is the true decorum of gentle blood.'

Depressed as his spirits were, Peveril could scarce forbear smiling, when he looked at the pigmy creature, who told these stories with infinite complacency, and appeared disposed to proclaim, as his own herald, that he had been a very model of valour and gallantry, though love and arms seemed to be pursuits totally irreconcilable to his shrivelled, weather-beaten countenance, and wasted limbs. Julian was, however, so careful to avoid giving his companion pain, that he endeavoured to humour him, by saying, that 'unquestionably, one bred up like Sir Geoffrey Hudson in courts and camps, knew exactly when to suffer personal freedoms, and when to control them.'

The little knight, with great vivacity, though with some difficulty, began to drag his seat from the side of the fire opposite to that where Julian was seated, and at length succeeded in bringing it near him, in token of increasing cordiality.

'You say well, Master Peveril,' said the dwarf; 'and I have given proofs both of bearing and forbearing. Yes, sir, there was not that thing which my most royal mistress, Henrietta Maria, could have required of me, that I would not have complied with, sir, I was her sworn both in war and in festival, in battle and pageant, sir. At her Majesty's particular request, I once condescended to become—ladies, you know, have strange fancies—to become the tenant, for a time, of the interior of a pie.'

'Of a pie?' said Julian, somewhat amazed.

'Yes, sir, of a pie. I hope you find nothing risible in my complaisance?' replied his companion, something jealously.

'Not I, sir,' said Peveril; 'I have other matters than laughter in my head at present.'

'So had I,' said the dwarfish champion, 'when I found myself imprisoned in a huge platter, of no ordinary dimensions, you may be assured, since I could lie at length in it, and when I was entombed, as it were, in walls of standing crust, and a huge cover of pastry, the whole constituting a sort of sarcophagus, of size enough to have recorded the epitaph of a general officer or an archbishop on the lid. Sir, notwithstanding the conveniences which were made to give me air, it was more like being buried alive than aught else which I could think of.' *

'I conceive it, sir,' said Julian.

'Moreover, sir,' continued the dwarf, 'there were few in the secret, which was contrived for the Queen's divertisement; for advancing of which I would have crept into a filbert nut, had it been possible; and few, as I said, being private in the scheme, there was a risk of accidents. I doubted, while in my darksome abode, whether some awkward attendant might not have let me fall, as I have seen happen to a venison pasty; or whether some hungry guest might not anticipate the moment of my resurrection, by sticking his knife into my upper crust. And though I had my weapons about me, young man, as has been my custom in every case of peril, yet, if such a rash person had plunged deep into the bowels of the supposed pasty, my sword and dagger could barely have served me to avenge, assuredly not to prevent, either of these catastrophes.'

'Certainly I do so understand it,' said Julian, who began, however, to feel that the company of little Hudson, talkative as he showed himself, was likely rather to aggravate than to alleviate the inconveniences of a prison.

'Nay,' continued the little man, enlarging on his former topic, 'I had other subjects of apprehension; for it pleased my Lord of Buckingham, his Grace's father who now bears the title, in his plenitude of court favour, to command the pasty to be carried down to the office, and committed anew to the oven, alleging preposterously that it was better to be eaten warm than cold.'

'And did this, sir, not disturb your equanimity?' said Julian.

'My young friend,' said Geoffrey Hudson, 'I cannot deny it.—Nature will claim her rights from the best and boldest of us.—I thought of Nebuchadnezzar and his fiery furnace; and I waxed warm with apprehension.—But, I thank Heaven, I also thought of my sworn duty to my royal mistress; and was thereby obliged and enabled to resist all temptations to make myself prematurely known. Nevertheless, the Duke—if of malice, may Heaven forgive him—followed down into the office himself, and urged the master cook very hard that the pasty should be heated, were it but for five minutes. But the master-cook, being privy to the very different intentions of my royal mistress, did most manfully resist the order; and I was again reconveyed in safety to the royal table.'

'And in due time liberated from your confinement, I doubt not?' said Peveril.

'Yes, sir; that happy, and I may say, glorious moment, at length arrived,' continued the dwarf. 'The upper crust was removed—I started up to the sound of trumpet and clarion, like the soul of a warrior when the last summons shall sound—or rather (if that simile be over audacious), like a spell bound champion relieved from his enchanted state. It was then that, with my buckler on my arm, and my trusty Bilboa in my hand, I executed a sort of warlike dance, in which my skill and agility then rendered me pre-eminent, displaying, at the same time, my postures, both of defence and offence, in a manner so totally inimitable, that I was almost deafened with the applause of all around me, and half-drowned by the scented waters with which the ladies of the court deluged me from their casting-bottles. I had amends of his Grace of Buckingham also; for, as I tripped a hasty morris hither and thither upon the dining-table, now offering my blade, now recovering it, I made a blow at his nose—a sort of *estramaçon*—the dexterity of which consists in coming mighty near to the object you seem to aim at, yet not attaining it. You may have seen a barber make such a flourish with his razor. I promise you his Grace sprung back a half-yard at least. He was pleased to threaten to brain me with a chicken-bone, as he disdainfully expressed it; but the King said, "George, you have but a Rowland for an Oliver." And so I tripped on, showing a bold heedlessness of his displeasure, which few dared to have done at that time, albeit countenanced to the utmost like me by the smiles of the brave and the fair. But, well-a-day! sir, youth, its fashions, its follies, its frolics, and all its pomp and pride, are as idle and transitory as the crackling of thorns under a pot.'

'The flower that is cast into the oven were a better simile,' thought Peveril. 'Good God! that a man should live to regret not being young enough to be still treated as baked meat, and served up in a pie!'

His companion, whose tongue had for many days been as closely imprisoned as his person, seemed resolved to indemnify his loquacity, by continuing to indulge it on the present occasion at his companion's expense. He proceeded, therefore, in a solemn tone, to moralize on the adventure which he had narrated.

'Young men will no doubt think one to be envied,' he said, 'who was thus enabled to be the darling and admiration of the court'—(Julian internally stood self-exculpated from the suspicion)—'and yet it is better to possess fewer means of distinction, and remain free from the backbiting, the slander, and the odium, which are always the share of court favour. Men who had no other cause, cast reflections upon me because my size varied somewhat from the common proportion; and jests were sometimes unthinkingly passed upon me by those I was bound to, who did not in that case, peradventure, sufficiently consider that the wren is made by the same Hand which formed the bustard, and that the diamond, though small in size, outvalues ten thousand-fold

* Note X. Jeffrey Hudson.

the rude gratuite. Nevertheless, they proceeded in the vein of humour, and as I could not in duty or gratitude retort upon nobles and princes, I was compelled to cast about in my mind how to vindicate my honour towards those who, being in the same rank with myself, as servants and courtiers, nevertheless bore themselves towards me as if they were of a superior class in the rank of honour, as well as in the accidental circumstance of stature. And as a lesson to my own pride, and that of others, it so happened that the pageant which I have but just narrated—which I justly reckon the most honourable moment of my life, excepting perhaps my distinguished share in the battle of Roundway-down—became the cause of a most tragic event, in which I acknowledge the greatest misfortune of my existence.

The dwarf here paused, fetched a sigh big at once with regret, and with the importance becoming the subject of a tragic history, then proceeded as follows:

'You would have thought in your simplicity, young gentleman, that the pretty pageant I have mentioned could only have been quoted to my advantage, as a rare masking frolic prettily devised, and not less deftly executed; and yet the malice of the courtiers who maligned and envied me, made them strain their wit and exhaust their ingenuity, in putting false and ridiculous constructions upon it. In short, my ears were so much offended with allusions to pies, puff-paste, ovens, and the like, that I was compelled to prohibit such subject of mirth, under penalty of my instant and severe displeasure. But it happed there was then a gallant about the court, a man of good quality, son to a knight baronet, and in high esteem with the best in that sphere, also a familiar friend of mine own, from whom, therefore, I had no reason to expect any of that species of gibing which I had intimated my purpose to treat as offensive. Howbeit, it pleased the Honourable Master Crofts, so was this youth called and designed, one night, at the groom-porter's, being full of wine and waggery, to introduce this threadbare subject, and to say something concerning a goose-pie, which I could not but consider as levelled at me. Nevertheless, I did but calmly and solidly pray him to choose a different subject, failing which, I let him know I should be sudden in my resentment. Notwithstanding, he continued in the same tone, and even aggravated the offence, by speaking of a tomtit, and other unnecessary and obnoxious comparisons, whereupon I was compelled to send him a cartel, and we met accordingly. Now, as I really loved the youth, it was my intention only to correct him by a flesh-wound or two; and I would willingly that he had named the sword for his weapon. Nevertheless, he made pistols his election, and being on horseback, he produced, by way of his own weapon, a foolish engine, which children are wont, in their roguery, to use for spouting water, a—a—in short, I forget the name.'

'A squirt, doubtless,' said Peveril, who began to recollect having heard something of this adventure.

'You are right,' said the dwarf, 'you have indeed the name of the little engine, of which I have had experience in passing the yards at Westminster.—Well, sir, this token of slight regard compelled me to give the gentleman such language as soon rendered it necessary for him to take more serious arms. We fought on horseback—breaking ground and advancing by signal, and, as I never miss aim, I had the misadventure to kill the Honourable Master Crofts at the first shot. I would not wish my worst foe the pain which I felt when I saw him reel on his saddle, and so fall down to the earth!—and when I perceived that the life-blood was pouring fast, I could not but wish to Heaven that it had been my own instead of his. Thus fell youth, hopes, and bravery, a sacrifice to a silly and thoughtless jest; yet, alas! wherein had I choice, seeing that honour is, as it were, the very breath in our nostrils, and that in no sense can we be said to live, if we permit ourselves to be deprived of it!'

The tone of feeling in which the dwarfish hero concluded his story, gave Julian a better opinion of his heart, and even of his understanding, than he had been able to form of one who gloried in having, upon a grand occasion, formed the contents of a pasty. He was indeed enabled to conjecture that the little champion was seduced into such exhibitions by the necessity attached to his condition, by his own vanity, and by the flattery bestowed on him by those who sought pleasure in practical jokes. The fate of the unlucky Master Crofts, however, as well as various exploits of this diminutive person during the Civil Wars, in which he actually and with great gallantry commanded a troop of horse, rendered most men cautious of openly rallying him, which was indeed the less necessary, as, when left alone, he seldom failed voluntarily to show himself on the ludicrous side.

At one hour after noon, the turnkey, true to his word, supplied the prisoners with a very tolerable dinner, and a flask of well-flavoured, though light, claret, which the old man, who was something of a *bon vivant*, regretted to observe, was nearly as diminutive as himself. The evening also passed away, but not without continued symptoms of garrulity on the part of Geoffrey Hudson.

It is true these were of a graver character than he had hitherto exhibited, for, when the flask was empty, he repeated a long Latin prayer. But the religious act in which he had been engaged only gave his discourse a more serious turn than belonged to his former themes of war, ladies' love, and courtly splendour.

The little knight harangued, at first, on polemical points of divinity, and diverged from this thorny path into the neighbouring and twilight walk of mysticism. He talked of secret warnings—of the predictions of sad-eyed prophets—of the visits of monitory spirits, and the Rosicrucian secrets of the Cabala; all which topics he treated of with such apparent conviction, nay, with so many appeals to personal experience, that one would have supposed him a member of the fraternity of gnomes or fairies, whom he resembled so much in point of size.

In short, he persevered for a stricken hour in such a torrent of unnecessary tattle, as determined Peveril, at all events, to endeavour to procure a separate lodging. Having repeated

his evening prayers in Latin, as formerly (for the old gentleman was a Catholic, which was the sole cause of his falling under suspicion), he set off on a new score as they were undressing, and continued to prattle until he had fairly talked both himself and his companion to sleep.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Of airy tongues that syllable men's names.
COMUS.

JULIAN had fallen asleep with his brain rather filled with his own sad reflections than with the mystical lore of the little knight; and yet it seemed as if in his visions the latter had been more present to his mind than the former.

He dreamed of gliding spirits, gibbering phantoms, bloody hands, which, dimly seen by twilight, seemed to beckon him forward like errant-knight on sad adventure bound. More than once he started from his sleep, so lively was the influence of these visions on his imagination; and he always awaked under the impression that some one stood by his bedside. The chillness of his ankles, the weight and clatter of the fetters, as he turned himself on his pallet, reminded him on these occasions where he was, and under what circumstances. The extremity to which he saw all that was dear to him at present reduced, struck a deeper cold on his heart than the iron upon his limbs; nor could he compose himself again to rest without a mental prayer to Heaven for protection. But when he had been for a third time awakened from repose by these thick-stirring fancies, his distress of mind vented itself in speech, and he was unable to suppress the almost despairing ejaculation, 'God have mercy upon us!'

'Amen!' answered a voice as sweet and 'soft as honey dew,' which sounded as if the words were spoken close by his bedside.

The natural inference was, that Geoffrey Hudson, his companion in calamity, had echoed the prayer which was so proper to the situation of both. But the tone of voice was so different from the harsh and dissonant sounds of the dwarf's enunciation, that Peveril was impressed with the certainty it could not proceed from Hudson. He was struck with involuntary terror, for which he could give no sufficient reason; and it was not without an effort that he was able to utter the question, 'Sir Geoffrey, did you speak?'

No answer was returned. He repeated the question louder; and the same silver-toned voice, which had formerly said '*Amen*' to his prayers, answered to his interrogatory, 'Your companion will not awake while I am here.'

'And who are you?—What seek you? How came you into this place?' said Peveril, huddling, eagerly, question upon question.

'I am a wretched being, but one who loves you well.—I come for your good.—Concern yourself no further.'

It now rushed on Julian's mind that he had heard of persons possessed of the wonderful talent of counterfeiting sounds to such accuracy, that they could impose on their hearers the belief that they proceeded from a point of the apartment entirely opposite to that which the real speaker occupied. Persuaded that he had now gained the depth of the mystery, he replied, 'This trifling, Sir Geoffrey, is unseasonable. Say what you have to say in your own voice and manner. These apish pleasantries do not become midnight in a Newgate dungeon.'

'But the being who speaks with you,' answered the voice, 'is fitted for the darkest hour and the most melancholy haunts.'

Impatient of suspense, and determined to satisfy his curiosity, Julian jumped at once from his pallet, hoping to secure the speaker, whose voice indicated he was so near. But he altogether failed in his attempt, and grasped nothing save thin air.

For a turn or two Peveril shuffled at random about the room with his arms extended; and then at last recollected that, with the impediment of his shackles, and the noise which necessarily accompanied his motions, and announced where he was, it would be impossible for him to lay hands on any one who might be disposed to keep out of his reach. He therefore endeavoured to return to his bed; but, in groping for his way, lighted first on that of his fellow-prisoner. The little captive slept deep and heavy, as was evinced from his breathing; and upon listening a moment, Julian became again certain, either that his companion was the most artful of ventriloquists and of dissemblers, or that there was actually within the precincts of that guarded chamber some third being, whose very presence there seemed to intimate that it belonged not to the ordinary line of humanity.

Julian was no ready believer in the supernatural; but that age was very far from being so incredulous concerning ghostly occurrences as our own; and it was no way derogatory to his good sense, that he shared the prejudices of his time. His hair began to bristle, and the moisture to stand on his brow, as he called on his companion to awake, for Heaven's sake.

The dwarf answered—but he spoke without awaking,—'The day may dawn and be d—d. Tell the master of the horse I will not go to the hunting, unless I have the little black jennet.'

'I tell you,' said Julian, 'there is some one in the apartment. Have you not a tinder-box to strike a light?'

'I care not how slight my horse be,' replied the slumberer, pursuing his own train of ideas, which, doubtless, carried him back to the green woods of Windsor, and the royal deer-hunts which he had witnessed there. 'I am not overweight.—I will not ride that great Holstein brute, that I must climb up to by a ladder, and then sit on his back like a pincushion on an elephant.'

Julian at length put his hand on the sleeper's shoulder, and shook him so as to awake him from his dream; when, after two or three snorts and groans, the dwarf asked peevishly, what the devil ailed him?

'The devil himself, for what I know,' said Peveril, 'is at this very moment in the room here beside us.'

The dwarf on this information started up,

crossed himself, and began to hammer a flint and steel with all despatch, until he had lighted a little piece of candle, which he said was consecrated to Saint Bridget, and as powerful as the herb called *fuga dæmonum*, or the liver of the fish burnt by Tobit in the house of Raguel, for chasing all goblins, and evil or dubious spirits, from the place of its radiance; 'if, indeed,' as the dwarf carefully guarded his proposition, 'they existed anywhere, save in the imagination of his fellow-prisoner.'

Accordingly, the apartment was no sooner enlightened by this holy candle's end, than Julian began to doubt the evidence of his own ears; for not only was there no one in the room save Sir Geoffrey Hudson and himself, but all the fastenings of the door were so secure, that it seemed impossible that they could have been opened and again fixed without a great deal of noise, which, on the last occasion at least, could not possibly have escaped his ears, seeing that he must have been on his feet, and employed in searching the chamber, when the unknown, if an earthly being, was in the act of retreating from it.

Julian gazed for a moment with great earnestness, and no little perplexity, first on the bolted door, then on the grated window; and began to accuse his own imagination of having played him an unpleasant trick. He answered little to the questions of Hudson, and, returning to his bed, heard in silence a long studied oration on the merits of Saint Bridget, which comprehended the greater part of her long-winded legend, and concluded with the assurance, that, from all accounts preserved of her, that holy saint was the least of all possible women, except those of the pigmy kind.

By the time the dwarf had ceased to speak, Julian's desire of sleep had returned; and after a few glances around the apartment, which was still illuminated by the expiring beams of the holy taper, his eyes were again closed in forgetfulness, and his repose was not again disturbed in the course of that night.

Morning dawns on Newgate, as well as on the freest mountain-turf which Welshman or wild goat ever trod; but in so different a fashion, that the very beams of heaven's precious sun, when they penetrate into the recesses of the prison house, have the air of being committed to jail. Still, with the light of day around him Peveril easily persuaded himself of the vanity of his preceding night's visions; and smiled when he reflected that fancies similar to those to which his ear was often exposed in the Isle of Man had been able to arrange themselves in a manner so impressive, when he heard them from the mouth of so singular a character as Hudson, and in the solitude of a prison.

Before Julian had awaked, the dwarf had already quitted his bed, and was seated in the chimney-corner of the apartment, where, with his own hands, he had arranged a morsel of fire, partly attending to the simmering of a small pot which he had placed on the flame, partly occupied with a huge folio volume which lay on the table before him, and seemed well-nigh as tall and bulky as himself. He was wrapped up in the dusky crimson cloak already mentioned, which served him for a morning-gown, as well as a mantle against the cold, and which corresponded with a large montero-cap, that enveloped his head. The singularity of his features, and of the eyes, armed with spectacles, which were now cast on the subject of his studies, now directed towards his little caldron, would have tempted Rembrandt to exhibit him on canvas, either in the character of an alchemist, or of a necromancer, engaged in some strange experiment, under the direction of one of the huge manuals which treat of the theory of these mystic arts.

The attention of the dwarf was bent, however, upon a more domestic object. He was only preparing soup, of no unsavoury quality, for breakfast, which he invited Peveril to partake with him. 'I am an old soldier,' he said, 'and, I must add, an old prisoner; and understand how to shift for myself better than you can do, young man.—Confusion to the scoundrel Clink, he has put the spice-box out of my reach!—Will you hand it me from the mantelpiece?—I will teach you, as the French have it, *faire la cuisine;* and then, if you please, we will divide, like brethren, the labours of our prison-house.'

Julian readily assented to the little man's friendly proposal, without interposing any doubt as to his continuing an inmate of the same cell. Truth is, that although, upon the whole, he was inclined to regard the whispering voice of the preceding evening as the impression of his own excited fancy, he felt, nevertheless, curiosity to see how a second night was to pass over in the same cell; and the tone of the invisible intruder, which at midnight had been heard by him with terror, now excited, on recollection, a gentle and not unpleasing species of agitation—the combined effect of awe, and of awakened curiosity.

Days of captivity have little to mark them as they glide away. That which followed the night which we have described, afforded no circumstance of note. The dwarf imparted to his youthful companion a volume similar to that which formed his own studies, and which proved to be a tome of one of Scuderi's now forgotten romances, of which Geoffrey Hudson was a great admirer and which were then very fashionable both at the French and English courts; although they contrive to unite in their immense folios all the improbabilities and absurdities of the old romances of chivalry, without that tone of imagination which pervades them, and all the metaphysical absurdities which Cowley and the poets of the age had heaped upon the passion of love, like so many load of small-coal upon a slender fire, which it smothers instead of aiding.

But Julian had no alternative, saving only to muse over the sorrows of Artamenes and Mandane, or on the complicated distresses of his own situation; and in these disagreeable divertisements the morning crept through as it could.

Noon first, and thereafter nightfall, were successively marked by a brief visit from their stern turnkey, who, with noiseless step and sullen demeanour, did in silence the necessary offices about the meals of the prisoners, exchanging with them as few words as an official in the Spanish Inquisition might have permitted himself upon a similar occasion. With the same

taciturn gravity, very different from the laughing humour into which he had been surprised on a former occasion, he struck their fetters with a small hammer, to ascertain, by the sound thus produced, whether they had been tampered with by file or otherwise. He next mounted on a table, to make the same experiment on the window-grating.

Julian's heart throbbed; for might not one of those grates have been so tampered with as to give entrance to the nocturnal visitant? But they returned to the experienced ear of Master Clink, when he struck them in turn with the hammer, a clear and ringing sound, which assured him of their security.

'It would be difficult for any one to get in through these defences,' said Julian, giving vent in words to his own feelings.

'Few wish that,' answered the surly groom, misconstruing what was passing in Peveril's mind; 'and let me tell you, master, folks will find it quite as difficult to get out.' He retired, and night came on.

The dwarf, who took upon himself for the day the whole duties of the apartment, trundled about the room, making a most important clatter as he extinguished their fire, and put aside various matters which had been in use in the course of the day, talking to himself all the while in a tone of no little consequence, occasionally grounded on the dexterity with which an old soldier could turn his hand to everything; and at other times, on the wonder that a courtier of the first rank should condescend to turn his hand to anything. Then came the repetition of his accustomed prayers; but his disposition to converse did not, as on the former occasion, revive after his devotions. On the contrary, long before Julian had closed an eye, the heavy breathing from Sir Geoffrey Hudson's pallet declared that the dwarf was already in the arms of Morpheus.

Amid the total darkness of the apartment, and with a longing desire, and at the same time no small fear, for the recurrence of the mysterious address of the preceding evening, Julian lay long awake without his thoughts receiving any interruption, save when the clock told the passing hour from the neighbouring steeple of Saint Sepulchre. At length he sunk into slumber, but had not slept, to his judgment, above an hour, when he was roused by the sound which his waking ear had so long expected in vain.

'Can you sleep?—Will you sleep? Dare you sleep?' were the questions impressed on his ear, in the same clear, soft, and melodious voice which had addressed him on the preceding night.

'Who is it asks me the question?' answered Julian. 'But be the questioner good or evil, I reply that I am a guiltless prisoner; and that innocence may wish and dare to sleep soundly.'

'Ask no questions of me,' said the voice; 'neither attempt to discover who speaks to you; and be assured that folly alone can sleep, with fraud around and danger before him.'

'Can you, who tell me of dangers, counsel me how to combat or how to avoid them?' said Julian.

'My power is limited,' said the voice; 'yet something I can do, as the glow-worm can show a precipice. But you must confide in me.'

'Confidence must beget confidence,' answered Julian. 'I cannot repose trust in I know not what or whom.'

'Speak not so loud,' replied the voice, sinking almost into a whisper.

'Last night you said my companion would not awake,' said Julian.

'To-night I warrant not that he shall sleep,' said the voice. And, as it spoke, the hoarse, snatching, discordant tones of the dwarf were heard, demanding of Julian why he talked in his sleep—wherefore he did not rest himself, and let other people rest—and, finally, whether his visions of last night were returned upon him again?

'Say yes,' said the voice, in a whisper, so low, yet so distinct, that Julian almost doubted whether it was not an echo of his own thought,—'Say but yes—and I part to return no more!'

In desperate circumstances men look to strange and unusual remedies; and, although unable to calculate the chances of advantage which this singular communication opened to him, Julian did not feel inclined to let them at once escape from him. He answered the dwarf, that he had been troubled by an alarming dream.

'I could have sworn it, from the sound of your voice,' said Hudson. 'It is strange, now, that you overgrown men never possess the extreme firmness of nerves proper to us who are cast in a more compact mould. My own voice retains its masculine sounds on all occasions. Doctor Cockerel was of opinion, that there was the same allowance of nerve and sinew to men of every size, and that nature spun the stock out thinner or stronger, according to the extent of surface which they were to cover. Hence, the least creatures are oftentimes the strongest. Place a beetle under a tall candlestick, and the insect will move it by its efforts to get out; which is, in point of comparative strength, as if one of us should shake his Majesty's prison of Newgate by similar struggles. Cats also, and weasels, are creatures of greater exertion or endurance than dogs or sheep. And in general, you may remark that little men dance better, and are more unwearied under exertion of every kind, than those to whom their own weight must necessarily be burdensome. I respect you, Master Peveril, because I am told you have killed one of those gigantic fellows, who go about swaggering as if their souls were taller than ours, because their noses are nearer to the clouds by a cubit or two. But do not value yourself on this as anything very unusual. I would have you to know it hath been always thus; and that, in the history of all ages, the clean, tight, dapper little fellow hath proved an overmatch for his bulky antagonist. I need only instance out of Holy Writ, the celebrated downfall of Goliah, and of another lubbard, who had more fingers to his hand, and more inches to his stature, than ought to belong to an honest man, and who was slain by a nephew of good King David; and of many others whom I do not remember; nevertheless they were all Philistines of gigantic stature. In the classics, also, you have Tydeus, and other tight, compact heroes, whose diminutive bodies were the abode of large minds. And indeed you may observe, in sacred as well as profane history, that your giants

are ever heretics and blasphemers, robbers and oppressors, outragers of the female sex, and scoffers at regular authority. Such were Gog and Magog, whom our authentic chronicles vouch to have been slain near to Plymouth, by the good little knight Corineus, who gave name to Cornwall. Ascaparte also was subdued by Bevis, and Colbrand by Guy, as Southampton and Warwick can testify. Like unto these was the giant Hoel, slain in Bretagne by King Arthur. And if Ryence, king of North Wales, who was done to death by the same worthy champion of Christendom, be not actually termed a giant, it is plain he was little better, since he required twenty-four kings' beards, which were then worn full and long, to fur his gown; whereby, computing each beard at eighteen inches (and you cannot allow less for a beard royal), and supposing only the front of the gown trimmed therewith, as we use ermine; and that the back was mounted and lined, instead of cat-skins and squirrels' fur, with the beards of earls and dukes, and other inferior dignitaries—may amount to ——But I will work the question to-morrow.'

Nothing is more soporific to any (save a philosopher or moneyed man) than the operation of figures; and when in bed, the effect is irresistible. Sir Geoffrey fell asleep in the act of calculating King Ryence's height, from the supposed length of his mantle. Indeed, had he not stumbled on this abstruse subject of calculation, there is no guessing how long he might have held forth upon the superiority of men of little stature, which was so great a favourite with him, that, numerous as such narratives are, the dwarf had collected almost all the instances of their victories over giants, which history or romance afforded.

No sooner had unequivocal signs of the dwarf's sound slumbers reached Julian's ears, than he began again to listen eagerly for the renewal of that mysterious communication which was at once interesting and awful. Even whilst Hudson was speaking, he had, instead of bestowing his attention upon his eulogy on persons of low stature, kept his ears on watchful guard to mark, if possible, the lightest sounds of any sort which might occur in the apartment; so that he thought it scarce possible that even a fly should have left it without its motion being overheard. If, therefore, his invisible monitor was indeed a creature of this world—an opinion which Julian's sound sense rendered him unwilling to renounce—that being could not have left the apartment; and he waited impatiently for a renewal of their communication. He was disappointed; not the slightest sound reached his ear; and the nocturnal visitor, if still in the room, appeared determined on silence.

It was in vain that Peveril coughed, hemmed, and gave other symptoms of being awake; at length, such became his impatience, that he resolved, at any risk, to speak first, in hopes of renewing the communication betwixt them. 'Whoever thou art,' he said, in a voice loud enough to be heard by a waking person, but not so high as to disturb his sleeping companion—'Whoever, or whatever, thou art, that hast shown some interest in the fate of such a castaway as Julian Peveril, speak once more, I conjure thee; and be your communication for good or evil, believe me, I am equally prepared to abide the issue.'

No answer of any kind was returned to this invocation; nor did the least sound intimate the presence of the being to whom it was so solemnly addressed.

'I speak in vain,' said Julian; 'and perhaps I am but invoking that which is insensible of human feeling, or which takes a malign pleasure in human suffering.'

There was a gentle and half-broken sigh from a corner of the apartment, which, answering to this exclamation, seemed to contradict the imputation which it conveyed.

Julian, naturally courageous, and familiarized by this time to his situation, raised himself in bed, and stretched out his arm, to repeat his adjuration, when the voice, as if alarmed at his action and energy, whispered, in a tone more hurried than that which it had hitherto used, 'Be still—move not—or I am mute for ever!'

'It is then a mortal being who is present with me,' was the natural inference of Julian, 'and one who is probably afraid of being detected; I have then some power over my visitor, though I must be cautious how I use it.—If your intents are friendly,' he proceeded, 'there was never a time in which I lacked friends more, or would be more grateful for kindness. The fate of all who are dear to me is weighed in the balance, and with worlds would I buy the tidings of their safety.'

'I have said my power is limited,' replied the voice. '*You* I may be able to preserve—the fate of your friends is beyond my control.'

'Let me at least know it,' said Julian; 'and, be it as it may, I will not shun to share it.'

'For whom would you inquire?' said the soft, sweet voice, not without a tremulousness of accent, as if the question was put with diffident reluctance.

'My parents,' said Julian, after a moment's hesitation: 'how fare they?—What will be their fate?'

'They fare as the fort under which the enemy has dug a deadly mine. The work may have cost the labour of years, such were the impediments to the engineers; but Time brings opportunity upon its wings.'

'And what will be the event?' said Peveril.

'Can I read the future,' answered the voice, 'save by comparison with the past?—Who has been hunted on these stern and unmitigable accusations, but has been at last brought to bay? Did high and noble birth, honoured age, and approved benevolence, save the unfortunate Lord Stafford?—Did learning, capacity of intrigue, or high court favour, redeem Coleman, although the confidential servant of the heir-presumptive of the crown of England?—Did subtilty and genius, and the exertions of a numerous sect, save Fenwicke or Whitbread, or any other of the accused priests?—Were Groves, Pickering, or the other humble wretches who have suffered, safe in their obscurity? There is no condition in life, no degree of talent, no form of principle which affords protection against an accusation which levels conditions, confounds characters, renders men's virtues their sins, and rates them

as dangerous in proportion as they have influence, though attained in the noblest manner, and used for the best purposes. Call such a one but an accessary to the Plot—let him be mouthed in the evidence of Oates or Dugdale—and the blindest shall foresee the issue of their trial.'

'Prophet of evil!' said Julian, 'my father has a shield invulnerable to protect him. He is innocent.'

'Let him plead his innocence at the bar of Heaven,' said the voice; 'it will serve him little where Scroggs presides.'

'Still I fear not,' said Julian, counterfeiting more confidence than he really possessed: 'my father's cause will be pleaded before twelve Englishmen.'

'Better before twelve wild beasts,' answered the Invisible, 'than before Englishmen, influenced with party prejudice, passion, and the epidemic terror of an imaginary danger. They are bold in guilt, in proportion to the number amongst whom the crime is divided.'

'Ill-omened speaker,' said Julian, 'thine is indeed a voice fitted only to sound with the midnight bell and the screech-owl. Yet speak again. Tell me if thou canst' (he would have said of Alice Bridgenorth, but the word would not leave his tongue)—'Tell me,' he said, 'if the noble house of Derby'——

'Let them keep their rock like the sea-fowl in the tempest; and it may so fall out,' answered the voice, 'that their rock may be a safe refuge. But there is blood on their ermine; and revenge has dogged them for many a year, like a bloodhound that hath been distanced in the morning chase, but may yet grapple the quarry ere the sun shall set. At present, however, they are safe.—Am I now to speak further on your own affairs, which involve little short of your life and honour? or are there yet any whose interests you prefer to your own?'

'There is,' said Julian, 'one, from whom I was violently parted yesterday; if I knew but of her safety, I were little anxious for my own.'

'One!' returned the voice, 'only *one* from whom you were parted yesterday?'

'But in parting from whom,' said Julian, 'I felt separated from all happiness which the world can give me.'

'You mean Alice Bridgenorth,' said the Invisible, with some bitterness of accent; 'but her you will never see more. Your own life and hers depend on your forgetting each other.'

'I cannot purchase my own life at that price,' replied Julian.

'Then DIE in your obstinacy,' returned the Invisible; nor to all the entreaties which he used was he able to obtain another word in the course of that remarkable night.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A short-hough'd man, but full of pride.
ALLAN RAMSAY.

THE blood of Julian Peveril was so much fevered by the state in which his invisible visitor left him, that he was unable for a length of time to find repose. He swore to himself that he would discover and expose the nocturnal demon which stole on his hours of rest, only to add gall to bitterness, and to pour poison into those wounds which already smarted so severely. There was nothing which his power extended to, that, in his rage, he did not threaten. He proposed a closer and a more rigorous survey of his cell, so that he might discover the mode by which his tormentor entered, were it as unnoticeable as an auger-hole. If his diligence should prove unavailing, he determined to inform the jailors, to whom it could not be indifferent to know that their prison was open to such intrusions. He proposed to himself to discover from their looks whether they were already privy to these visits; and if so, to denounce them to the magistrates, to the judges, to the House of Commons, was the least that his resentment proposed. Sleep surprised his worn-out frame in the midst of his projects of discovery and vengeance, and, as frequently happens, the light of the ensuing day proved favourable to calmer resolutions.

He now reflected that he had no ground to consider the motives of his visitor as positively malevolent, although he had afforded him little encouragement to hope for assistance on the points he had most at heart. Towards himself there had been expressed a decided feeling, both of sympathy and interest; if through means of these he could acquire his liberty, he might, when possessed of freedom, turn it to the benefit of those for whom he was more interested than for his own welfare. 'I have behaved like a fool,' he said; 'I ought to have temporized with this singular being, learned the motives of its interference, and availed myself of its succour, provided I could do so without any dishonourable conditions. It would have been always time enough to reject such when they should have been proposed to me.'

So saying, he was forming projects for regulating his intercourse with the stranger more prudently, in case their communication should be renewed, when his meditations were interrupted by the peremptory summons of Sir Geoffrey Hudson, that he would, in his turn, be pleased to perform those domestic duties of their common habitation, which the dwarf had yesterday taken upon himself.

There was no resisting a request so reasonable, and Peveril accordingly rose and betook himself to the arrangement of their prison, while Sir Hudson, perched upon a stool from which his legs did not by half-way reach the ground, sat in a posture of elegant languor, twangling upon an old broken-winded guitar, and singing songs in Spanish, Moorish, and Lingua Franca, most detestably out of tune. He failed not, at the conclusion of each ditty, to favour Julian with some account of what he had sung, either in the way of translation, or historical anecdote, or as the lay was connected with some peculiar part of his own eventful history, in the course of which the poor little man had chanced to have been taken by a Sallee rover, and carried captive into Morocco.

This part of his life Hudson used to make the

era of many strange adventures; and if he could himself be believed, he had made wild work among the affections of the emperor's seraglio. But although few were in a situation to cross-examine him on gallantries and intrigues of which the scene was so remote, the officers of the garrison of Tangier had a report current amongst them, that the only use to which the tyrannical Moors could convert a slave of such slender corporeal strength, was to employ him to lie a-bed all day and hatch turkeys' eggs. The least allusion to this rumour used to drive him well-nigh frantic; and the fatal termination of his duel with young Crofts, which began in wanton mirth, and ended in bloodshed, made men more coy than they had formerly been, of making the fiery little hero the subject of their raillery.

While Peveril did the drudgery of the apartment, the dwarf remained much at his ease, carolling in the manner we have described; but when he beheld Julian attempting the task of the cook, Sir Geoffrey Hudson sprang from the stool on which he sat *en Signor*, at the risk of breaking both his guitar and his neck, exclaiming, 'That he would rather prepare breakfast every morning betwixt this and the day of judgment, than commit a task of such consequence to an inexperienced bungler like his companion.'

The young man gladly resigned his task to the splenetic little knight, and only smiled at his resentment when he added, that, to be but a mortal of middle stature, Julian was as stupid as a giant. Leaving the dwarf to prepare the meal after his own pleasure, Peveril employed himself in measuring the room with his eyes on every side, and in endeavouring to discover some private entrance, such as might admit his midnight visitant, and perhaps could be employed in case of need for effecting his own escape. The floor next engaged a scrutiny equally minute, but more successful.

Close by his own pallet, and dropped in such a manner that he must have seen it sooner but for the hurry with which he obeyed the summons of the impatient dwarf, lay a slip of paper, sealed, and directed with the initial letters J. P., which seemed to ascertain that it was addressed to himself. He took the opportunity of opening it while the soup was in the very moment of projection, and the full attention of his companion was occupied by what he, in common with wiser and taller men, considered as one of the principal occupations of life; so that, without incurring his observation or awaking his curiosity, Julian had the opportunity to read as follows:—

'Rash and infatuated as you are, there is one who would forfeit much to stand betwixt you and your fate. You are to-morrow to be removed to the Tower, where your life cannot be assured for a single day; for, during the few hours you have been in London, you have provoked a resentment which is not easily slaked. There is but one chance for you,—renounce A. B.—think no more of her. If that be impossible, think of her but as one whom you can never see again. If your heart can resolve to give up an attachment which it should never have entertained, and which it would be madness to cherish longer, make your acquiescence in this condition known by putting on your hat a white band, or white feather, or knot of ribbon of the same colour, whichever you may most easily come by. A boat will, in that case, run, as if by accident, on board of that which is to convey you to the Tower. Do you in the confusion jump overboard, and swim to the Southwark side of the Thames. Friends will attend there to secure your escape, and you will find yourself with one who will rather lose character and life than that a hair of your head should fall to the ground; but who, if you reject the warning, can only think of you as of the fool who perishes in his folly. May Heaven guide you to a sound judgment of your condition! So prays one who would be your friend, if you pleased,

'UNKNOWN.'

The Tower!—it was a word of terror, even more so than a civil prison; for how many passages to death did that dark structure present! The severe executions which it had witnessed in preceding reigns, were not perhaps more numerous than the secret murders which had taken place within its walls; yet Peveril did not a moment hesitate on the part which he had to perform. 'I will share my father's fate,' he said; 'I thought but of him when they brought me hither; I will think of nothing else when they convey me to yonder still more dreadful place of confinement; it is his, and it is but meet that it should be his son's.—And thou, Alice Bridgenorth, the day that I renounce thee, may I be held alike a traitor and a dastard!—Go, false adviser, and share the fate of seducers and heretical teachers!'

He could not help uttering this last expression aloud, as he threw the billet into the fire, with a vehemence which made the dwarf start with surprise. 'What say you of burning heretics, young man?' he exclaimed; 'by my faith, your zeal must be warmer than mine, if you talk on such a subject when the heretics are the prevailing number. May I measure six feet without my shoes, but the heretics would have the best of it if we came to that work. Beware of such words.'

'Too late to beware of words spoken and heard,' said the turnkey, who, opening the door with unusual precautions to avoid noise, had stolen unperceived into the room; 'however, Master Peveril has behaved like a gentleman, and I am no tale-bearer, on condition he will consider I have had trouble in his matters.'

Julian had no alternative but to take the fellow's hint and administer a bribe, with which Master Clink was so well satisfied, that he exclaimed, 'It went to his heart to take leave of such a kind-natured gentleman, and that he could have turned the key on him for twenty years with pleasure. But the best friends must part.'

'I am to be removed, then?' said Julian.

'Ay, truly, master, the warrant is come from the Council.'

'To convey me to the Tower?'

'Whew!' exclaimed the officer of the law—

'who the devil told you that? But since you do know it, there is no harm to say ay. So make yourself ready to move immediately; and first, hold out your dew-beaters till I take off the darbies.'

'Is that usual?' said Peveril, stretching out his feet as the fellow directed, while his fetters were unlocked.

'Why, ay, master, these fetters belong to the keeper; they are not a-going to send them to the Lieutenant, I trow. No, no, the warders must bring their own gear with them; they get none here, I promise them. Nevertheless, if your honour hath a fancy to go in fetters, as thinking it may move compassion of your case'——

'I have no intention to make my case seem worse than it is,' said Julian; whilst at the same time it crossed his mind that his anonymous correspondent must be well acquainted both with his own personal habits, since the letter proposed a plan of escape which could only be executed by a bold swimmer, and with the fashions of the prison, since it was foreseen that he would not be ironed on his passage to the Tower. The turnkey's next speech made him carry conjecture still farther.

'There is nothing in life I would not do for so brave a guest,' said Clink; 'I would nab one of my wife's ribbons for you, if your honour had the fancy to mount the white flag in your beaver.'

'To what good purpose?' said Julian, shortly connecting, as was natural, the man's proposed civility with the advice given and the signal prescribed in the letter.

'Nay, to no good purpose I know of,' said the turnkey; 'only it is the fashion to seem white and harmless—a sort of token of not guiltiness, as I may say, which folks desire to show the world, whether they be truly guilty or not; but I cannot say that guiltiness or not-guiltiness argufies much, saving they be words in the verdict.'

'Strange,' thought Peveril, although the man seemed to speak quite naturally, and without any double meaning,—'strange that all should apparently combine to realize the plan of escape, could I but give my consent to it! And had I not better consent? Whoever does so much for me must wish me well, and a well-wisher would never enforce the unjust conditions on which I am required to consent to my liberation.'

But this misgiving of his resolution was but for a moment. He speedily recollected, that whoever aided him in escaping must be necessarily exposed to great risk, and had a right to name the stipulation on which he was willing to incur it. He also recollected that falsehood is equally base, whether expressed in words or in dumb show; and that he should lie as flatly by using the signal agreed upon in evidence of his renouncing Alice Bridgenorth, as he would in direct terms if he made such renunciation without the purpose of abiding by it.

'If you would oblige me,' he said to the turnkey, 'let me have a piece of black silk or crape for the purpose you mention.'

'Of crape,' said the fellow; 'what should that signify? Why, the bien morts, who bing out to tour at you,* will think you a chimney-sweeper on May-day.'

'It will show my settled sorrow,' said Julian, 'as well as my determined resolution.'

'As you will, sir,' answered the fellow; 'I'll provide you with a black rag of some kind or other. So, now, let us be moving.'

Julian intimated his readiness to attend him, and proceeded to bid farewell to his late companion, the stout Geoffrey Hudson. The parting was not without emotion on both sides, more particularly on that of the poor little man, who had taken a particular liking to the companion of whom he was now about to be deprived. 'Fare ye well,' he said, 'my young friend,' taking Julian's hand in both his uplifted palms, in which action he somewhat resembled the attitude of a sailor pulling a rope overhead.—'Many a one in my situation would think himself wronged, as a soldier and servant of the King's chamber, in seeing you removed to a more honourable prison than that which I am limited unto. But, I thank God, I grudge you not the Tower, nor the rocks of Scilly, nor even Carisbrooke Castle, though the latter was graced with the captivity of my blessed and martyred master. Go where you will, I wish you all the distinction of an honourable prison-house, and a safe and speedy deliverance in God's own time. For myself, my race is near a close, and that because I fall a martyr to the over-tenderness of my own heart. There is a circumstance, good Master Julian Peveril, which should have been yours, had Providence permitted our further intimacy, but it fits not the present hour. Go, then, my friend, and bear witness, in life and death, that Geoffrey Hudson scorns the insults and persecutions of fortune, as he would despise, and has often despised, the mischievous pranks of an overgrown schoolboy.'

So saying, he turned away, and hid his face with his little handkerchief, while Julian felt towards him that tragi-comic sensation which makes us pity the object which excites it, not the less that we are somewhat inclined to laugh amid our sympathy. The jailor made him a signal, which Peveril obeyed, leaving the dwarf to disconsolate solitude.

As Julian followed the keeper through the various windings of this penal labyrinth, the man observed, that 'he was a rum fellow, that little Sir Geoffrey, and, for gallantry, a perfect Cock of Bantam, for as old as he was. There was a certain gay wench,' he said, 'that had hooked him; but what she could make of him, save she carried him to Smithfield, and took money for him, as for a motion of puppets, it was,' he said, 'hard to gather.'

Encouraged by this opening, Julian asked if his attendant knew why his prison was changed. 'To teach you to become a King's post without commission,' answered the fellow.

He stopped in his tattle as they approached that formidable central point, in which lay couched on his leathern elbow-chair the fat commander of the fortress, stationed apparently for ever in the midst of his citadel, as the huge Boa is sometimes said to lie stretched as a guard

* The smart girls, who turn out to look at you.

upon the subterranean treasures of Eastern rajahs. This overgrown man of authority eyed Julian wistfully and sullenly, as the miser the guinea which he must part with, or the hungry mastiff the food which is carried to another kennel. He growled to himself as he turned the leaves of his ominous register, in order to make the necessary entry respecting the removal of his prisoner. 'To the Tower—to the Tower ay, ay, all must to the Tower—that's the fashion of it—free Britons to a military prison, as if we had neither bolts nor chains here!—I hope Parliament will have it up, this Towering work, that's all.—Well, the youngster will take no good by the change, and that is one comfort.'

Having finished at once his official act of registration, and his soliloquy, he made a signal to his assistants to remove Julian, who was led along the same stern passages which he had traversed upon his entrance, to the gate of the prison, whence a coach, escorted by two officers of justice, conveyed him to the water-side.

A boat here waited him, with four warders of the Tower, to whose custody he was formally resigned by his late attendants. Clink, however, the turnkey, with whom he was more especially acquainted, did not take leave of him without furnishing him with the piece of black crape which he requested. Peveril fixed it on his hat amid the whispers of his new guardians. 'The gentleman is in a hurry to go into mourning,' said one; 'mayhap he had better wait till he has cause.'

'Perhaps others may wear mourning for him, ere he can mourn for any one,' answered another of these functionaries.

Yet, notwithstanding the tenor of these whispers, their behaviour to their prisoner was more respectful than he had experienced from his former keepers, and might be termed a sullen civility. The ordinary officers of the law were in general rude, as having to do with felons of every description; whereas these men were only employed with persons accused of State crimes—men who were from birth and circumstances usually entitled to expect, and able to reward, decent usage.

The change of keepers passed unnoticed by Julian, as did the gay and busy scene presented by the broad and beautiful river on which he was now launched. A hundred boats shot past them, bearing parties intent on business, or on pleasure. Julian only viewed them with the stern hope, that whoever had endeavoured to bribe him from his fidelity by the hope of freedom, might see, from the colour of the badge which he had assumed, how determined he was to resist the temptation presented to him.

It was about high water, and a stout wherry came up the river, with sail and oar, so directly upon that in which Julian was embarked, that it seemed as if likely to run her aboard. 'Get your carabines ready,' cried the principal warder to his assistants. 'What the devil can these scoundrels mean?'

But the crew in the other boat seemed to have perceived their error, for they suddenly altered their course, and struck off into the middle stream, while a torrent of mutual abuse was exchanged betwixt them and the boat whose course they had threatened to impede.

'The Unknown has kept his faith,' said Julian to himself; 'I too have kept mine.'

It even seemed to him, as the boats neared each other, that he heard, from the other wherry, something like a stifled scream or groan; and when the momentary bustle was over, he asked the warder who sat next to him, what boat that was.

'Men-of-war's-men, on a frolic, I suppose,' answered the warder. 'I know no one else would be so impudent as run foul of the King's boat; for I am sure the fellow put the helm up on purpose. But mayhap you, sir, know more of the matter than I do.'

This insinuation effectually prevented Julian from putting further questions, and he remained silent until the boat came under the dusky bastions of the Tower. The tide carried them up under a dark and lowering arch, closed at the upper end by the well-known Traitor's Gate,* formed like a wicket of huge intersecting bars of wood, through which might be seen a dim and imperfect view of soldiers and warders upon duty, and of the steep ascending causeway which leads up from the river into the interior of the fortress. By this gate—and it is the well-known circumstance which assigned its name—those accused of State crimes were usually committed to the Tower. The Thames afforded a secret and silent mode of conveyance for transporting thither such whose fallen fortunes might move the commiseration, or whose popular qualities might excite the sympathy, of the public; and even where no cause for especial secrecy existed, the peace of the city was undisturbed by the tumult attending the passage of the prisoner and his guards through the most frequented streets.

Yet this custom, however recommended by State policy, must have often struck chill upon the heart of the criminal, who thus, stolen, as it were, out of society, reached the place of his confinement, without encountering even one glance of compassion on the road; and as, from under the dusky arch, he landed on those flinty steps, worn by many a footstep anxious as his own, against which the tide lapped fitfully with small successive waves, and thence looked forward to the steep ascent into a Gothic State prison, and backward to such part of the river as the low-browed vault suffered to become visible, he must often have felt that he was leaving daylight, hope, and life itself, behind him.

While the warder's challenge was made and answered, Peveril endeavoured to obtain information from his conductors where he was likely to be confined; but the answer was brief and general—'Where the Lieutenant should direct.'

'Could he not be permitted to share the imprisonment of his father, Sir Geoffrey Peveril?' He forgot not, on this occasion, to add the surname of his house.

The warder, an old man of respectable appearance, stared, as if at the extravagance of the demand, and said bluntly, 'It is impossible.'

'At least,' said Peveril, 'show me where my

* See note, The Fortunes of Nigel, p. 671.

father is confined, that I may look upon the walls which separate us.'

'Young gentleman,' said the senior warder, shaking his grey head, 'I am sorry for you; but asking questions will do you no service. In this place we know nothing of fathers and sons.'

Yet chance seemed, in a few minutes afterwards, to offer Peveril that satisfaction which the rigour of his keepers was disposed to deny to him. As he was conveyed up the steep passage which leads under what is called the Wakefield Tower, a female voice, in a tone wherein grief and joy were indescribably mixed, exclaimed, 'My son!—My dear son!'

Even those who guarded Julian seemed softened by a tone of such acute feeling. They slackened their pace. They almost paused to permit him to look up towards the casement from which the sounds of maternal agony proceeded; but the aperture was so narrow, and so closely grated, that nothing was visible save a white female hand, which grasped one of those rusty barricadoes, as if for supporting the person within, while another streamed a white handkerchief, and then let it fall. The casement was instantly deserted.

'Give it me,' said Julian to the officer who lifted the handkerchief; 'it is perhaps a mother's last gift.'

The old warder lifted the napkin, and looked at it with the jealous minuteness of one who is accustomed to detect secret correspondence in the most trifling acts of intercourse.

'There may be writing on it with invisible ink,' said one of his comrades.

'It is wetted, but I think it is only with tears,' answered the senior. 'I cannot keep it from the poor young gentleman.'

'Ah, Master Coleby,' said his comrade, in a gentle tone of reproach, 'you would have been wearing a better coat than a yeoman's to-day, had it not been for your tender heart.'

'It signifies little,' said old Coleby, 'while my heart is true to my King, what I feel in discharging my duty, or what coat keeps my old bosom from the cold weather.'

Peveril, meanwhile, folded in his breast the token of his mother's affection which chance had favoured him with; and when placed in the small and solitary chamber which he was told to consider as his own during his residence in the Tower, he was soothed even to weeping by this trifling circumstance, which he could not help considering as an omen that his unfortunate house was not entirely deserted by Providence.

But the thoughts and occurrences of a prison are too uniform for a narrative, and we must now convey our readers into a more bustling scene.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Henceforth 'tis done—Fortune and I are friends;
And I must live, for Buckingham commends.
POPE.

THE spacious mansion of the Duke of Buckingham, with the demesne belonging to it, originally bore the name of York House, and occupied a large portion of the ground adjacent to the Savoy.

This had been laid out by the munificence of his father, the favourite of Charles the First, in a most splendid manner, so as almost to rival Whitehall itself. But during the increasing rage for building new streets, and the creating of almost an additional town, in order to connect London and Westminster, this ground had become of very great value; and the second Duke of Buckingham, who was at once fond of scheming, and needy of money, had agreed to a plan laid before him by some adventurous architect, for converting the extensive grounds around his palace into those streets, lanes, and courts which still perpetuate his name and titles; though those who live in Buckingham Street, Duke Street, Villiers Street, or in Of-alley * (for even that connecting particle is locally commemorated), probably think seldom of the memory of the witty, eccentric, and licentious George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, whose titles are preserved in the names of their residence and its neighbourhood.

This building plan the duke had entered upon with all the eagerness which he usually attached to novelty. His gardens were destroyed—his pavilions levelled his splendid stables demolished—the whole pomp of his suburban demesne laid waste, cumbered with ruins, and intersected with the foundations of new buildings and cellars, and the process of levelling different lines for the intended streets. But the undertaking, although it proved afterwards both lucrative and successful, met with a check at the outset, partly from want of the necessary funds, partly from the impatient and mercurial temper of the duke, which soon carried him off in pursuit of some more new object. So that, though much was demolished, very little, in comparison, was reared up in the stead, and nothing was completed. The principal part of the ducal mansion still remained uninjured; but the demesne in which it stood bore a strange analogy to the irregular mind of its noble owner. Here stood a beautiful group of exotic trees and shrubs the remnant of the garden, amid yawning common sewers, and heaps of rubbish. In one place an old tower threatened to fall upon the spectator; and in another, he ran the risk of being swallowed up by a modern vault. Grandeur of conception could be discovered in the undertaking, but was almost everywhere marred by poverty or negligence of execution. In short, the whole place was the true emblem of an understanding and talents run to waste, and become more dangerous than advantageous to society, by the want of steady principle, and the improvidence of the possessor.

There were men who took a different view of the duke's purpose in permitting his mansion to be thus surrounded, and his demesne occupied by modern buildings which were incomplete, and ancient which were but half demolished. They alleged, that, engaged as he was in so many mysteries of love and of politics, and having the character of the most daring and dangerous intriguer of his time, his Grace

* [Now York Place.]

found it convenient to surround himself with this ruinous arena, into which officers of justice could not penetrate without some difficulty and hazard; and which might afford, upon occasion, a safe and secret shelter for such tools as were fit for desperate enterprises, and a private and unobserved mode of access to those whom he might have any special reason for receiving in secret.

Leaving Peveril in the Tower, we must once more convey our readers to the levee of the duke, who, on the morning of Julian's transference to that fortress, thus addressed his minister-in-chief, and principal attendant:—'I have been so pleased with your conduct in this matter, Jerningham, that if Old Nick were to arise in our presence, and offer me his best imp as a familiar in thy room, I would hold it but a poor compliment'

'A legion of imps,' said Jerningham, bowing, 'could not have been more busy than I in your Grace's service; but if your Grace will permit me to say so, your whole plan was well-nigh marred by your not returning home till last night, or rather this morning.'

'And why, I pray you, sage Master Jerningham,' said his Grace, 'should I have returned home an instant sooner than my pleasure and convenience served?'

Nay, my lord Duke,' replied the attendant. 'I know not: only, when you sent us word by Empson, in Chiffinch's apartment, to command us to make sure of the girl at any rate, and at all risks, you said you would be here so soon as you could get freed of the King.'

'Freed of the King, you rascal! What sort of phrase is that?' demanded the duke.

'It was Empson who used it, my lord, as coming from your Grace.'

'There is much very fit for my Grace to say, that misbecomes such mouths as Empson's or yours to repeat,' answered the duke haughtily, but instantly resumed his tone of familiarity, for his humour was as capricious as his pursuits. 'But I know what thou wouldst have: first, your wisdom would know what became of me since thou hadst my commands at Chiffinch's; and next, your valour would fain sound another flourish of trumpets on thine own most artificial retreat, leaving thy comrade in the hands of the Philistines.'

'May it please your Grace,' said Jerningham, 'I did but retreat for the preservation of the baggage.'

'What! do you play at crambo with me?' said the duke. 'I would have you to know that the common parish fool should be whipped, were he to attempt to pass pun or quodlibet as a genuine jest, even amongst ticket-porters and hackney chairmen.'

'And yet I have heard your Grace indulge in the *jeu de mots*,' answered the attendant.

'Sirrah Jerningham,' answered the patron, 'discard thy memory, or keep it under correction, else it will hamper thy rise in the world. Thou mayest perchance have seen me also have a fancy to play at trap-ball, or to kiss a serving-wench, or to guzzle ale and eat toasted cheese in a porterly whimsy; but is it fitting thou shouldst remember such follies? No more on't. —Hark you; how came the long lubberly fool, Jenkins, being a master of the noble science of defence, to suffer himself to be run through the body so simply by a rustic swain like this same Peveril?'

'Please your Grace, this same Corydon is no such novice. I saw the onset; and, except in one hand, I never saw a sword managed with such life, grace, and facility.'

'Ay, indeed?' said the duke, taking his own sheathed rapier in his hand; 'I could not have thought that. I am somewhat rusted, and have need of breathing. Peveril is a name of note. As well go to the Barns Elms, or behind Montagu House, with him as with another. His father a rumoured plotter, too. The public would have noted it in me as becoming a zealous Protestant. Needful I do something to maintain my good name in the city, to atone for non-attendance on prayer and preaching. But your Laertes is fast in the Fleet; and I suppose his blundering blockhead of an antagonist is dead or dying?'

'Recovering, my lord, on the contrary,' replied Jerningham; 'the blade fortunately avoided his vitals.'

'D—n his vitals!' answered the duke. 'Tell him to postpone his recovery, or I will put him to death in earnest.'

'I will caution his surgeon,' said Jerningham, 'which will answer equally well.'

'Do so; and tell him he had better be on his own deathbed as cure his patient till I send him notice.—That young fellow must be let loose again at no rate.'

'There is little danger,' said the attendant. I hear some of the witnesses have got their net flung over him on account of some matters down in the north; and that he is to be translated to the Tower for that, and for some letters of the Countess of Derby, as rumour goes.'

'To the Tower let him go, and get out as he can,' replied the duke; 'and when you hear he is fast there, let the fencing fellow recover as fast as the surgeon and he can mutually settle it.'

The duke, having said this, took two or three turns in the apartment, and appeared to be in deep thought. His attendant waited the issue of his meditations with patience, being well aware that such moods, during which his mind was strongly directed in one point, were never of so long duration with his patron as to prove a severe burden to his own patience.

Accordingly, after the silence of seven or eight minutes, the duke broke through it, taking from the toilet a large silk purse, which seemed full of gold. 'Jerningham,' he said, 'thou art a faithful fellow, and it would be sin not to cherish thee. I beat the King at Mall on his bold defiance. The honour is enough for me; and thou, my boy, shalt have the winnings.'

Jerningham pocketed the purse with due acknowledgments.

'Jerningham,' his Grace continued, 'I know you blame me for changing my plans too often; and on my soul I have heard you so learned on the subject, that I have become of your opinion, and have been vexed at myself for two or three hours together, for not sticking as constantly to one object, as doubtless I shall, when age' (touching his forehead) 'shall make this same weathercock too rusty to turn with the changing

breeze. But as yet, while I have spirit and action, let it whirl like the vane at the mast-head, which teaches the pilot how to steer his course; and when I shift mine, think I am bound to follow fortune, and not to control her.'

'I can understand nothing from all this, please your Grace,' replied Jerningham, 'save that you have been pleased to change some purposed measures, and think that you have profited by doing so.'

'You shall judge yourself,' replied the duke. 'I have seen the Duchess of Portsmouth.—You start. It is true, by Heaven! I have seen her, and from sworn enemies we have become sworn friends. The treaty between such high and mighty powers had some weighty articles; besides, I had a French negotiator to deal with; so that you will allow a few hours' absence was but a necessary interval to make up our matters of diplomacy.'

'Your Grace astonishes me,' said Jerningham. 'Christian's plan of supplanting the great lady is then entirely abandoned? I thought you had but desired to have the fair successor here, in order to carry it on under your own management.'

'I forget what I meant at the time,' said the duke; 'unless that I was resolved she should not jilt me as she did the good-natured man of royalty; and so I am still determined, since you put me in mind of the fair Dowsabelle. But I had a contrite note from the Duchess while we were at the Mall. I went to see her, and found her a perfect Niobe.—On my soul, in spite of red eyes and swelled features, and dishevelled hair, there are, after all, Jerningham, some women who do, as the poets say, look lovely in affliction. Out came the cause; and with such humility, such penitence, such throwing herself on my mercy (she the proudest devil, too, in the whole court), that I must have had heart of steel to resist it all. In short, Chiffinch in a drunken fit had played the babbler, and let young Saville into our intrigue. Saville plays the rogue, and informs the Duchess by a messenger, who luckily came a little late into the market. She learned, too, being a very devil for intelligence, that there had been some jarring between the master and me about this new Phillis; and that I was most likely to catch the bird,—as any one may see who looks on us both. It must have been Empson who fluted all this into her Grace's ear; and, thinking she saw how her ladyship and I could hunt in couples, she entreats me to break Christian's scheme, and keep the wench out of the King's sight, especially if she were such a rare piece of perfection as fame has reported her.'

'And your Grace has promised her your hand to uphold the influence which you have so often threatened to ruin?' said Jerningham.

'Ay, Jerningham; my turn was as much served when she seemed to own herself in my power, and cry me mercy.—And, observe, it is all one to me by which ladder I climb into the King's cabinet. That of Portsmouth is ready fixed—better ascend by it than fling it down to put up another—I hate all unnecessary trouble.'

'And Christian?' said Jerningham.

'May go to the devil for a self-conceited ass. One pleasure of this twist of intrigue is, to revenge me of that villain, who thought himself so essential, that, by Heaven! he forced himself on my privacy, and lectured me like a schoolboy. Hang the cold-blooded, hypocritical vermin! If he mutters, I will have his nose slit as wide as Coventry's.*—Hark ye, is the Colonel come?'

'I expect him every moment, your Grace.'

'Send him up when he arrives,' said the duke. —'Why do you stand looking at me? What would you have?'

'Your Grace's direction respecting the young lady,' said Jerningham.

'Oddzooks,' said the duke, 'I had totally forgotten her.—Is she very tearful?—exceedingly afflicted?'

'She does not take on so violently as I have seen some do,' said Jerningham; 'but for a strong, firm, concentrated indignation, I have seen none to match her.'

'Well, we will permit her to cool. I will not face the affliction of a second fair one immediately. I am tired of snivelling, and swelled eyes, and blubbered cheeks, for some time; and, moreover, must husband my powers of consolation. Begone, and send the Colonel.'

'Will your Grace permit me one other question?' demanded his confidant.

'Ask what thou wilt, Jerningham, and then begone.'

'Your Grace has determined to give up Christian,' said the attendant. 'May I ask what becomes of the kingdom of Man?'

'Forgotten, as I have a Christian soul!' said the duke; 'as much forgotten as if I had never nourished that scheme of royal ambition.—D—n it, we must knit up the ravelled skean of that intrigue.—Yet it is but a miserable rock, not worth the trouble I have been bestowing on it; and for a kingdom—it has a sound, indeed; but in reality, I might as well stick a cock-chicken's feather into my hat, and call it a plume. Besides, now I think upon it, it would scarce be honourable to sweep that petty royalty out of Derby's possession. I won a thousand pieces of the young Earl when he was last here, and suffered him to hang about me at court. I question if the whole revenue of his kingdom is worth twice as much. Easily I could win it of him, were he here, with less trouble than it would cost me to carry on these troublesome intrigues of Christian's.'

'If I may be permitted to say so, please your Grace,' answered Jerningham, 'although your Grace is somewhat liable to change your mind, no man in England can afford better reasons for doing so.'

'I think so myself, Jerningham,' said the duke; 'and it may be it is one reason for my changing. One likes to vindicate his own conduct, and to find out fine reasons for doing what one has a mind to.—And now, once again, begone. Or, hark ye—hark ye—I shall need some loose gold. You may leave the purse I gave you; and I will give you an order for as much and two years' interest, on old Jacob Doublefee.'

* The ill usage of Sir John Coventry by some of the Life Guardsmen, in revenge of something said in Parliament concerning the king's theatrical amours, gave rise to what was called Coventry's Act, against cutting and maiming the person.

'As your Grace pleases,' said Jerningham, his whole stock of complaisance scarcely able to conceal his mortification at exchanging for a distant order, of a kind which of late had not been very regularly honoured, the sunny contents of the purse which had actually been in his pocket. Secretly but solemnly did he make a vow, that two years' interest alone should not be the compensation for this involuntary exchange in the form of his remuneration.

As the discontented dependant left the apartment, he met, at the head of the grand staircase, Christian himself, who, exercising the freedom of an ancient friend of the house, was making his way, unannounced, to the duke's dressing apartment. Jerningham, conjecturing that his visit at this crisis would be anything but well timed, or well taken, endeavoured to avert his purpose, by asserting that the duke was indisposed, and in his bed-chamber; and this he said so loud that his master might hear him, and, if he pleased, realize the apology which he offered in his name, by retreating into the bedroom as his last sanctuary, and drawing the bolt against intrusion.

But, far from adopting a stratagem to which he had had recourse on former occasions, in order to avoid those who came upon him, though at an appointed hour, and upon business of importance, Buckingham called, in a loud voice, from his dressing apartment, commanding his chamberlain instantly to introduce his good friend Master Christian, and censuring him for hesitating for an instant to do so.

'Now,' thought Jerningham within himself, 'if Christian knew the duke as well as I do, he would sooner stand the leap of a lion, like the London 'prentice bold, than venture on my master at this moment, who is even now in a humour nearly as dangerous as the animal.'

He then ushered Christian into his master's presence, taking care to post himself within earshot of the door.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

> 'Speak not of niceness, when there's chance of wreck,'
> The captain said, as ladies writhed their neck
> To see the dying dolphin flap the deck:
> 'If we go down, on us these gentry sup;
> We dine upon them, if we haul them up.
> Wise men applaud us when we eat the eaters,
> As the devil laughs when keen folks cheat the cheaters.
>
> THE SEA VOYAGE.

THERE was nothing in the duke's manner towards Christian which could have conveyed to that latter personage, experienced as he was in the worst possible ways of the world, that Buckingham would, at that particular moment, rather have seen the devil than himself; unless it was that Buckingham's reception of him, being rather extraordinarily courteous towards so old an acquaintance, might have excited some degree of suspicion.

Having escaped with some difficulty from the vague region of general compliments, which bears the same relation to that of business that Milton informs us the *Limbo Patrum* has to the sensible and material earth, Christian asked his Grace of Buckingham, with the same blunt plainness with which he usually veiled a very deep and artificial character, whether he had lately seen Chiffinch or his helpmate.

'Neither of them lately,' answered Buckingham. 'Have not you waited on them yourself? —I thought you would have been more anxious about the great scheme.'

'I have called once and again,' said Christian, 'but I can gain no access to the sight of that important couple. I begin to be afraid they are paltering with me.'

'Which, by the welkin and its stars, you would not be slow in avenging, Master Christian. I know your Puritanical principles on that point well,' said the duke. 'Revenge may be well said to be sweet, when so many grave and wise men are ready to exchange for it all the sugar-plums which pleasures offer to the poor sinful people of the world, besides the reversion of those which they talk of expecting in the way of *post obit*.'

'You may jest, my lord,' said Christian, 'but still'——

'But still you will be revenged on Chiffinch, and his little commodious companion. And yet the task may be difficult—Chiffinch has so many ways of obliging his master—his little woman is such a convenient pretty sort of a screen, and has such winning little ways of her own, that, in faith, in your case, I would not meddle with them. What is this refusing their door, man? We all do it to our best friends now and then, as well as to duns and dull company.'

'If your Grace is in a humour for rambling thus wildly in your talk,' said Christian, 'you know my old faculty of patience—I can wait till it be your pleasure to talk more seriously.'

'Seriously!' said his Grace—'Wherefore not? —I only wait to know what your serious business may be.'

'In a word, my lord, from Chiffinch's refusal to see me, and some vain calls which I have made at your Grace's mansion, I am afraid either that our plan has miscarried, or that there is some intention to exclude me from the further conduct of the matter.' Christian pronounced these words with considerable emphasis.

'That were folly as well as treachery,' returned the duke, 'to exclude from the spoil the very engineer who conducted the attack. But hark ye, Christian—I am sorry to tell bad news without preparation; but, as you insist on knowing the worst, and are not ashamed to suspect your best friends, out it must come—Your niece left Chiffinch's house the morning before yesterday.'

Christian staggered, as if he had received a severe blow; and the blood ran to his face in such a current of passion, that the duke concluded he was struck with an apoplexy. But, exerting the extraordinary command which he could maintain under the most trying circumstances, he said, with a voice the composure of which had an unnatural contrast with the alteration of his countenance, 'Am I to conclude that, in leaving the protection of the roof in which I placed her, the girl has found shelter under that of your Grace?'

'Sir,' replied Buckingham gravely, 'the sup-

position does my gallantry more credit than it deserves.'

'O, my lord Duke,' answered Christian, 'I am not one whom you can impose on by this species of courtly jargon. I know of what your Grace is capable; and that to gratify the caprice of a moment you would not hesitate to disappoint even the schemes at which you yourself have laboured most busily.—Suppose this jest played off. Take your laugh at those simple precautions by which I intended to protect your Grace's interest, as well as that of others. Let us know the extent of your frolic, and consider how far its consequences can be repaired.'

'On my word, Christian,' said the duke, laughing, 'you are the most obliging of uncles and of guardians. Let your niece pass through as many adventures as Boccaccio's bride of the King of Garba, you care not. Pure or soiled, she will still make the footstool of your fortune.'

An Indian proverb says, that the dart of contempt will even pierce through the shell of the tortoise; but this is more peculiarly the case when conscience tells the subject of the sarcasm that it is justly merited. Christian, stung with Buckingham's reproach, at once assumed a haughty and threatening mien, totally inconsistent with that in which sufferance seemed to be as much his badge as that of Shylock. 'You are a foul-mouthed and most unworthy lord,' he said; 'and as such I will proclaim you, unless you make reparation for the injury you have done me.'

'And what,' said the Duke of Buckingham, 'shall I proclaim *you*, that can give you the least title to notice from such as I am? What name shall I bestow on the little transaction which has given rise to such unexpected misunderstanding?'

Christian was silent, either from rage or from mental conviction.

'Come, come, Christian,' said the duke, smiling, 'we know too much of each other to make a quarrel safe. Hate each other we may—circumvent each other—it is the way of courts—but proclaim! a fico for the phrase!'

'I used it not,' said Christian, 'till your Grace drove me to extremity. You know, my lord, I have fought both at home and abroad; and you should not rashly think that I will endure any indignity which blood can wipe away.'

'On the contrary,' said the duke, with the same civil and sneering manner, 'I can confidently assert that the life of half a score of your friends would seem very light to you, Christian, if their existence interfered, I do not say with your character, as being a thing of much less consequence, but with any advantage which their existence might intercept.—Fie upon it, man, we have known each other long. I never thought you a coward; and am only glad to see I could strike a few sparkles of heat out of your cold and constant disposition. I will now, if you please, tell you at once the fate of the young lady, in which I pray you to believe that I am truly interested.'

'I hear you, my lord Duke,' said Christian. 'The curl of your upper lip and your eyebrow does not escape me. Your Grace knows the French proverb, "He laughs best who laughs last." But I hear you.'

'Thank Heaven you do,' said Buckingham; 'for your case requires haste, I promise you, and involves no laughing matter. Well, then, hear a simple truth, on which (if it became me to offer any pledge for what I assert to be such) I could pledge life, fortune, and honour. It was the morning before last, when, meeting with the King at Chiffinch's unexpectedly,—in fact, I had looked in to fool an hour away, and to learn how your scheme advanced,—I saw a singular scene. Your niece terrified little Chiffinch—(the hen Chiffinch, I mean)—bade the King defiance to his teeth, and walked out of the Presence triumphantly, under the guardianship of a young fellow of little mark or likelihood, excepting a tolerable personal presence, and the advantage of a most unconquerable impudence. Egad, I can hardly help laughing to think how the King and I were both baffled; for I will not deny that I had tried to trifle for a moment with the fair Indamora. But, egad, the young fellow swooped her off from under our noses, like my own Drawcansir clearing off the banquet from the two Kings of Brentford. There was a dignity in the gallant's swaggering retreat which I must try to teach Mohun;* it will suit his part admirably.'

'This is incomprehensible, my lord Duke,' said Christian, who by this time had recovered all his usual coolness; 'you cannot expect me to believe this. Who dared be so bold as to carry off my niece in such a manner, and from so august a Presence? And with whom, a stranger as he must have been, would she, wise and cautious as I know her, have consented to depart in such a manner? My lord, I cannot believe this.'

'One of your priests, my most devout Christian,' replied the duke, 'would only answer, Die, infidel, in thine unbelief; but I am only a poor worldling sinner, and I will add what mite of information I can. The young fellow's name, as I am given to understand, is Julian, son of Sir Geoffrey, whom men call Peveril of the Peak.'

'Peveril of the Devil, who hath his cavern there!' said Christian warmly; 'for I know that gallant, and believe him capable of anything bold and desperate. But how could he intrude himself into the royal Presence? Either hell aids him, or Heaven looks nearer into mortal dealings than I have yet believed. If so, may God forgive us, who deemed he thought not on us at all!'

'Amen, most Christian Christian,' replied the duke. 'I am glad to see thou hast yet some touch of grace that leads thee to augur so. But Empson, the hen Chiffinch, and half-a-dozen more, saw the swain's entrance and departure. Please examine these witnesses with your own wisdom, if you think your time may not be better employed in tracing the fugitives. I believe he gained entrance as one of some dancing or masking party. Rowley, you know, is accessible to all who will come forth to make him sport. So in stole this termagant tearing gallant, like Samson among the Philistines, to pull down our fine scheme about our ears.'

* Then a noted actor.

'I believe you, my lord,' said Christian; 'I cannot but believe you; and I forgive you, since it is your nature, for making sport of what is ruin and destruction. But which way did they take?'

'To Derbyshire, I should presume, to seek her father,' said the duke. 'She spoke of going into the paternal protection, instead of yours, Master Christian. Something had chanced at Chiffinch's, to give her cause to suspect that you had not altogether provided for his daughter in the manner which her father was likely to approve of.'

'Now, Heaven be praised,' said Christian, 'she knows not her father is come to London' and they must be gone down either to Martindale Castle, or to Moultrassie Hall; in either case they are in my power—I must follow them close. I will return instantly to Derbyshire I am undone if she meet her father until these errors are amended. Adieu, my lord. I forgive the part which I fear your Grace must have had in baulking our enterprise—it is no time for mutual reproaches.'

'You speak truth, Master Christian,' said the duke, 'and I wish you all success. Can I help you with men, or horses, or money?'

'I thank your Grace,' said Christian, and hastily left the apartment.

The duke watched his descending footsteps on the staircase, until they could be heard no longer, and then exclaimed to Jerningham, who entered, '*Victoria! victoria! magna est veritas et prævalebit!* Had I told the villain a word of a lie, he is so familiar with all the regions of falsehood—his whole life has been such an absolute imposture, that I had stood detected in an instant; but I told him truth, and that was the only means of deceiving him. *Victoria!* My dear Jerningham, I am prouder of cheating Christian than I should have been of circumventing a minister of State.'

'Your Grace holds his wisdom very high,' said the attendant.

'His cunning, at least, I do, which, in court affairs, often takes the weather-gage of wisdom,—as in Yarmouth Roads, a herring-buss will baffle a frigate. He shall not return to London if I can help it, until all these intrigues are over.'

As his Grace spoke, the Colonel, after whom he had repeatedly made inquiry, was announced by a gentleman of his household. 'He met not Christian, did he?' said the duke hastily.

'No, my lord,' returned the domestic, 'the Colonel came by the old garden staircase.'

'I judged as much,' replied the duke; ''tis an owl that will not take wing in daylight, when there is a thicket left to skulk under. Here he comes, from threading lane, vault, and ruinous alley, very near as ominous a creature as the fowl of ill augury which he resembles.'

The Colonel, to whom no other appellation seemed to be given, than that which belonged to his military station, now entered the apartment. He was tall, strongly built, and past the middle period of life, and his countenance, but for the heavy cloud which dwelt upon it, might have been pronounced a handsome one. While the duke spoke to him, either from humility or some other cause, his large serious eye was cast down upon the ground; but he raised it when he answered, with a keen look of earnest observation. His dress was very plain, and more allied to that of the Puritans than of the Cavaliers of the time: a shadowy black hat, like the Spanish sombrero; a large black mantle or cloak, and a long rapier, gave him something the air of a Castilione, to which his gravity and stiffness of demeanour added considerable strength.

'Well, Colonel,' said the duke, 'we have been long strangers—how have matters gone with you?'

'As with other men of action in quiet times,' answered the Colonel, 'or as a good war-caper* that lies high and dry in a muddy creek, till seams and planks are rent and riven.'

'Well, Colonel,' said the duke, 'I have used your valour before now, and I may again; so that I shall speedily see that the vessel is careened, and undergoes a thorough repair.'

'I conjecture, then,' said the Colonel, 'that your Grace has some voyage in hand?'

'No, but there is one which I want to interrupt,' replied the duke.

''Tis but another stave of the same tune.—Well, my lord, I listen,' answered the stranger.

'Nay,' said the duke, 'it is but a trifling matter after all. You know Ned Christian?'

'Ay, surely, my lord,' replied the Colonel; 'we have been long known to each other.'

'He is about to go down to Derbyshire to seek a certain niece of his, whom he will scarcely find there. Now, I trust to your tried friendship to interrupt his return to London. Go with him, or meet him, cajole him, or assail him, or do what thou wilt with him—only keep him from London for a fortnight at least, and then I care little how soon he comes.'

'For by that time, I suppose,' replied the Colonel, 'any one may find the wench that thinks her worth the looking for.'

'Thou mayest think her worth the looking for thyself, Colonel,' rejoined the duke; 'I promise you she hath many a thousand stitched to her petticoat; such a wife would save thee from skeldering on the public.'

'My lord, I sell my blood and my sword, but not my honour,' answered the man sullenly; 'if I marry, my bed may be a poor, but it shall be an honest one.'

'Then thy wife will be the only honest matter in thy possession, Colonel—at least since I have known you,' replied the duke.

'Why, truly, your Grace may speak your pleasure on that point. It is chiefly your business which I have done of late; and if it were less strictly honest than I could have wished, the employer was to blame as well as the agent. But for marrying a cast-off mistress, the man (saving your Grace, to whom I am bound) lives not who dares propose it to me.'

The duke laughed loudly. 'Why, this is mine Ancient Pistol's vein,' he replied.

—'Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become,
And by my side wear steel?—then Lucifer take all!'

'My breeding is too plain to understand ends of playhouse verse, my lord,' said the Colonel

* A privateer.

sullenly. 'Has your Grace no other service to command me?'

'None—only I am told you have published a Narrative concerning the Plot.' *

'What should ail me, my lord?' said the Colonel; 'I hope I am a witness as competent as any that has yet appeared?'

'Truly, I think so to the full,' said the duke; 'and it would have been hard, when so much profitable mischief was going, if so excellent a Protestant as yourself had not come in for a share.'

'I came to take your Grace's commands, not to be the object of your wit,' said the colonel.

'Gallantly spoken, most resolute and most immaculate Colonel! As you are to be on full pay in my service for a month to come, I pray your acceptance of this purse, for contingents and equipments, and you shall have my instructions from time to time.'

'They shall be punctually obeyed, my lord,' said the Colonel; 'I know the duty of a subaltern officer. I wish your Grace a good morning.'

So saying, he pocketed the purse, without either affecting hesitation or expressing gratitude, but merely as a part of a transaction in the regular way of business, and stalked from the apartment with the same sullen gravity which marked his entrance. 'Now, there goes a scoundrel after my own heart,' said the duke; 'a robber from his cradle, a murderer since he could hold a knife, a profound hypocrite in religion, and a worse and deeper hypocrite in honour,—would sell his soul to the devil to accomplish any villany, and would cut the throat of his brother, did he dare to give the villany he had so acted its right name.—Now, why stand you amazed, good Master Jerningham, and look on me as you would on some monster of Ind, when you had paid your shilling to see it, and were staring out your pennyworth with your eyes as round as a pair of spectacles? Wink, man, and save them, and then let thy tongue untie the mystery.'

'On my word, my lord Duke,' answered Jerningham, 'since I am compelled to speak, I can only say, that the longer I live with your Grace, I am the more at a loss to fathom your motives of action. Others lay plans, either to attain profit or pleasure by their execution; but your Grace's delight is to counteract your own schemes, when in the very act of performance; like a child —forgive me—that breaks its favourite toy, or a man who should set fire to the house he has half built.'

'And why not, if he wanted to warm his hands at the blaze?' said the duke.

'Ay, my lord,' replied his dependant; 'but what if, in doing so, he should burn his fingers? —My lord, it is one of your noblest qualities, that you will sometimes listen to the truth without taking offence; but, were it otherwise, I could not, at this moment, help speaking out at every risk.'

'Well, say on, I can bear it,' said the duke, throwing himself into an easy-chair, and using his toothpick with graceful indifference and equanimity; 'I love to hear what such potsherds as thou art think of the proceedings of us who are of the pure porcelain clay of the earth.'

'In the name of Heaven, my lord, let me then ask you,' said Jerningham, 'what merit you claim, or what advantage you expect, from having embroiled everything in which you are concerned to a degree which equals the chaos of the blind old Roundhead's poem which your Grace is so fond of? To begin with the King. In spite of good-humour, he will be incensed at your repeated rivalry.'

'His Majesty defied me to it.'

'You have lost all hopes of the Isle, by quarrelling with Christian.'

'I have ceased to care a farthing about it,' replied the duke.

'In Christian himself, whom you have insulted, and to whose family you intend dishonour, you have lost a sagacious, artful, and cool-headed instrument and adherent,' said the monitor.

'Poor Jerningham!' answered the duke; 'Christian would say as much for thee, I doubt not, wert thou discarded to-morrow. It is the common error of such tools as you and he to think themselves indispensable. As to his family, what was never honourable cannot be dishonoured by any connection with my house.'

'I say nothing of Chiffinch,' said Jerningham, 'offended as he will be when he learns why, and by whom, his scheme has been ruined, and the lady spirited away—He and his wife, I say nothing of them.'

'You need not,' said the duke; 'for were they even fit persons to speak to me about, the Duchess of Portsmouth has bargained for their disgrace.'

'Then this bloodhound of a Colonel, as he calls himself, your Grace cannot even lay *him* on a quest which is to do you service, but you must do him such indignity at the same time, as he will not fail to remember, and be sure to fly at your throat should he ever have an opportunity of turning on you.'

'I will take care he has none,' said the duke; 'and yours, Jerningham, is a low-lived apprehension. Beat your spaniel heartily if you would have him under command. Ever let your agents see you know what they are, and prize them accordingly. A rogue, who must needs be treated as a man of honour, is apt to get above his work. Enough, therefore, of your advice and censure, Jerningham; we differ in every particular. Were we both engineers, you would spend your life in watching some old woman's wheel, which spins flax by the ounce; I must be in the midst of the most varied and counteracting machinery, regulating checks and counter-checks, balancing weights, proving springs and wheels, directing and controlling a hundred combined powers.'

'And your fortune, in the meanwhile?' said Jerningham; 'pardon this last hint, my lord.'

'My fortune,' said the duke, 'is too vast to be hurt by a petty wound; and I have, as thou knowest, a thousand salves in store for the scratches and scars which it sometimes receives in greasing my machinery.'

'Your Grace does not mean Doctor Wilderhead's powder of projection?'

'Pshaw! he is a quacksalver, and mountebank, and beggar.'

* Note Y. Colonel Blood's Narrative.

'Or Solicitor Drowndland's plan for draining the fens?'

'He is a cheat,—*videlicet*, an attorney.'

'Of the Laird of Lackpelf's sale of Highland woods?'

'He is a Scotsman,' said the duke,—'*videlicet*, both cheat and beggar.'

'These streets here, upon the site of your noble mansion-house?' said Jerningham.

'The architect's a bite, and the plan's a bubble. I am sick of the sight of this rubbish, and I will soon replace our old alcoves, alleys, and flower-pots, by an Italian garden and a new palace.'

'That, my lord, would be to waste, not to improve your fortune,' said his domestic.

'Clodpate, and muddy spirit that thou art, thou hast forgot the most hopeful scheme of all—the South Sea Fisheries—their stock is up 50 per cent. already. Post down to the Alley, and tell old Manasses to buy £20,000 for me. Forgive me, Plutus, I forgot to lay my sacrifice on thy shrine, and yet expected thy favours!—Fly post-haste, Jerningham—for thy life, for thy life, for thy life!'*

With hands and eyes uplifted, Jerningham left the apartment; and the duke, without thinking a moment further on old or new intrigues—on the friendship he had formed, or the enmity he had provoked—on the beauty whom he had carried off from her natural protectors, as well as from her lover—or on the monarch against whom he had placed himself in rivalship—sat down to calculate chances with all the zeal of Demoivre, tired of the drudgery in half-an-hour, and refused to see the zealous agent whom he had employed in the city, because he was busily engaged in writing a new lampoon.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Ah! changeful head, and fickle heart!
PROGRESS OF DISCONTENT.

No event is more ordinary in narratives of this nature, than the abduction of the female on whose fate the interest is supposed to turn; but that of Alice Bridgenorth was thus far particular, that she was spirited away by the Duke of Buckingham, more in contradiction than in the rivalry of passion; and that, as he made his first addresses to her at Chiffinch's rather in the spirit of rivalry to his sovereign, than from any strong impression which her beauty had made on his affections, so he had formed the sudden plan of spiriting her away by means of his dependants, rather to perplex Christian, the King, Chiffinch, and all concerned, than because he had any particular desire for her society at his own mansion. Indeed, so far was this from being the case, that his Grace was rather surprised than delighted with the success of the enterprise which had made her an inmate there, although it is probable he might have thrown himself into an uncontrollable passion, had he learned its miscarriage instead of its success.

Twenty-four hours had passed over since he had returned to his own roof, before, notwithstanding sundry hints from Jerningham, he could even determine on the exertion necessary to pay his fair captive a visit; and then it was with the internal reluctance of one who can only be stirred from indolence by novelty.

'I wonder what made me plague myself about this wench,' said he, 'and doom myself to encounter all the hysterical rhapsodies of a country Phillis, with her head stuffed with her grandmother's lessons about virtue and the Bible-book, when the finest and best-bred women in town may be had upon more easy terms. It is a pity one cannot mount the victor's car of triumph without having a victory to boast of; yet, faith, it is what most of our modern gallants do, though it would not become Buckingham.—Well, I must see her,' he concluded, 'though it were but to rid the house of her. The Portsmouth will not hear of her being set at liberty near Charles, so much is she afraid of a new fair seducing the old sinner from his allegiance. So how the girl is to be disposed of—for I shall have little fancy to keep her here, and she is too wealthy to be sent down to Cliefden as a housekeeper—is a matter to be thought on.'

He then called for such a dress as might set off his natural good mien—a compliment which he considered as due to his own merit; for, as to anything further, he went to pay his respects to his fair prisoner with almost as little zeal in the cause, as a gallant to fight a duel in which he has no warmer interest than the maintenance of his reputation as a man of honour.

The set of apartments consecrated to the use of those favourites who occasionally made Buckingham's mansion their place of abode, and who were, so far as liberty was concerned, often required to observe the regulations of a convent, were separated from the rest of the duke's extensive mansion. He lived in the age when what was called gallantry warranted the most atrocious actions of deceit and violence; as may be best illustrated by the catastrophe of an unfortunate actress, whose beauty attracted the attention of the last De Vere, Earl of Oxford. While her virtue defied his seductions, he ruined her under colour of a mock marriage, and was rewarded for a success which occasioned the death of his victim, by the general applause of the men of wit and gallantry who filled the drawing-room of Charles.

Buckingham had made provision in the interior of his ducal mansion for exploits of a similar nature; and the set of apartments which he now visited were alternately used to confine the reluctant, and to accommodate the willing.

Being now destined for the former purpose, the key was delivered to the duke by a hooded and spectacled old lady, who sat reading a devout book in the outer hall which divided these apartments (usually called the Nunnery) from the rest of the house. This experienced dowager acted as mistress of the ceremonies on such occasions, and was the trusty depositary of more

* Stock-jobbing, as it is called, that is, dealing in shares of monopolies, patent, and joint-stock companies of every description, was at least as common in Charles II.'s time as our own; and as the exercise of ingenuity in this way promised a road to wealth without the necessity of industry, it was then much pursued by dissolute courtiers.

intrigues than were known to any dozen of her worshipful calling besides.

'As sweet a linnet,' she said, as she undid the outward door, 'as ever sung in a cage.'

'I was afraid she might have been more for moping than for singing, Dowlas,' said the duke.

'Till yesterday she was so, please your Grace,' answered Dowlas; 'or, to speak sooth, till early this morning, we heard of nothing but Lachrymæ But the air of your noble Grace's house is favourable to singing-birds; and to-day matters have been a-much mended.'

''Tis sudden, dame,' said the duke; 'and 'tis something strange, considering that I have never visited her, that the pretty trembler should have been so soon reconciled to her fate.'

'Ah, your Grace has such magic, that it communicates itself to your very walls; as wholesome Scripture says, Exodus first and seventh, "It cleaveth to the walls and the door-posts"'

'You are too partial, Dame Dowlas,' said the Duke of Buckingham.

'Not a word but truth,' said the dame; 'and I wish I may be an outcast from the fold of the lambs, but I think this damsel's very frame has changed since she was under your Grace's roof. Methinks she hath a lighter form, a finer step, a more displayed ankle—I cannot tell, but I think there is a change. But, lack-a-day, your Grace knows I am as old as I am trusty, and that my eyes wax something uncertain.'

'Especially when you wash them with a cup of canary, Dame Dowlas,' answered the duke, who was aware that temperance was not amongst the cardinal virtues which were most familiar to the old lady's practice.

'Was it canary, your Grace said?—Was it indeed with canary that your Grace should have supposed me to have washed my eyes?' said the offended matron. 'I am sorry that your Grace should know me no better'

'I crave your pardon, dame,' said the duke, shaking aside fastidiously the grasp which, in the earnestness of her exculpation, Madam Dowlas had clutched upon his sleeve. 'I crave your pardon. Your nearer approach has convinced me of my erroneous imputation—I should have said nantz—not canary.'

So saying, he walked forward into the inner apartments, which were fitted up with an air of voluptuous magnificence.

'The dame said true, however,' said the proud deviser and proprietor of the splendid mansion—'A country Phillis might well reconcile herself to such a prison as this, even without a skilful bird-fancier to touch a bird-call. But I wonder where she can be, this rural Phidele. Is it possible she can have retreated, like a despairing commandant, into her bedchamber, the very citadel of the place, without even an attempt to defend the outworks?'

As he made this reflection, he passed through an antechamber and little eating parlour, exquisitely furnished, and hung with excellent paintings of the Venetian school.

Beyond these lay a withdrawing-room, fitted up in a style of still more studied elegance. The windows were darkened with painted glass, of such a deep and rich colour, as made the mid-day beams, which found their way into the apartment, imitate the rich colours of sunset; and, in the celebrated expression of the poet, 'taught light to counterfeit a gloom.'

Buckingham's feelings and taste had been too much, and too often, and too readily gratified, to permit him, in the general case, to be easily accessible even to those pleasures which it had been the business of his life to pursue. The hackneyed voluptuary is like the jaded epicure, the mere listlessness of whose appetite becomes at length a sufficient penalty for having made it the principal object of his enjoyment and cultivation. Yet novelty has always some charms, and uncertainty has more.

The doubt how he was to be received—the change of mood which his prisoner was said to have evinced—the curiosity to know how such a creature as Alice Bridgenorth had been described was likely to bear herself under the circumstances in which she was so unexpectedly placed—had upon Buckingham the effect of exciting unusual interest. On his own part, he had none of those feelings of anxiety with which a man, even of the most vulgar mind, comes to the presence of the female whom he wishes to please, far less the more refined sentiments of love, respect, desire, and awe, with which the more refined lover approaches the beloved object. He had been, to use an expressive French phrase, too completely *blasé* even from his earliest youth to permit him now to experience the animal eagerness of the one, far less the more sentimental pleasure of the other. It is no small aggravation of this jaded and uncomfortable state of mind, that the voluptuary cannot renounce the pursuits with which he is satiated, but must continue, for his character's sake, or from the mere force of habit, to take all the toil, fatigue, and danger of the chase, while he has so little real interest in the termination.

Buckingham, therefore, felt it due to his reputation, as a successful hero of intrigue, to pay his addresses to Alice Bridgenorth with dissembled eagerness; and, as he opened the door of the inner apartment, he paused to consider whether the tone of gallantry or that of passion was fittest to use on the occasion. This delay enabled him to hear a few notes of a lute touched with exquisite skill, and accompanied by the still sweeter strains of a female voice, which, without executing any complete melody, seemed to sport itself in rivalship of the silver sound of the instrument.

'A creature so well educated,' said the duke, 'with the sense she is said to possess, would, rustic as she is, laugh at the assumed rants of Oroondates. It is the vein of Dorimont—once, Buckingham, thine own—that must here do the feat, besides that the part is easier.'

So thinking, he entered the room with that easy grace which characterized the gay courtiers among whom he flourished, and approached the fair tenant, whom he found seated near a table covered with books and music, and having on her left hand the large half-open casement, dim with stained glass, admitting only a doubtful light into this lordly retiring-room, which, hung with the richest tapestry of the Gobelines, and ornamented with piles of china and splendid

mirrors, seemed like a bower built for a prince to receive his bride.

The splendid dress of the inmate corresponded with the taste of the apartment which she occupied, and partook of the Oriental costume which the much-admired Roxalana had then brought into fashion. A slender foot and ankle, which escaped from the wide trouser of richly ornamented and embroidered blue satin, was the only part of her person distinctly seen; the rest was enveloped, from head to foot, in a long veil of silver gauze, which, like a feathery and light mist on a beautiful landscape, suffered you to perceive that what it concealed was rarely lovely, yet induced the imagination even to enhance the charms it shaded. Such part of the dress as could be discovered was, like the veil and the trousers, in the Oriental taste; a rich turban and splendid caftan were rather indicated than distinguished through the folds of the former. The whole attire argued at least coquetry on the part of a fair one, who must have expected, from her situation, a visitor of some pretension: and induced Buckingham to smile internally at Christian's account of the extreme simplicity and purity of his niece.

He approached the lady *en cavalier*, and addressed her with the air of being conscious, while he acknowledged his offences, that his condescending to do so formed a sufficient apology for them. 'Fair Mistress Alice,' he said, 'I am sensible how deeply I ought to sue for pardon for the mistaken zeal of my servants, who, seeing you deserted and exposed without protection, during an unlucky affray, took it upon them to bring you under the roof of one who would expose his life rather than suffer you to sustain a moment's anxiety. Was it my fault that those around me should have judged it necessary to interfere for your preservation; or that, aware of the interest I must take in you, they have detained you till I could myself, in personal attendance, receive your commands?'

'That attendance has not been speedily rendered, my lord,' answered the lady. 'I have been a prisoner for two days—neglected, and left to the charge of menials.'

'How say you, lady? Neglected?' exclaimed the duke. 'By Heaven, if the best in my household has failed in his duty, I will discard him on the instant!'

'I complain of no lack of courtesy from your servants, my lord,' she replied; 'but methinks it had been but complaisant in the Duke himself to explain to me earlier wherefore he has had the boldness to detain me as a State prisoner.'

'And can the divine Alice doubt,' said Buckingham, 'that, had time and space, those cruel enemies to the flight of passion, given permission, the instant in which you crossed your vassal's threshold had seen its devoted master at your feet, who hath thought, since he saw you, of nothing but the charms which that fatal morning placed before him at Chiffinch's?'

'I understand, then, my lord,' said the lady, 'that you have been absent, and have had no part in the restraint which has been exercised upon me?'

'Absent on the King's command, lady, and employed in the discharge of his duty,' answered Buckingham without hesitation. 'What could I do?—The moment you left Chiffinch's, his Majesty commanded me to the saddle in such haste, that I had no time to change my satin buskins for riding-boots.* If my absence has occasioned you a moment of inconvenience, blame the inconsiderate zeal of those who, seeing me depart from London half distracted at my separation from you, were willing to contribute their unmannered, though well-meant exertions, to preserve their master from despair, by retaining the fair Alice within his reach. To whom, indeed, could they have restored you? He whom you selected as your champion is in prison, or fled—your father absent from town—your uncle in the north. To Chiffinch's house you had expressed your well-founded aversion; and what fitter asylum remained than that of your devoted slave, where you must ever reign a queen?'

'An imprisoned one,' said the lady. 'I desire not such royalty.'

'Alas! how wilfully you misconstrue me!' said the duke, kneeling on one knee; 'and what right can you have to complain of a few hours' gentle restraint—you, who destine so many to hopeless captivity? Be merciful for once, and withdraw that envious veil; for the divinities are ever most cruel when they deliver their oracles from such clouded recesses. Suffer at least my rash hand'——

'I will save your Grace that unworthy trouble,' said the lady haughtily; and, rising up, she flung back over her shoulders the veil which shrouded her, saying, at the same time, 'Look on me, my lord Duke, and see if these be indeed the charms which have made on your Grace an impression so powerful.'

Buckingham did look; and the effect produced on him by surprise was so strong, that he rose hastily from his knee, and remained for a few seconds as if he had been petrified. The figure that stood before him had neither the height nor the rich shape of Alice Bridgenorth; and, though perfectly well made, was so slightly formed as to seem almost infantine. Her dress was three or four short vests of embroidered satin, disposed one over the other, of different colours, or rather different shades of similar colours; for strong contrast was carefully avoided. These opened in front, so as to show part of the throat and neck, partially obscured by an inner covering of the finest lace; over the uppermost vest was worn a sort of mantle, or coat of rich fur. A small but magnificent turban was carelessly placed on her head, from under which flowed a profusion of coal-black tresses, which Cleopatra might have envied. The taste and splendour of the Eastern dress corresponded with the complexion of the lady's face, which was brunette, of a shade so dark as might almost have served an Indian.

Amidst a set of features, in which rapid and keen expression made amends for the want of

* This case is not without precedent. Among the jealousies and fears expressed by the Long Parliament, they insisted much upon an agent for the king departing for the Continent so abruptly, that he had not time to change his court dress—white buskins, to wit, and black silk pantaloons—for an equipment more suitable to travel with.

regular beauty, the essential points of eyes as bright as diamonds, and teeth as white as pearls, did not escape the Duke of Buckingham, a professed connoisseur in female charms. In a word, the fanciful and singular female who thus unexpectedly produced herself before him, had one of those faces which are never seen without making an impression; which, when removed, are long after remembered; and for which, in our idleness, we are tempted to invent a hundred histories, that we may please our fancy by supposing the features under the influence of different kinds of emotion. Every one must have in recollection countenances of this kind, which, from a captivating and stimulating originality of expression, abide longer in the memory, and are more seductive to the imagination, than even regular beauty.

'My lord Duke,' said the lady, 'it seems the lifting of my veil has done the work of magic upon your Grace. Alas for the captive princess, whose nod was to command a vassal so costly as your Grace! She runs, methinks, no slight chance of being turned out of doors, like a second Cinderella, to seek her fortune among lackeys and lightermen.'

'I am astonished!' said the duke. 'That villain Jerningham—I will have the scoundrel's blood!'

'Nay, never abuse Jerningham for the matter,' said the Unknown; 'but lament your own unhappy engagements. While you, my lord Duke, were posting northward, in white satin buskins, to toil in the King's affairs, the right and lawful princess sat weeping in sables in the uncheered solitude to which your absence condemned her. Two days she was disconsolate in vain; on the third came an African enchantress to change the scene for her, and the person for your Grace. Methinks, my lord, this adventure will tell but ill, when some faithful squire shall recount or record the gallant adventures of the second Duke of Buckingham.'

'Fairly bit and bantered to boot,' said the duke—'the monkey has a turn for satire, too, by all that is *piquant*. Hark ye, fair princess, how dared you adventure on such a trick as you have been accomplice to?'

'Dare, my lord!' answered the stranger; 'put the question to others, not to one who fears nothing.'

'By my faith, I believe so; for thy front is bronzed by nature.—Hark ye, once more, mistress—What is your name and condition?'

'My condition I have told you—I am a Mauritanian sorceress by profession, and my name is Zarah,' replied the Eastern maiden.

'But methinks that face, shape, and eyes,' said the duke—'when didst thou pass for a dancing fairy?—Some such imp thou wert not many days since.'

'My sister you may have seen—my twin sister;' but not me, my lord,' answered Zarah.

'Indeed,' said the duke, 'that duplicate of thine, if it was not thy very self, was possessed with a dumb spirit, as thou with a talking one. I am still in the mind that you are the same; and that Satan, always so powerful with your sex, had art enough, on our former meeting, to make thee hold thy tongue.'

'Believe what you will of it, my lord,' replied Zarah, 'it cannot change the truth.—And now, my lord, I bid you farewell. Have you any commands to Mauritania?'

'Tarry a little, my princess,' said the duke; 'and remember that you have voluntarily entered yourself as pledge for another; and are justly subjected to any penalty which it is my pleasure to exact. None must brave Buckingham with impunity.'

'I am in no hurry to depart, if your Grace hath any commands for me.'

'What! are you neither afraid of my resentment nor of my love, fair Zarah?' said the duke.

'Of neither, by this glove,' answered the lady. 'Your resentment must be a petty passion indeed, if it could stoop to such a helpless object as I am; and for your love—good lack! good lack!'

'And why good lack with such a tone of contempt, lady?' said the duke, piqued in spite of himself. 'Think you Buckingham cannot love, or has never been beloved in return?'

'He may have thought himself beloved,' said the maiden; 'but by what slight creatures!—things whose heads could be rendered giddy by a playhouse rant—whose brains were only filled with red-heeled shoes and satin buskins—and who run altogether mad on the argument of a George and a star.'

'And are there no such frail fair ones in your climate, most scornful princess?' said the duke.

'There are,' said the lady; 'but men rate them as parrots and monkeys—things without either sense or soul, head or heart. The nearness we bear to the sun has purified, while it strengthens, our passions. The icicles of your frozen climate shall as soon hammer hot bars into ploughshares, as shall the foppery and folly of your pretended gallantry make an instant's impression on a breast like mine.'

'You speak like one who knows what passion is,' said the duke. 'Sit down, fair lady, and grieve not that I detain you. Who can consent to part with a tongue of so much melody, or an eye of such expressive eloquence!—You have known, then, what it is to love?'

'I know—no matter if by experience, or through the report of others—but I do know, that to love, as I would love, would be to yield not an iota to avarice, not one inch to vanity, not to sacrifice the slightest feeling to interest or to ambition; but to give up all to fidelity of heart and reciprocal affection.'

'And how many women, think you, are capable of feeling such disinterested passion?'

'More, by thousands, than there are men who merit it,' answered Zarah. 'Alas! how often do you see the female, pale, and wretched, and degraded, still following with patient constancy the footsteps of some predominating tyrant, and submitting to all his injustice with the endurance of a faithful and misused spaniel, which prizes a look from his master, though the surliest groom that ever disgraced humanity, more than all the pleasure which the world besides can furnish him! Think what such would be to one who merited and repaid her devotion.'

'Perhaps the very reverse,' said the duke; 'and for your simile, I can see little resemblance.

I cannot charge my spaniel with any perfidy; but for my mistresses—to confess truth, I must always be in a cursed hurry if I would have the credit of changing them before they leave me.'

'And they serve you but rightly, my lord,' answered the lady; 'for what are you?—Nay, frown not; for you must hear the truth for once. Nature has done its part, and made a fair outside, and courtly education hath added its share. You are noble, it is the accident of birth—handsome, it is the caprice of nature—generous, because to give is more easy than to refuse—well-apparelled, it is to the credit of your tailor—well-natured in the main, because you have youth and health—brave, because to be otherwise were to be degraded—and witty, because you cannot help it.'

The duke darted a glance on one of the large mirrors. 'Noble, and handsome, and court-like, generous, well-attired, good-humoured, brave, and witty!—You allow me more, madam, than I have the slightest pretension to, and surely enough to make my way, at some point at least, to female favour.'

'I have neither allowed you a heart nor a head,' said Zarah calmly.—'Nay, never redden as if you would fly at me. I say not but nature may have given you both: but folly has confounded the one, and selfishness perverted the other. The man whom I call deserving the name, is one whose thoughts and exertions are for others, rather than himself—whose high purpose is adopted on just principles, and never abandoned while heaven or earth affords means of accomplishing it. He is one who will neither seek an indirect advantage by a specious road, nor take an evil path to gain a real good purpose. Such a man were one for whom a woman's heart should beat constant while he breathes, and break when he dies.'

She spoke with so much energy that the water sparkled in her eyes, and her cheek coloured with the vehemence of her feelings.

'You speak,' said the duke, 'as if you had yourself a heart which could pay the full tribute to the merit which you describe so warmly.'

'And have I not?' said she, laying her hand on her bosom. 'Here beats one that would bear me out in what I have said, whether in life or in death.'

'Were it in my power,' said the duke, who began to get further interested in his visitor than he could at first have thought possible—'Were it in my power to deserve such faithful attachment, methinks it should be my care to requite it.'

'Your wealth, your titles, your reputation as a gallant—all you possess were too little to merit such sincere affection.'

'Come, fair lady,' said the duke, a good deal piqued, 'do not be quite so disdainful. Bethink you that, if your love be as pure as coined gold, still a poor fellow like myself may offer you an equivalent in silver—The quantity of my affection must make up for its quality.'

'But I am not carrying my affection to market, my lord; and therefore I need none of the base coin you offer in change for it.'

'How do I know that, my fairest?' said the duke. 'This is the realm of Paphos—You have invaded it, with what purpose you best know; but I think with none consistent with your present assumption of cruelty. Come, come—eyes that are so intelligent can laugh with delight as well as gleam with scorn and anger. You are here a waif on Cupid's manor, and I must seize on you in name of the deity.'

'Do not think of touching me, my lord,' said the lady. 'Approach me not, if you would hope to learn the purpose of my being here. Your Grace may suppose yourself a Solomon if you please; but I am no travelling princess, come from distant climes, either to flatter your pride, or wonder at your glory.'

'A defiance, by Jupiter!' said the duke.

'You mistake the signal,' said the 'dark ladye;' 'I came not here without taking sufficient precautions for my retreat.'

'You mouth it bravely,' said the duke; 'but never fortress so boasted its resources but the garrison had some thoughts of surrender. Thus I open the first parallel.'

They had been hitherto divided from each other by a long narrow table, which, placed in the recess of the large casement we have mentioned, had formed a sort of barrier on the lady's side against the adventurous gallant. The duke went hastily to remove it as he spoke; but, attentive to all his motions, his visitor instantly darted through the half-open window. Buckingham uttered a cry of horror and surprise, having no doubt, at first, that she had precipitated herself from a height of at least fourteen feet; for so far the window was distant from the ground. But when he sprung to the spot, he perceived, to his astonishment, that she had effected her descent with equal agility and safety.

The outside of this stately mansion was decorated with a quantity of carving, in the mixed state, betwixt the Gothic and Grecian styles, which marks the age of Elizabeth and her successor; and, though the feat seemed a surprising one, the projections of these ornaments were sufficient to afford footing to a creature so light and active, even in her hasty descent.

Inflamed alike by mortification and curiosity, Buckingham at first entertained some thought of following her by the same dangerous route, and had actually got upon the sill of the window for that purpose; and was contemplating what might be his next safe movement, when, from a neighbouring thicket of shrubs, amongst which his visitor had disappeared, he heard her chant a verse of a comic song, then much in fashion, concerning a despairing lover who had recourse to a precipice—

> But when he came near,
> Beholding how steep
> The sides did appear,
> And the bottom how deep;
> Though his suit was rejected,
> He sadly reflected
> That a lover forsaken
> A new love may get;
> But a neck that's once broken
> Can never be set.

The duke could not help laughing, though much against his will, at the resemblance which the verses bore to his own absurd situation, and, stepping back into the apartment, desisted from

an attempt which might have proved dangerous as well as ridiculous. He called his attendants, and contented himself with watching the little thicket, unwilling to think that a female who had thrown herself in a great measure into his way, meant absolutely to mortify him by a retreat.

That question was determined in an instant. A form, wrapped in a mantle, with a slouched hat and shadowy plume, issued from the bushes, and was lost in a moment amongst the ruins of ancient and of modern buildings, with which, as we have already stated, the demesne formerly termed York House was now encumbered in all directions.

The duke's servants, who had obeyed his impatient summons, were hastily directed to search for this tantalizing siren in every direction. Their master, in the meantime, eager and vehement in every new pursuit, but especially when his vanity was piqued, encouraged their diligence by bribes, and threats, and commands. All was in vain. They found nothing of the Mauritanian princess, as she called herself, but the turban and the veil; both of which she had left in the thicket, together with her satin slippers; which articles, doubtless, she had thrown aside as she exchanged them for others less remarkable.

Finding all his search in vain, the Duke of Buckingham, after the example of spoiled children of all ages and stations, gave a loose to the frantic vehemence of passion; and fiercely he swore vengeance on his late visitor, whom he termed by a thousand opprobrious epithets, of which the elegant phrase 'jilt' was most frequently repeated.

Even Jerningham, who knew the depths and shallows of his master's mood, and was bold to fathom them at almost every state of his passions, kept out of his way on the present occasion; and, cabineted with the pious old housekeeper, declared to her, over a bottle of ratafia, that, in his apprehension, if his Grace did not learn to put some control on his temper, chains, darkness, straw, and Bedlam, would be the final doom of the gifted and admired Duke of Buckingham.

CHAPTER XL.

——Contentions fierce,
Ardent, and dire, spring from no petty cau

THE quarrels between man and wife are proverbial; but let not these honest folks think that connections of a less permanent nature are free from similar jars. The frolic of the Duke of Buckingham, and the subsequent escape of Alice Bridgenorth, had kindled fierce dissension in Chiffinch's family, when, on his arrival in town, he learned these two stunning events. 'I tell you,' he said to his obliging helpmate, who seemed but little moved by all that he could say on the subject, 'that your d—d carelessness has ruined the work of years.'

'I think it is the twentieth time you have said so,' replied the dame; 'and, without such frequent assurance, I was quite ready to believe that a very trifling matter would overset any scheme of yours, however long thought of.'

'How on earth could you have the folly to let the Duke into the house when you expected the King?' said the irritated courtier.

'Lord, Chiffinch,' answered the lady, 'ought not you to ask the porter, rather than me, that sort of question?—I was putting on my cap to receive his Majesty.'

'With the address of a madge-howlet,' said Chiffinch; 'and in the meanwhile you gave the cat the cream to keep.'

'Indeed, Chiffinch,' said the lady, 'these jaunts to the country do render you excessively vulgar! there is a brutality about your very boots! nay, your muslin ruffles, being somewhat soiled, give to your knuckles a sort of rural rusticity, as I may call it.'

'It were a good deed,' muttered Chiffinch, 'to make both boots and knuckles bang the folly and affectation out of thee.' Then, speaking aloud, he added, like a man who would fain break off an argument, by extorting from his adversary a confession that he has reason on his side, 'I am sure, Kate, you must be sensible that our all depends on his Majesty's pleasure.'

'Leave that to me,' said she; 'I know how to pleasure his Majesty better than you can teach me. Do you think his Majesty is booby enough to cry like a schoolboy because his sparrow has flown away? His Majesty has better taste. I am surprised at you, Chiffinch,' she added, drawing herself up, 'who were once thought to know the points of a fine woman, that you should have made such a roaring about this country wench. Why, she has not even the country quality of being plump as a barn-door fowl, but is more like a Dunstable lark, that one must crack bones and all if you would make a mouthful of it. What signifies whence she came, or where she goes? There will be those behind that are much more worthy of his Majesty's condescending attention, even when the Duchess of Portsmouth takes the frumps.'

'You mean your neighbour, Mistress Nelly,' said her worthy helpmate; 'but, Kate, her date is out. Wit she has, let her keep herself warm with it in worse company, for the cant of a gang of strollers is not language for a prince's chamber.' *

'It is no matter what I mean, or whom I mean,' said Mrs. Chiffinch; 'but I tell you, Tom Chiffinch, that you will find your master quite consoled for loss of the piece of prudish Puritanism that you would needs saddle him with; as if the good man were not plagued enough with them in Parliament, but you must, forsooth, bring them into his very bed-chamber.'

'Well, Kate,' said Chiffinch, 'if a man were to speak all the sense of the seven wise masters, a woman would find nonsense enough to over-

* In Evelyn's Memoirs is the following curious passage respecting Nell Gwyn, who is hinted at in the text:—'I walked with him [King Charles II.] through Saint James' Park to the garden, where I both saw and heard a very familiar discourse between . . . [*the King*] and Mistress Nelly, as they called her, an intimate comedian, she looking out of her garden on a terrace at the top of the wall, and [*the King*] standing on the green walk under it. I was heartily sorry at this scene.'—EVELYN'S *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 413.

whelm him with; so I shall say no more, but that I would to Heaven I may find the King in no worse humour than you describe him. I am commanded to attend him down the river to the Tower to-day, where he is to make some survey of arms and stores. They are clever fellows who contrive to keep Rowley from engaging in business, for, by my word, he has a turn for it.'

'I warrant you,' said Chiffinch the female, nodding, but rather to her own figure, reflected from a mirror, than to her politic husband,—'I warrant you we will find means of occupying him that will sufficiently fill up his time.'

'On my honour, Kate,' said the male Chiffinch, 'I find you strangely altered, and, to speak truth, grown most extremely opinionative. I shall be happy if you have good reason for your confidence.'

The dame smiled superciliously, but deigned no other answer, unless this were one,—'I shall order a boat to go upon the Thames to-day with the royal party.'

'Take care what you do, Kate; there are none dare presume so far but women of the first rank,—Duchess of Bolton—of Buckingham—of'——

'Who cares for a list of names? why may not I be as forward as the greatest B. amongst your string of them?'

'Nay, faith, thou mayest match the greatest B. in court already,' answered Chiffinch; 'so e'en take thy own course of it. But do not let Chaubert forget to get some collation ready, and a *souper au petit couvert*, in case it should be commanded for the evening.'

'Ay, there your boasted knowledge of court matters begins and ends.—Chiffinch, Chaubert, and Company;—dissolve that partnership, and you break Tom Chiffinch for a courtier.'

'Amen, Kate,' replied Chiffinch; 'and let me tell you it is as safe to rely on another person's fingers as on your own wit. But I must give orders for the water. If you will take the pinnace, there are the cloth-of-gold cushions in the chapel may serve to cover the benches for the day. They are never wanted where they lie, so you may make free with them too.'

Madam Chiffinch accordingly mingled with the flotilla which attended the King on his voyage down the Thames, amongst whom was the Queen, attended by some of the principal ladies of the court. The little plump Cleopatra, dressed to as much advantage as her taste could devise, and seated upon her embroidered cushions like Venus in her shell, neglected nothing that effrontery and *minauderie* could perform to draw upon herself some portion of the King's observation; but Charles was not in the vein, and did not even pay her the slightest passing attention of any kind, until her boatmen, having ventured to approach nearer to the Queen's barge than etiquette permitted, received a peremptory order to back their oars and fall out of the royal procession. Madam Chiffinch cried for spite, and transgressed Solomon's warning, by cursing the King in her heart; but had no better course than to return to Westminster, and direct Chaubert's preparations for the evening.

In the meantime, the royal barge paused at the Tower; and, accompanied by a laughing train of ladies and of courtiers, the gay monarch made the echoes of the old prison-towers ring with the unwonted sounds of mirth and revelry. As they ascended from the river-side to the centre of the building, where the fine old keep of William the Conqueror, called the White Tower, predominates over the exterior defences, Heaven only knows how many gallant jests, good or bad, were run on the comparison of his Majesty's State prison to that of Cupid, and what killing similes were drawn between the ladies' eyes and the guns of the fortress, which, spoken with a fashionable *congée*, and listened to with a smile from a fair lady, formed the fine conversation of the day.

This gay swarm of flutterers did not, however, attend close on the King's person, though they had accompanied him upon his party on the river. Charles, who often formed manly and sensible resolutions, though he was too easily diverted from them by indolence or pleasure, had some desire to make himself personally acquainted with the state of the military stores, arms, etc., of which the Tower was then, as now, the magazine; and, although he had brought with him the usual number of his courtiers, only three or four attended him on the scrutiny which he intended. Whilst, therefore, the rest of the train amused themselves as they might in other parts of the Tower, the King, accompanied by the Dukes of Buckingham, Ormond, and one or two others, walked through the well-known hall, in which is preserved the most splendid magazine of arms in the world, and which, though far from exhibiting its present extraordinary state of perfection, was even then an arsenal worthy of the great nation to which it belonged.

The Duke of Ormond, well known for his services during the great Civil War, was, as we have elsewhere noticed, at present rather on cold terms with his sovereign, who nevertheless asked his advice on many occasions, and who required it on the present amongst others, when it was not a little feared that the Parliament, in their zeal for the Protestant religion, might desire to take the magazines of arms and ammunition under their own exclusive orders. While Charles sadly hinted at such a termination of the popular jealousies of the period, and discussed with Ormond the means of resisting, or evading it, Buckingham, falling a little behind, amused himself with ridiculing the antiquated appearance and embarrassed demeanour of the old warder who attended on the occasion, and who chanced to be the very same that escorted Julian Peveril to his present place of confinement. The duke prosecuted his raillery with the greater activity, that he found the old man, though restrained by the place and presence, was rather upon the whole testy, and disposed to afford what sportsmen call *play* to his persecutor. The various pieces of ancient armour with which the wall was covered, afforded the principal source of the duke's wit, as he insisted upon knowing from the old man, who, he said, could best remember matters from the days of King Arthur downwards at the least, the history of the different warlike weapons, and anecdotes of the battles in which they had been wielded. The old man ob-

viously suffered, when he was obliged, by repeated questions, to tell the legends (often sufficiently absurd) which the tradition of the place had assigned to particular relics. Far from flourishing his partisan, and augmenting the emphasis of his voice, as was and is the prevailing fashion of these warlike *ciceroni*, it was scarcely possible to extort from him a single word concerning those topics on which their information is usually overflowing.

'Do you know, my friend,' said the duke to him at last, 'I begin to change my mind respecting you. I supposed you must have served as a Yeoman of the Guard since bluff King Henry's time, and expected to hear something from you about the Field of the Cloth of Gold,--and I thought of asking you the colour of Anne Bullen's breast-knot, which cost the Pope three kingdoms; but I am afraid you are but a novice in such recollections of love and chivalry. Art sure thou didst not creep into thy warlike office from some dark shop in the Tower Hamlets, and that thou hast not converted an unlawful measuring-yard into that glorious halberd? I warrant thou canst not even tell one whom this piece of antique panoply pertained to?'

The duke pointed at random to a cuirass which hung amongst others, but was rather remarkable from being better cleansed.

'I should know that piece of iron,' said the warder bluntly, yet with some change in his voice; 'for I have known a man within side of it who would not have endured half the impertinence I have heard spoken to-day.'

The tone of the old man, as well as the words, attracted the attention of Charles and the Duke of Ormond, who were only two steps before the speaker. They both stopped, and turned round; the former saying at the same time,--'How now, sirrah!--what answers are these?--What man do you speak of?'

'Of one who is none now,' said the warder, 'whatever he may have been.'

'The old man surely speaks of himself,' said the Duke of Ormond, closely examining the countenance of the warder, which he in vain endeavoured to turn away. 'I am sure I remember these features--Are not you my old friend, Major Coleby?'

'I wish your Grace's memory had been less accurate,' said the old man, colouring deeply, and fixing his eyes on the ground.

The king was greatly shocked.--'Good God!' he said, 'the gallant Major Coleby, who joined us with his four sons and a hundred and fifty men at Warrington!--And is this all we could do for an old Worcester friend?'

The tears rushed thick into the old man's eyes as he said, in broken accents, 'Never mind me, sire; I am well enough here--a worn-out soldier rusting among old armour. Where one old Cavalier is better, there are twenty worse.--I am sorry your Majesty should know anything of it, since it grieves you.'

With that kindness which was a redeeming point of his character, Charles, while the old man was speaking, took the partisan from him with his own hand, and put it into that of Buckingham, saying, 'What Coleby's hand has borne, can disgrace neither yours nor mine,--and you owe him this atonement. Time has been with him, that, for less provocation, he would have laid it about your ears.'

The duke bowed deeply, but coloured with resentment, and took an immediate opportunity to place the weapon carelessly against a pile of arms. The King did not observe a contemptuous motion, which, perhaps, would not have pleased him, being at the moment occupied with the veteran, whom he exhorted to lean upon him, as he conveyed him to a seat, permitting no other person to assist him. 'Rest there,' he said, 'my brave old friend; and Charles Stuart must be poor indeed, if you wear that dress an hour longer.--You look very pale, my good Coleby, to have had so much colour a few minutes since. Be not vexed at what Buckingham says, no one minds his folly.--You look worse and worse. Come, come, you are too much hurried by this meeting. Sit still--do not rise--do not attempt to kneel. I command you to repose yourself till I have made the round of these apartments.'

The old cavalier stooped his head in token of acquiescence in the command of his sovereign, but he raised it not again. The tumultuous agitation of the moment had been too much for spirits which had been long in a state of depression, and health which was much decayed. When the King and his attendants, after half-an-hour's absence, returned to the spot where they had left the veteran, they found him dead, and already cold, in the attitude of one who has fallen easily asleep. The King was dreadfully shocked; and it was with a low and faltering voice that he directed the body, in due time, to be honourably buried in the chapel of the Tower.* He was then silent, until he attained the steps in front of the arsenal, where the party in attendance upon his person began to assemble at his approach, along with some other persons of respectable appearance, whom curiosity had attracted.

'This is dreadful,' said the King. 'We must find some means of relieving the distresses and rewarding the fidelity of our suffering followers, or posterity will cry fie upon our memory.'

'Your Majesty has had often such plans agitated in your Council,' said Buckingham.

'True, George,' said the King. 'I can safely say it is not my fault. I have thought of it for years.'

'It cannot be too well considered,' said Buckingham; 'besides, every year makes the task of relief easier.'

'True,' said the Duke of Ormond, 'by diminishing the number of sufferers. Here is poor old Coleby will no longer be a burden to the crown.'

'You are too severe, my Lord of Ormond,' said the King, 'and should respect the feelings you trespass on. You cannot suppose that we would have permitted this poor man to hold such a situation, had we known of the circumstance?'

* A story of this nature is current in the legends of the Tower. The affecting circumstances are, I believe, recorded in one of the little manuals which are put into the hands of visitors, but are not to be found in the later editions.

'For God's sake, then, sire,' said the Duke of Ormond, 'turn your eyes, which have just rested on the corpse of one old friend, upon the distresses of others. Here is the valiant old Sir Geoffrey Peveril of the Peak, who fought through the whole war, wherever blows were going, and was the last man, I believe, in England, who laid down his arms—Here is his son, of whom I have the highest accounts, as a gallant of spirit, accomplishments, and courage—Here is the unfortunate House of Derby—For pity's sake, interfere in behalf of these victims, whom the folds of this hydra-plot have entangled, in order to crush them to death—rebuke the fiends that are seeking to devour their lives, and disappoint the harpies that are gaping for their property. This very day seven-night, the unfortunate family, father and son, are to be brought upon trial for crimes of which they are as guiltless, I boldly pronounce, as any who stand in this presence. For God's sake, sire, let us hope that, should the prejudices of the people condemn them, as it has done others, you will at last step in between the blood-hunters and their prey.'

The King looked, as he really was, exceedingly perplexed.

Buckingham, between whom and Ormond there existed a constant and almost mortal quarrel, interfered to effect a diversion in Charles's favour. 'Your Majesty's royal benevolence,' he said, 'needs never want exercise, while the Duke of Ormond is near your person. He has his sleeve cut in the old and ample fashion, that he may always have store of ruined cavaliers stowed in it to produce at demand, rare old raw-boned boys, with Malmsey noses, bald heads, spindle shanks, and merciless histories of Edgehill and Naseby.'

'My sleeve is, I daresay, of an antique cut,' said Ormond, looking full at the duke; 'but I pin neither bravoes nor ruffians upon it, my Lord of Buckingham, as I see fastened to coats of the new mode.'

'That is a little too sharp for our presence, my lord,' said the King.

'Not if I make my words good,' said Ormond. —'My Lord of Buckingham, will you name the man you spoke to as you left the boat?'

'I spoke to no one,' said the duke hastily— 'Nay, I mistake, I remember a fellow whispered in my ear, that one, who I thought had left London, was still lingering in town. A person whom I had business with.'

'Was yon the messenger?' said Ormond, singling out from the crowd, who stood in the court-yard, a tall, dark-looking man, muffled in a large cloak, wearing a broad shadowy black beaver hat, with a long sword of the Spanish fashion—the very Colonel, in short, whom Buckingham had despatched in quest of Christian, with the intention of detaining him in the country.

When Buckingham's eyes had followed the direction of Ormond's finger, he could not help blushing so deeply as to attract the King's attention.*

'What new frolic is this, George?' he said. 'Gentlemen, bring that fellow forward.—On my life, a truculent-looking caitiff.—Hark ye, friend, who are you? If an honest man, Nature has forgot to label it upon your countenance.—Does none here know him?

> With every symptom of a knave complete,
> If he be honest, he's a devilish cheat.'

'He is well known to many, sire,' replied Ormond; 'and that he walks in this area with his neck safe, and his limbs unshackled, is an instance, amongst many, that we live under the sway of the most merciful prince of Europe.'

'Oddsfish! who is the man, my lord Duke?' said the King. 'Your Grace talks mysteries—Buckingham blushes—and the rogue himself is dumb.'

'That honest gentleman, please your Majesty,' replied the Duke of Ormond, 'whose modesty makes him mute, though it cannot make him blush, is the notorious Colonel Blood, as he calls himself, whose attempt to possess himself of your Majesty's royal crown took place at no very distant date, in this very Tower of London.'

'That exploit is not easily forgotten,' said the King; 'but that the fellow lives, shows your Grace's clemency as well as mine.'

'I cannot deny that I was in his hands, sire,' said Ormond, 'and had certainly been murdered by him, had he chosen to take my life on the spot, instead of destining me—I thank him for the honour—to be hanged at Tyburn. I had certainly been sped, if he had thought me worth knife or pistol, or anything short of the cord.—Look at him, sire! If the rascal dared, he would say at this moment, like Caliban in the play, "Ho, ho, I would I had done it!"'

'Why, oddsfish!' answered the King, 'he hath a villanous sneer, my lord, which seems to say as much; but, my lord Duke, we have pardoned him, and so has your Grace.'

'It would ill have become me,' said the Duke of Ormond, 'to have been severe in prosecuting an attempt on my poor life, when your Majesty was pleased to remit his more outrageous and insolent attempt upon your royal crown. But I must conceive it as a piece of supreme insolence on the part of this bloodthirsty bully, by whomsoever he may be now backed, to appear in the Tower, which was the theatre of one of his villanies, or before me, who was well-nigh the victim of another.'

'It shall be amended in future,' said the King. 'Hark ye, Sirrah Blood, if you again presume to thrust yourself in the way you have done but now, I will have the hangman's knife and your knavish ears made acquainted.'

Blood bowed, and, with a coolness of impudence which did his nerves great honour, he said he had only come to the Tower accidentally, to communicate with a particular friend on business of importance. 'My lord Duke of Buckingham,' he said, 'knew he had no other intentions.'

'Get you gone, you scoundrelly cut-throat,' said the duke, as much impatient of Colonel Blood's claim of acquaintance, as a town-rake of the low and blackguard companions of his midnight rambles, when they accost him in daylight amidst better company; 'if you dare to quote my name again, I will have you thrown into the Thames.'

* Note Z. · Colonel Blood.

Blood, thus repulsed, turned round with the most insolent composure, and walked away down from the parade, all men looking at him, as at some strange and monstrous prodigy, so much was he renowned for daring and desperate villany. Some even followed him, to have a better survey of the notorious Colonel Blood, like the smaller tribe of birds which keep fluttering round an owl when he appears in the light of the sun. But as, in the latter case, these thoughtless flutterers are careful to keep out of reach of the beak and claws of the bird of Minerva, so none of those who followed and gazed on Blood as something ominous, cared to bandy looks with him, or to endure and return the lowering and deadly glances which he shot from time to time on those who pressed nearest to him. He stalked on in this manner, like a daunted, yet sullen wolf, afraid to stop, yet unwilling to fly, until he reached the Traitor's Gate, and, getting on board a sculler which waited for him, he disappeared from their eyes.

Charles would fain have obliterated all recollection of his appearance, by the observation, 'It were shame that such a reprobate scoundrel should be the subject of discord between two noblemen of distinction;' and he recommended to the Dukes of Buckingham and Ormond to join hands, and forget a misunderstanding which rose on so unworthy a subject.

Buckingham answered carelessly, 'That the Duke of Ormond's honoured white hairs were a sufficient apology for his making the first overtures to a reconciliation;' and he held out his hand accordingly. But Ormond only bowed in return, and said, 'The King had no cause to expect that the court would be disturbed by his personal resentments, since time would not yield him back twenty years, nor the grave restore his gallant son Ossory. As to the ruffian who had intruded himself there, he was obliged to him, since, by showing that his Majesty's clemency extended even to the very worst of criminals, he strengthened his hopes of obtaining the King's favour for such of his innocent friends as were now in prison, and in danger, from the odious charges brought against them on the score of the Popish Plot.'

The King made no other answer to this insinuation, than by directing that the company should embark for their return to Whitehall; and thus took leave of the officers of the Tower who were in attendance, with one of those well-turned compliments to their discharge of duty, which no man knew better how to express; and issued at the same time strict and anxious orders for protection and defence of the important fortress confided to them, and all which it contained.

Before he parted with Ormond on their arrival at Whitehall, he turned round to him, as one who has made up his resolution, and said, 'Be satisfied, my lord Duke—our friends' case shall be looked to.'

In the same evening, the Attorney-General, and North, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, had orders, with all secrecy, to meet his Majesty that evening on especial matters of State, at the apartments of Chiffinch, the centre of all affairs, whether of gallantry or business.

CHAPTER XLI.

> Yet, Corah, thou shalt from oblivion pass;
> Erect thyself, thou monumental brass,
> High as the serpent of thy metal made,
> While nations stand secure beneath thy shade.
>
> ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

THE morning which Charles had spent in visiting the Tower, had been very differently employed by those unhappy individuals, whom their bad fate, and the singular temper of the times, had made the innocent tenants of that State prison, and who had received official notice that they were to stand their trial in the Court of Queen's Bench at Westminster, on the seventh succeeding day. The stout old Cavalier at only railed at the officer for spoiling his bi fast with the news, but evinced great feeling when he was told that Julian was to be put under the same indictment.

We intend to dwell only very generally on the nature of their trial, which corresponded, in the outline, with almost all those which took place during the prevalence of the Popish Plot. That is, one or two infamous and perjured evidences, whose profession of common informers had become frightfully lucrative, made oath to the prisoners having expressed themselves interested in the great confederacy of the Catholics. A number of others brought forward facts or suspicions, affecting the character of the parties as honest Protestants and good subjects; betwixt the direct and presumptive evidence, enough was usually extracted for justifying, to a corrupted court and perjured jury, the fatal verdict of Guilty.

The fury of the people had, however, now begun to pass away, exhausted even by its own violence. The English nation differ from all others, indeed even from those of the sister kingdoms, in being very easily sated with punishment, even when they suppose it most merited. Other nations are like the tamed tiger, which, when once its native appetite for slaughter is indulged in one instance, rushes on in promiscuous ravages. But the English public have always rather resembled what is told of the sleuth-dog, which, eager, fierce, and clamorous in pursuit of his prey, desists from it so soon as blood is sprinkled upon his path.

Men's minds were now beginning to cool—the character of the witnesses was more closely sifted—their testimonies did not in all cases tally—and a wholesome suspicion began to be entertained of men, who would never say they had made a full discovery of all they knew, but avowedly reserved some points of evidence to bear on future trials.

The King also, who had lain passive during the first burst of popular fury, was now beginning to bestir himself, which produced a marked effect on the conduct of the crown counsel, and even the judges. Sir George Wakeman had been acquitted in spite of Oates's direct testimony; and public attention was strongly excited concerning the event of the next trial; which chanced to be that of the Peverils, father and son, with whom. I know not from what con-

catenation, little Hudson the dwarf was placed at the bar of the Court of King's Bench.

It was a piteous sight to behold a father and son, who had been so long separated, meet under circumstances so melancholy; and many tears were shed, when the majestic old man—for such he was, though now broken with years—folded his son to his bosom, with a mixture of joy, affection, and a bitter anticipation of the event of the impending trial. There was a feeling in the court that for a moment overcame every prejudice and party feeling. Many spectators shed tears; and there was even a low moaning, as of those who weep aloud.

Such as felt themselves sufficiently at ease to remark the conduct of poor little Geoffrey Hudson, who was scarcely observed amid the preponderating interest created by his companions in misfortune, could not but notice a strong degree of mortification on the part of that diminutive gentleman. He had soothed his great mind by the thoughts of playing the character which he was called on to sustain, in a manner which should be long remembered in that place; and, on his entrance, had saluted the numerous spectators, as well as the court, with a cavalier air, which he meant should express grace, high breeding, perfect coolness, with a noble disregard to the issue of their proceedings. But his little person was so obscured and jostled aside, on the meeting of the father and son, who had been brought in different boats from the Tower, and placed at the bar at the same moment, that his distress and his dignity were alike thrown into the background, and attracted neither sympathy nor admiration.

The dwarf's wisest way to attract attention would have been to remain quiet, when so remarkable an exterior would certainly have received in its turn the share of public notice which he so eagerly coveted. But when did personal vanity listen to the suggestions of prudence?—Our impatient friend scrambled, with some difficulty, on the top of the bench intended for his seat; and there, 'paining himself to stand a-tiptoe,' like Chaucer's gallant Sir Chaunticlere, he challenged the notice of the audience, as he stood bowing and claiming acquaintance of his namesake, Sir Geoffrey the larger, with whose shoulders, notwithstanding his elevated situation, he was scarcely yet upon a level.

The taller knight, whose mind was occupied in a very different manner, took no notice of these advances upon the dwarf's part, but sat down with the determination rather to die on the spot than evince any symptoms of weakness before Roundheads and Presbyterians; under which obnoxious epithets, being too old-fashioned to find out party designations of newer date, he comprehended all persons concerned in his present trouble.

By Sir Geoffrey the larger's change of position, his face was thus brought on a level with that of Sir Geoffrey the less, who had an opportunity of pulling him by the cloak. He of Martindale Castle, rather mechanically than consciously, turned his head towards the large wrinkled visage, which, struggling between an assumed air of easy importance, and an anxious desire to be noticed, was grimacing within a yard of him. But neither the singular physiognomy, the nods and smiles of greeting and recognition into which it was wreathed, nor the strange little form by which it was supported, had at that moment the power of exciting any recollections in the old knight's mind; and, having stared for a moment at the poor little man, his bulky namesake turned away his head without further notice.

Julian Peveril, the dwarf's more recent acquaintance, had, even amid his own anxious feelings, room for sympathy with those of his little fellow-sufferer. As soon as he discovered that he was at the same terrible bar with himself, although he could not conceive how their causes came to be conjoined, he acknowledged him by a hearty shake of the hand, which the old man returned with affected dignity and real gratitude. 'Worthy youth,' he said, 'thy presence is restorative, like the nepenthe of Homer even in this syncope of our mutual fate. I am concerned to see that your father hath not the same alacrity of soul as that of ours, which are lodged within smaller compass; and that he hath forgotten an ancient comrade and fellow-soldier, who now stands beside him to perform, perhaps, their last campaign.'

Julian briefly replied, that his father had much to occupy him. But the little man—who, to do him justice, cared no more (in his own phrase) for imminent danger or death, than he did for the puncture of a flea's proboscis—did not so easily renounce the secret object of his ambition, which was to acquire the notice of the large and lofty Sir Geoffrey Peveril, who, being at least three inches taller than his son, was in so far possessed of that superior excellence, which the poor dwarf, in his secret soul, valued before all other distinctions, although, in his conversation, he was constantly depreciating it. 'Good comrade and namesake,' he proceeded, stretching out his hand, so as again to reach the elder Peveril's cloak, 'I forgive your want of reminiscence, seeing it is long since I saw you at Naseby, fighting as if you had as many arms as the fabled Briareus.'

The Knight of Martindale, who had again turned his head towards the little man, and had listened, as if endeavouring to make something out of his discourse, here interrupted him with a peevish 'Pshaw!'

'Pshaw!' repeated Sir Geoffrey the less; '*pshaw* is an expression of slight esteem—nay, of contempt—in all languages; and were this a befitting place'——

But the judges had now taken their places, the criers called silence, and the stern voice of the Lord Chief Justice (the notorious Scroggs) demanded what the officers meant by permitting the accused to communicate together in open court.

It may here be observed, that this celebrated personage was, upon the present occasion, at a great loss how to proceed. A calm, dignified, judicial demeanour was at no time the characteristic of his official conduct. He always ranted and roared either on the one side or the other; and of late he had been much unsettled which side to take, being totally incapable of anything resembling impartiality. At the first trials for

the Plot, when the whole stream of popularity ran against the accused, no one had been so loud as Scroggs; to attempt to impeach the character of Oates or Bedlowe, or any other leading witnesses, he treated as a crime more heinous than it would have been to blaspheme the Gospel on which they had been sworn—it was a stifling of the Plot, or discrediting of the king's witnesses—a crime not greatly, if at all, short of high treason against the king himself.

But of late a new light had begun to glimmer upon the understanding of this interpreter of the laws. Sagacious in the signs of the times, he began to see that the tide was turning; and that court favour was at least, and probably popular opinion also, were likely, in a short time, to declare against the witnesses, and in favour of the accused.

The opinion which Scroggs had hitherto entertained of the high respect in which Shaftesbury, the patron of the Plot, was held by Charles, had been definitely shaken by a whisper from his brother North to the following effect: 'His lordship has no more interest at court than your footman.'

This notice, from a sure hand, and received but that morning, had put the judge to a sore dilemma; for, however indifferent to actual consistency, he was most anxious to save appearances. He could not but recollect how violent he had been on former occasions in favour of these prosecutions; and being sensible at the same time that the credit of the witnesses, though shaken in the opinion of the more judicious, was, amongst the bulk of the people out of doors, as strong as ever, he had a difficult part to play. His conduct, therefore, during the whole trial, resembled the appearance of a vessel about to go upon another tack, when her sails are shivering in the wind ere they have yet caught the impulse which is to send her forth in a new direction. In a word, he was so uncertain which side it was his interest to favour, that he might be said on that occasion to have come nearer a state of total impartiality than he was ever capable of attaining, whether before or afterwards. This was shown by his bullying now the accused, and now the witnesses, like a mastiff too much irritated to lie still without baying, but uncertain whom he shall first bite.

The indictment was then read; and Sir Geoffrey Peveril heard, with some composure, the first part of it, which stated him to have placed his son in the household of the Countess of Derby, a recusant Papist, for the purpose of aiding the horrible and bloodthirsty Popish Plot—with having had arms and ammunition concealed in his house—and with receiving a blank commission from the Lord Stafford, who had suffered death on account of the Plot. But when the charge went on to state that he had communicated for the same purpose with Geoffrey Hudson, sometimes called Sir Geoffrey Hudson, now or formerly in the domestic service of the Queen Dowager, he looked at his companion as if he suddenly recalled him to remembrance, and broke out impatiently, 'These lies are too gross to require a moment's consideration. I might have had enough of intercourse, though in nothing but what was loyal and innocent, with my noble kinsman the late Lord Stafford—I will call him so in spite of his misfortunes—and with my wife's relation, the Honourable Countess of Derby. But what likelihood can there be that I should have colleagued with a decrepit buffoon, with whom I never had an instant's communication, save once at an Easter feast, when I whistled a hornpipe as he danced on a trencher to amuse the company?'

The rage of the poor dwarf brought tears in his eyes, while, with an affected laugh, he said, that, instead of those juvenile and festive passages, Sir Geoffrey Peveril might have remembered his charging along with him at Wiggan Lane.

'On my word,' said Sir Geoffrey, after a moment's recollection, 'I will do you justice, Master Hudson—I believe you were there—I think I heard you did good service. But you will allow you might have been near one without his seeing you.'

A sort of titter ran through the court at the simplicity of the larger Sir Geoffrey's testimony, which the dwarf endeavoured to control, by standing on his tiptoes and looking fiercely around, as if to admonish the laughers that they indulged their mirth at their own peril. But perceiving that this only excited further scorn, he composed himself into a semblance of careless contempt, observing, with a smile, that no one feared the glance of a chained lion; a magnificent simile, which rather increased than diminished the mirth of those who heard it.

Against Julian Peveril there failed not to be charged the aggravated fact that he had been bearer of letters between the Countess of Derby and other Papists and priests engaged in the universal treasonable conspiracy of the Catholics; and the attack of the house at Moultrassie Hall—with his skirmish with Chiffinch, and his assault, as it was termed, on the person of John Jenkins, servant to the Duke of Buckingham, were all narrated at length as so many open and overt acts of treasonable import. To this charge Peveril contented himself with pleading—Not Guilty.

His little companion was not satisfied with so simple a plea; for when he heard it read, as a part of the charge applying to him, that he had received from an agent of the Plot a blank commission as colonel of a regiment of grenadiers, he replied, in wrath and scorn, that if Goliath of Gath had come to him with such a proposal, and proffered him the command of the whole sons of Anak in a body, he should never have had occasion or opportunity to repeat the temptation to another. 'I would have slain him,' said the little man of loyalty, 'even where he stood.'

The charge was stated anew by the counsel for the crown; and forth came the notorious Doctor Oates, rustling in the full silken canonicals of priesthood, for it was a time when he affected no small dignity of exterior decoration and deportment.

This singular man, who, aided by the obscure intrigues of the Catholics themselves, and the fortuitous circumstance of Godfrey's murder, had been able to cram down the public throat such a mass of absurdity as his evidence amounts to, had no other talent for imposture than an i[illegible]dence which set conviction and shame all defiance. A man of sense or reflection, by

ing, to give his plot an appearance of more probability, would most likely have failed, as wise men often do in addressing the multitude, from not daring to calculate upon the prodigious extent of their credulity, especially where the figments presented to them involve the fearful and the terrible.

Oates was by nature choleric, and the credit he had acquired made him insolent and conceited. Even his exterior was portentous. A fleece of white periwig showed a most uncouth visage, of great length, having the mouth, as the organ by use of which he was to rise to eminence, placed in the very centre of the countenance, and exhibiting to the astonished spectator as much chin below as there was nose and brow above the aperture. His pronunciation, too, was after a conceited fashion of his own, in which he accented the vowels in a manner altogether peculiar to himself.

This notorious personage, such as we have described him, stood forth on the present trial, and delivered his astonishing testimony concerning the existence of a Catholic Plot for the subversion of the government and murder of the king, in the same general outline in which it may be found in every English history. But as the doctor always had in reserve some special piece of evidence affecting those immediately on trial, he was pleased, on the present occasion, deeply to inculpate the Countess of Derby. 'He had seen,' as he said, 'that honourable lady when he was at the Jesuits' College at Saint Omer's. She had sent for him to an inn or *auberge*, as it was there termed—the sign of the Golden Lamb, and had ordered him to breakfast in the same room with her ladyship; and afterwards told him, that knowing he was trusted by the Fathers of the Society, she was determined that he should have a share of her secrets also; and therewithal, that she drew from her bosom a broad, sharp-pointed knife, such as butchers kill sheep with, and demanded of him what he thought of it for *the purpose*; and when he the witness, said for what purpose, she rapped him on the fingers with her fan, called him a dull fellow, and said it was designed to kill the King with.'

Here Sir Geoffrey Peveril could no longer refrain his indignation and surprise. 'Mercy of Heaven!' he said, 'did ever one hear of ladies of quality carrying butchering knives about them, and telling every scurvy companion she meant to kill the king with them?—Gentlemen of the jury, do but think if this is reasonable—though, if the villain could prove by sufficient evidence that my Lady of Derby ever let such a scum as himself come to speech of her, I would believe all he can say.'

'Sir Geoffrey,' said the judge, 'rest you quiet—You must not fly out—passion helps you not here—The Doctor must be suffered to proceed.'

Doctor Oates went on to state, how the lady complained of the wrongs the House of Derby had sustained from the king, and the oppression of her religion, and boasted of the schemes of the Jesuits and seminary priests; and how they would be furthered by her noble kinsmen of the House of Stanley. He finally averred that both the countess, and the fathers of the seminary abroad, founded much upon the talents and courage of Sir Geoffrey Peveril and his son—the latter of whom was a member of her family. Of Hudson, he only recollected of having heard one of the fathers say, 'that, although but a dwarf in stature, he would prove a giant in the cause of the Church.'

When he had ended his evidence, there was a pause, until the judge, as if the thought had suddenly occurred to him, demanded of Doctor Oates whether he had ever mentioned the name of the Countess of Derby in any of the previous informations which he had lodged before the Privy Council, and elsewhere, upon this affair.

Oates seemed rather surprised at the question, and coloured with anger as he answered, in his peculiar mode of pronunciation, 'Whoy, no, maay lord.'

'And pray, Doctor,' said the judge, 'how came so great a revealer of mysteries as you have lately proved, to have suffered so material a circumstance as the accession of this powerful family to the Plot to have remained undiscovered?'

'Maay lord,' said Oates, with much effrontery, 'aye do not come here to have my evidence questioned as touching the Plaut.'

'I do not question your evidence, Doctor,' said Scroggs, for the time was not arrived that he dared treat him roughly; 'nor do I doubt the existence of the *Plaut*, since it is your pleasure to swear to it. I would only have you, for your own sake, and the satisfaction of all good Protestants, to explain why you have kept back such a weighty point of information from the king and country.'

'Maay lord,' said Oates, 'I will tell you a pretty fable.'

'I hope,' answered the judge, 'it may be the first and last which you shall tell in this place.'

'Maay lord,' continued Oates, 'there was once a fox, who, having to carry a goose over a frozen river, and being afraid the ice would not bear him and his booty, did carry over a stone, my lord, in the first instance, to prove the strength of the ice.'

'So your former evidence was but the stone, and now, for the first time, you have brought us the goose?' said Sir William Scroggs; 'to tell us this, Doctor, is to make geese of the court and jury.'

'I desoire your lordship's honest construction,' said Oates, who saw the current changing against him, but was determined to pay the score with effrontery. 'All men knaw at what coast and praice I have given my evidence, which has been always, under Gaad, the means of awakening this poor nation to the dangerous state in which it staunds. Many here knaw that I have been obliged to fortify my ladging at Whitehall against the bloody Papists. It was not to be thought that I should have brought all the story out at aunce. I think your wisdom would have advised me otherwise.'*

* It was on such terms that Dr Oates was pleased to claim the extraordinary privilege of dealing out the information which he chose to communicate to a court of justice. The only sense in which his story of the fox, stone, and goose could be applicable is by supposing that he was determined to ascertain the extent of his countrymen's credulity before supplying it with a full meal.

'Nay, Doctor,' said the judge, 'it is not for me to direct you in this affair; and it is for the jury to believe you or not; and as for myself, I sit here to do justice to both—the jury have heard your answer to my question.'

Doctor Oates retired from the witness-box, reddening like a turkey-cock, as one totally unused to have such accounts questioned as he chose to lay before the courts of justice; and there was, perhaps for the first time, amongst the counsel and solicitors, as well as the Templars and students of law there present, a murmur distinct and audible, unfavourable to the character of the great father of the Popish Plot.

Everett and Dangerfield, with whom the reader is already acquainted, were then called in succession to sustain the accusation. They were subordinate informers a sort of under-spur-leathers, as the cant term went—who followed the path of Oates, with all deference to his superior genius and invention, and made their own fictions chime in and harmonize with his, as well as their talents could devise. But as their evidence had at no time received the full credence into which the impudence of Oates had cajoled the public, so they now began to fall into discredit rather more hastily than their prototype, as the super-added turrets of an ill constructed building are naturally the first to give way.

It was in vain that Everett, with the precision of a hypocrite, and Dangerfield, with the audacity of a bully, narrated, with added circumstances of suspicion and criminality, their meeting with Julian Peveril in Liverpool, and again at Martindale Castle. It was in vain they described the arms and accoutrements which they pretended to have discovered in old Sir Geoffrey's possession; and that they gave a most dreadful account of the escape of the younger Peveril from Moultrassie Hall, by means of an armed force.

The jury listened coldly, and it was visible that they were but little moved by the accusation; especially as the judge, always professing his belief in the Plot, and his zeal for the Protestant religion, was ever and anon reminding them that presumptions were no proofs—that hearsay was no evidence—that those who made a trade of discovery were likely to aid their researches by invention—and that, without doubting the guilt of the unfortunate persons at the bar, he would gladly hear some evidence brought against them of a different nature. 'Here we are told of a riot, and an escape achieved by the younger Peveril, at the house of a grave and worthy magistrate, known, I think, to most of us. Why, Master Attorney, bring ye not Master Bridgenorth himself to prove the fact, or all his household if it be necessary?—A rising in arms is an affair over public to be left on the hearsay tale of these two men—though Heaven forbid that I should suppose they speak one word more than they believe! They are the witnesses for the King—and what is equally dear to us, the Protestant religion—and witnesses against a most foul and heathenish plot. On the other hand, here is a worshipful old knight, for such I must suppose him to be, since he has bled often in battle for the King,—such, I must say, I suppose him to be, until he is proved otherwise. And here is his son, a hopeful young gentleman—we must see that they have right, Master Attorney.'

'Unquestionably, my lord,' answered the attorney. 'God forbid else! But we will make out these matters against these unhappy gentlemen in a manner more close, if your lordship will permit us to bring in our evidence.'

'Go on, Master Attorney,' said the [judge], throwing himself back in his seat. 'Heaven forbid I hinder proving the King's accusation! I only say, what you know as well as I, that *de non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.*'

'We shall then call Master Bridgeno[rth, as] your lordship advises, who I think is in wai[ting].'

'No!' answered a voice from the crowd, apparently that of a female; 'he is too wise and too honest to be here.'

The voice was distinct as that of Lady Fairfax, when she expressed herself to a similar effect on the trial of Charles the First; but the researches which were made on the present occasion to discover the speaker were unsuccessful.

After the slight confusion occasioned by this circumstance was abated, the attorney, who had been talking aside with the conductors of the prosecution, said, 'Whoever favoured us with that information, my lord, had good reason for what they said. Master Bridgenorth has become, I am told, suddenly invisible since this morning.'

'Look you there now, Master Attorney,' said the judge—'This comes of not kee[ping your] crown witnesses together and in rea[diness. I] am sure I cannot help the consequence[s].'

'Nor I either, my lord,' said the attorney pettishly. 'I could have proved by this worshipful gentleman, Master Justice Bridgenorth, the ancient friendship betwixt this party, Sir Geoffrey Peveril, and the Countess of Derby, of whose doings and intentions Doctor Oates has given such a deliberate evidence. I could have proved his having sheltered her in his castle against a process of law, and rescued her, by force of arms, from this very Justice Bridgenorth, not without actual violence. Moreover, I could have proved against young Peveril the whole affray charged upon him, by the same worshipful evidence.'

Here the judge stuck his thumbs into his girdle, which was a favourite attitude of his on such occasions, and exclaimed, 'Pshaw, pshaw, Master Attorney!—Tell me not what you *could* have proved this, and you *could* have proved that, or that or this—Prove what you will, but let it be through the mouths of your evidence. Men are not to be licked out of their lives by the rough side of a lawyer's tongue.'

'Nor is a foul plot to be smothered,' said the attorney, 'for all the haste your lordship is in. I cannot call Master Chiffinch neither, as he is employed on the King's especial affairs, as I am this instant certiorated from the court at Whitehall.'

'Produce the papers, then, Master Attorney, of which this young man is said to be the bearer,' said the judge.

'They are before the Privy Council, my lord.'

'Then why do you found on them here?' said

the judge—'This is something like trifling with the court.'

'Since your lordship gives it that name,' said the attorney, sitting down in a huff, 'you may manage the cause as you will.'

'If you do not bring more evidence, I pray you to charge the jury,' said the judge.

'I shall not take the trouble to do so,' said the crown counsel. 'I see plainly how the matter is to go.'

'Nay, but be better advised,' said Scroggs. 'Consider, your case is but half proved respecting the two Peverils, and doth not pinch on the little man at all, saving that Doctor Oates said he was in a certain case to prove a giant, which seems no very probable Popish miracle.'

[illegible] sally occasioned a laugh in the court, [illegible] the attorney-general seemed to take in great dudgeon.

'Master Attorney,' said Oates, who always interfered in the management of these law-suits, 'this is a plain and absolute giving away of the cause—I must needs say it, a mere stoifling of the Plaat.'

'Then the devil who bred it may blow wind into it again, if he lists,' answered the attorney-general; and, flinging down his brief, he left the court, as if in a huff with all who were concerned in the affair.

The judge having obtained silence—for a murmur arose in the court when the counsel for the prosecution threw up his brief—began to charge the jury, balancing, as he had done throughout the whole day, the different opinions by which he seemed alternately swayed. He protested on [illegible]lvation that he had no more doubt of the [illegible]e of the horrid and damnable conspiracy [illegible] Popish Plot, than he had of the treachery of Judas Iscariot; and that he considered Oates as the instrument under Providence of preserving the nation from all the miseries of his Majesty's assassination, and of a second Saint Bartholomew, acted in the streets of London. But then he stated it was the candid construction of the law of England, that the worse the crime, the more strong should be the evidence. Here was the case of accessories tried, whilst their principal—for such he should call the Countess of Derby—was unconvicted and at large; and for Doctor Oates, he had but spoke of matters which personally applied to that noble lady, whose words, if she used such in passion, touching aid which she expected in some treasonable matters from the Peverils, and from her kinsmen, or her son's kinsmen, of the House of Stanley, may have been but a burst of female resentment—*dulcis Amaryllidis ira*, as the poet [illegible]. Who knoweth but Doctor Oates did mistake—he being a gentleman of a comely countenance and easy demeanour—this same rap with the fan as a chastisement for lack of courage in the Catholic cause, when, peradventure, it was otherwise meant, as Popish ladies will put, it is said, such neophytes and youthful candidates for orders, to many severe trials. 'I speak these things jocularly,' said the judge, 'having no wish to stain the reputation either of the honourable Countess or the reverend Doctor; only I think the bearing between them may have related to something short of high treason. As for what the Attorney-General hath set forth of rescues and force, and I wot not what, sure I am, that in a civil country, when such things happen, such things may be proved; and that you and I, gentlemen, are not to take them for granted gratuitously. Touching this other prisoner, this *Galfridus minimus*, he must needs say,' he continued, 'he could not discover even a shadow of suspicion against him. Was it to be thought so abortive a creature would thrust himself into depths of policy, far less into stratagems of war? They had but to look at him to conclude the contrary—the creature was, from his age, fitter for the grave than a conspiracy—and by his size and appearance, for the inside of a raree-show, than the mysteries of a plot.'

The dwarf here broke in upon the judge by force of screaming, to assure him that he had been, simple as he sat there, engaged in seven plots in Cromwell's time; and, as he proudly added, with some of the tallest men of England. The matchless look and air with which Sir Geoffrey made this vaunt, set all a-laughing, and increased the ridicule with which the whole trial began to be received; so that it was amidst shaking sides and watery eyes that a general verdict of Not Guilty was pronounced, and the prisoners dismissed from the bar.

But a warmer sentiment awakened among those who saw the father and son throw themselves into each other's arms, and, after a hearty embrace, extend their hands to their poor little companion in peril, who, like a dog, when present at a similar scene, had at last succeeded, by stretching himself up to them and whimpering at the same time, to secure to himself a portion of their sympathy and gratulation.

Such was the singular termination of this trial. Charles himself was desirous to have taken considerable credit with the Duke of Ormond for the evasion of the law, which had been thus effected by his private connivance; and was both surprised and mortified at the coldness with which his Grace replied, that he was rejoiced at the poor gentlemen's safety, but would rather have had the King redeem them like a prince, by his royal prerogative of mercy, than that his judge should convey them out of the power of the law, like a juggler with his cups and balls.

CHAPTER XLII.

—— On fair ground
I could beat forty of them!
CORIOLANUS.

It doubtless occurred to many that wer[e] at the trial we have described, that it wa[s] in a singular manner, and that the quarrel, which had the appearance of having taken place between the court and the crown counsel, might proceed from some private understanding betwixt them, the object of which was the miscarriage of the accusation. Yet, though such underhand dealing was much suspected, the greater part of the audience, being well educated and intelligent, had already suspected the bubble of the Popish

Plot, and were glad to see that accusations, founded on what had already cost so much blood, could be evaded in any way. But the crowd, who waited in the Court of Requests, and in the hall, and without doors, viewed in a very different light the combination, as they interpreted it, between the judge and the attorney-general, for the escape of the prisoners.

Oates, whom less provocation than he had that day received often induced to behave like one frantic with passion, threw himself amongst the crowd, and repeated till he was hoarse, 'Theay are stoifling the Plaat!—theay are straangling the Plaat!—My Laard Justice and Maaster Attarney are in league to secure the escape of the Plaaters and Paapists.'

'It is the device of the Papist whore of Portsmouth,' said one.

'Of old Rowley himself,' said another.

'If he could be murdered by himself, why hang those that would hinder it?' exclaimed a third.

'He should be tried,' said a fourth, 'for conspiring his own death, and hanged *in terrorem*.'

In the meanwhile, Sir Geoffrey, his son, and their little companion, left the hall, intending to go to Lady Peveril's lodgings, which had been removed to Fleet Street. She had been relieved from considerable inconvenience, as Sir Geoffrey gave Julian hastily to understand, by an angel, in the shape of a young friend, and she now expected them doubtless with impatience. Humanity, and some indistinct idea of having unintentionally hurt the feelings of the poor dwarf, induced the honest Cavalier to ask this unprotected being to go with them. 'He knew Lady Peveril's lodgings were but small,' he said; 'but it would be strange if there was not some cupboard large enough to accommodate the little gentleman.'

The dwarf registered this well-meant remark in his mind, to be the subject of a proper explanation, along with the unhappy reminiscence of the trencher-hornpipe, whenever time should permit an argument of such nicety.

And thus they sallied from the hall, attracting general observation, both from the circumstances in which they had stood so lately, and from their resemblance, as a wag of the Inner Temple expressed it, to the three degrees of comparison, Large, Lesser, Least. But they had not passed far along the street, when Julian perceived that more malevolent passions than mere curiosity began to actuate the crowd, which followed, and, as it were, dogged their motions.

'There go the Papist cut-throats, tantivy for Rome!' said one fellow.

'Tantivy to Whitehall, you mean!' said another.

'Ah! the bloodthirsty villains!' cried a woman. 'Shame, one of them should be suffered to live, after poor Sir Edmondsbury's cruel murder.'

'Out upon the mealy-mouthed jury, that turned out the bloodhounds on an innocent town!' cried a fourth.

In short, the tumult thickened, and the word began to pass among the more desperate, 'Lambe them, lads; lambe them!'—a cant phrase of the time, derived from the fate of Doctor Lambe, an astrologer and quack, who was knocked on the head by the rabble in Charles the First's time.

Julian began to be much alarmed at these symptoms of violence, and regretted that they had not gone down to the city by water. It was now too late to think of that mode of retreating, and he therefore requested his father in a whisper to walk steadily forward towards Charing Cross, taking no notice of the insults which might be cast upon them, while the steadiness of their pace and appearance might prevent the rabble from resorting to actual violence. The execution of this prudent resolution was prevented, after they had passed the palace, by the hasty disposition of the elder Sir Geoffrey, and the no less choleric temper of Galfridus Minimus, who had a soul which spurned all odds, as well of numbers as of size.

'Now a murrain take the knaves, with their hallooing and whooping,' said the larger knight; 'by this day, if I could but light on a weapon, I would cudgel reason and loyalty into some of their carcasses!'

'And I also,' said the dwarf, who was toiling to keep up with the longer strides of his companions, and therefore spoke in a very phthisical tone,—'I also will cudgel the plebeian knaves beyond measure—he!—hem!'

Among the crowd who thronged around them, impeded, and did all but assault them, was a mischievous shoemaker's apprentice, who, hearing this unlucky vaunt of the valorous dwarf, repaid it by flapping him on the head with a boot which he was carrying home to the owner, so as to knock the little gentleman's hat over his eyes. The dwarf, thus rendered unable to discover the urchin that had given him the offence, flew with instinctive ambition against the biggest fellow in the crowd, who received the onset with a kick on the stomach, which made the poor little champion reel back to his companions. They were now assaulted on all sides; but fortune, complying with the wish of Sir Geoffrey the larger, ordained that the scuffle should happen near the booth of a cutler, from amongst whose wares, as they stood exposed to the public, Sir Geoffrey Peveril snatched a broadsword, which he brandished with the formidable address of one who had for many a day been in the familiar practice of using such a weapon. Julian, while at the same time he called loudly for a peace-officer, and reminded the assailants that they were attacking inoffensive passengers, saw nothing better for it than to imitate his father's example, and seized also one of the weapons thus opportunely offered.

When they displayed these demonstrations of defence, the rush which the rabble at first made towards them was so great as to throw down the unfortunate dwarf, who would have been trampled to death in the scuffle, had not his stout old namesake cleared the rascal crowd from about him with a few flourishes of his weapon, and, seizing on the fallen champion, put him out of danger (except from missiles), by suddenly placing him on the bulkhead, that is to say, the flat wooden roof of the cutler's projecting booth. From the rusty ironware which was displayed there, the dwarf instantly snatched an old rapier and target, and, covering himself with the one, stood making passes with the other, at the faces

and eyes of the people in the street; so much delighted with his post of vantage, that he called loudly to his friends, who were skirmishing with the rioters on more equal terms as to position, to lose no time in putting themselves under his protection. But, far from being in a situation to need his assistance, the father and son might easily have extricated themselves from the rabble by their own exertions, could they have thought of leaving the mannikin in the forlorn situation in which, to every eye but his own, he stood like a diminutive puppet, tricked out with sword [illegible]d target as a fencing-master's sign.

Stones and sticks began now to fly very thick, l the crowd, notwithstanding the exertions of Peverils to disperse them with as little harm sible, seemed determined on mischief, when some gentlemen who had been at the trial, understanding that the prisoners who had been just acquitted were in danger of being murdered by the populace, drew their swords, and made forward to effect their rescue, which was completed by a small party of the King's Life-Guards, who had been despatched from their ordinary post of alarm, upon intelligence of what was passing. When this unexpected reinforcement arrived, the old jolly knight at once recognised, amidst the cries of those who then entered upon action, some of the sounds which had animated his more active years.

'Where be these cuckoldly Roundheads?' cried some.—'Down with the sneaking knaves!' cried others.—'The King and his friends, and the devil a one else!' exclaimed a third set, with more oaths and d—n me's, than, in the present more correct age, it is necessary to commit to paper.

The old soldier, pricking up his ears like an ancient hunter at the cry of the hounds, would gl[illegible]ave scoured the Strand, with the charitable purpose, now he saw himself so well supported, of knocking the London knaves, who had insulted him, into twiggen bottles; but he was withheld by the prudence of Julian, who, though himself extremely irritated by the unprovoked ill usage which they had received, saw himself in a situation in which it was necessary to exercise more caution than vengeance. He prayed and pressed his father to seek some temporary place of retreat from the fury of the populace, while that prudent measure was yet in their power. The subaltern officer who commanded the party of the Life-Guards exhorted the old Cavalier eagerly to the same sage counsel, using, as a spice of compulsion, the name of the king; [illegible] Julian strongly urged that of his [illegible] The old knight looked at his blade, crimsoned with cross-cuts and slashes which he had given to the most forward of the assailants, with the eye of one not half sufficed.

'I would I had pinked one of the knaves at least—but I know not how it was, when I looked on their broad round English faces, I shunned to use my point, and only sliced the rogues a little.'

'But the King's pleasure,' said the officer, 'is, that no tumult be prosecuted.'

'My mother,' said Julian, 'will die with fright, if the rumour of this scuffle reaches her ere [illegible]e see her.'

'Ay, ay,' said the knight, 'the King's Majesty and my good dame—well, their pleasure be done, that's all I can say—kings and ladies must be obeyed. But which way to retreat, since retreat we needs must!'

Julian would have been at some loss to advise what course to take, for everybody in the vicinity had shut up their shops, and chained their doors, upon observing the confusion become so formidable. The poor cutler, however, with whose goods they made so free, offered them an asylum on the part of his landlord, whose house served as a rest for his shop, and only intimated gently, he hoped the gentlemen would consider him for the use of his weapons.

Julian was hastily revolving whether they ought, in prudence, to accept this man's invitation, aware, by experience, how many trepans, as they were then termed, were used betwixt two contending factions, each too inveterate to be very scrupulous of the character of fair play to an enemy, when the dwarf, exerting his cracked voice to the uttermost, and shrieking like an exhausted herald, from the exalted station which he still occupied on the bulkhead, exhorted them to accept the offer of the worthy man of the mansion. 'He himself,' he said, as he reposed himself after the glorious conquest in which he had some share, 'had been favoured with a beatific vision, too splendid to be described to common and mere mortal ears, but which had commanded him, in a voice to which his heart had bounded as to a trumpet sound, to take refuge with the worthy person of the house, and cause his friends to do so.'

'Vision!' said the Knight of the Peak,—'sound of a trumpet!—the little man is stark mad.'

But the cutler, in great haste, intimated to them that their little friend had received an intimation from a gentlewoman of his acquaintance, who spoke to him from the window, while he stood on the bulkhead, that they would find a safe retreat in his landlord's; and, desiring them to attend to two or three deep though distant huzzas, made them aware that the rabble were up still, and would soon be upon them with renewed violence and increased numbers.

The father and son, therefore, hastily thanked the officer and his party, as well as the other gentlemen who had volunteered in their assistance, lifted little Sir Geoffrey Hudson from the conspicuous post which he had so creditably occupied during the skirmish, and followed the footsteps of the tenant of the booth, who conducted them down a blind alley and through one or two courts, in case, as he said, any one might have watched where they burrowed, and so into a back-door. This entrance admitted them to a staircase carefully hung with straw mats to exclude damp, from the upper step of which they entered upon a tolerably large withdrawing-room, hung with coarse green serge edged with gilded leather, which the poorer or more economical citizens at that time used instead of tapestry or wainscoting.

Here the [illegible]or cutler received from Julian such a gratuity for the loan of the swords, that he generously abandoned the property to the gentlemen who had used them [illegible] well; the

rather,' he said, 'that he saw, by the way they handled their weapons, that they were men of mettle, and tall fellows.'

Here the dwarf smiled on him courteously, and bowed, thrusting, at the same time, his hand into his pocket, which, however, he withdrew carelessly, probably because he found he had not the means of making the small donation which he had meditated.

The cutler proceeded to say, as he bowed and was about to withdraw, that he saw there would be merry days yet in Old England, and that Bilboa blades would fetch as good a price as ever. 'I remember,' he said, 'gentlemen, though I was then but a 'prentice, the demand for weapons in the years forty-one and forty-two; sword-blades were more in request than toothpicks, and old Ironsides, my master, took more for rascally Provant rapiers, than I dare ask now-a-days for a Toledo. But, to be sure, a man's life then rested on the blade he carried; the Cavaliers and Roundheads fought every day at the gates of Whitehall, as it is like, gentlemen, by your good example, they may do again, when I shall be enabled to leave my pitiful booth, and open a shop of better quality. I hope you will recommend me, gentlemen, to your friends. I am always provided with ware which a gentleman may risk his life on.'

'Thank you, good friend,' said Julian; 'I prithee thee begone. I trust we shall need thy ware no more for some time at least.'

The cutler retired, while the dwarf hallooed after him down-stairs, that he would call on him soon, and equip himself with a longer blade, and one more proper for action; although, he said, the little weapon he had did well enough for a walking-sword, or in a skirmish with such canaille as they had been engaged with.

The cutler returned at this summons, and agreed to pleasure the little man with a weapon more suitable to his magnanimity; then, as if the thought had suddenly occurred to him, he said, 'But, gentlemen, it will be wild work to walk with your naked swords through the Strand, and it can scarce fail to raise the rabble again. If you please, while you repose yourselves here, I can fit the blades with sheaths.'

The proposal seemed so reasonable, that Julian and his father gave up their weapons to the friendly cutler, an example which the dwarf followed, after a moment's hesitation, not caring, as he magnificently expressed it, to part so soon with the trusty friend which fortune had but the moment before restored to his hand. The man retired with the weapons under his arm, and, in shutting the door behind him, they heard him turn the key.

'Did you hear that?' said Sir Geoffrey to his son—'and we are disarmed!'

Julian, without reply, examined the door, which was fast secured; and then looked at the casements, which were at a storey's height from the ground, and grated besides with iron. 'I cannot think,' he said, after a moment's pause, 'that the fellow means to trepan us; and, in any event, I trust we should have no difficulty in forcing the door, or otherwise making an escape. But, before resorting to such violent measures, I think it is better to give the rabble leisure to disperse, by waiting this man's return with our weapons within a reasonable time, when, if he does not appear, I trust we shall find little difficulty in extricating ourselves.' As he spoke thus, the hangings were pulled aside, and from a small door which was concealed behind them, Major Bridgenorth entered the room.

CHAPTER XLIII.

He came amongst them like a new-raised spirit,
To speak of dreadful judgments that impend,
And of the wrath to come.

THE REFORMER.

THE astonishment of Julian at the unexpected apparition of Bridgenorth, was instantly succeeded by apprehension of his father's violence, which he had every reason to believe would break forth against one, whom he himself could not but reverence on account of his own merits, as well as because he was the father of Alice. The appearance of Bridgenorth was not, however, such as to awaken resentment. His countenance was calm, his step slow and composed, his eye not without the indication of some deep-seated anxiety, but without any expression either of anger or of triumph. 'You are welcome,' he said, 'Sir Geoffrey Peveril, to the shelter and hospitality of this house; as welcome as you would have been in other days, when we called each other neighbours and friends.'

'Oddzooks,' said the old Cavalier, 'and had I known it was thy house, man, I would sooner had my heart's blood run down the kennel, than my foot should have crossed your threshold —in the way of seeking safety, that is.'

'I forgive your inveteracy,' said Major Bridgenorth, 'on account of your prejudices.'

'Keep your forgiveness,' answered the Cavalier, 'until you are pardoned yourself. By Saint George I have sworn, if ever I got my heels out of yon rascally prison, whither I was sent much through your means, Master Bridgenorth, that you should pay the reckoning for my bad lodging.—I will strike no man in his own house; but if you will cause the fellow to bring back my weapon, and take a turn in that blind court there below, along with me, you shall soon see what chance a traitor hath with a true man, and a kennel-blooded Puritan with Peveril of the Peak.'

Bridgenorth smiled with much composure. 'When I was younger and more warm-blooded,' he replied, 'I refused your challenge, Sir Geoffrey; it is not likely I should now accept it, when each is within a stride of the grave. I have not spared, and will not spare, my blood, when my country wants it.'

'That is when there is any chance of treason against the King,' said Sir Geoffrey.

'Nay, my father,' said Julian, 'let us hear Master Bridgenorth! We have been sheltered in his house; and although we now see him in London, we should remember that he did not appear against us this day, when perhaps his

evidence might have given a fatal turn to our situation.'

'You are right, young man,' said Bridgenorth; 'and it should be some pledge of my sincere good will, that I was this day absent from Westminster, when a few words from my mouth had ended the long line of Peveril of the Peak: it needed but ten minutes to walk to Westminster Hall, to have insured your condemnation. But could I have done this, knowing, as I now know, that to thee, Julian Peveril, I owe the extrication of my daughter—of my dearest Alice—the memory of her departed mother—from the snares which hell and profligacy had opened around her?'

'She is, I trust, safe,' said Peveril eagerly, and almost forgetting his father's presence; 'she is, I trust, safe, and in your own wardship?'

'Not in mine,' said the dejected father; 'but in that of one in whose protection, next to that of Heaven, I can most fully confide.'

'Are you sure—are you very sure of that?' repeated Julian eagerly. 'I found her under the charge of one to whom she had been trusted, and who yet'——

'And who yet was the basest of women,' answered Bridgenorth; 'but he who selected her for the charge was deceived in her character.'

'Say rather you were deceived in his; remember that, when we parted at Moultrassie, I warned you of that Ganlesse—that'——

'I know your meaning,' said Bridgenorth; nor did you err in describing him as a worldly-wise man. But he has atoned for his error by recovering Alice from the dangers into which she was plunged when separated from you; and besides, I have not thought meet again to entrust him with the charge that is dearest to me.'

'I thank God your eyes are thus far opened!' said Julian.

'This day will open them wide, or close them for ever,' answered Bridgenorth.

During this dialogue, which the speakers hurried through without attending to the others who were present, Sir Geoffrey listened with surprise and eagerness, endeavouring to catch something which should render their conversation intelligible; but, as he totally failed in gaining any such key to their meaning, he broke in with,—''Sblood and thunder, Julian, what unprofitable gossip is this? What hast thou to do with this fellow, more than to bastinado him, if you should think it worth while to beat so old a rogue?'

'My dearest father,' said Julian, 'you know not this gentleman—I am certain you do him injustice. My own obligations to him are many; and I am sure, when you come to know them'——

'I hope I shall die ere that moment come,' said Sir Geoffrey; and continued with increasing violence, 'I hope in the mercy of Heaven that I shall be in the grave of my ancestors, ere I learn that my son—my only son—the last hope of my ancient house—the last remnant of the name of Peveril—hath consented to receive obligations from the man on earth I am most bound to hate, were I not still more bound to contemn him!—Degenerate dog-whelp!' he repeated with great vehemence, 'you colour without replying! Speak, and disown such disgrace; or, by the God of my fathers'——

The dwarf suddenly stepped forward, and called out, 'Forbear!' with a voice at once so discordant and commanding, that it sounded supernatural. 'Man of sin and pride,' he said, 'forbear; and call not the name of a holy God to witness thine unhallowed resentments.'

The rebuke so boldly and decidedly given, and the moral enthusiasm with which he spoke, gave the despised dwarf an ascendancy for the moment over the fiery spirit of his gigantic namesake. Sir Geoffrey Peveril eyed him for an instant askance and shyly, as he might have done a supernatural apparition, and then muttered, 'What knowest thou of my cause of wrath?'

'Nothing,' said the dwarf;—'nothing but this—that no cause can warrant the oath thou wert about to swear. Ungrateful man! thou wert to-day rescued from the devouring wrath of the wicked, by a marvellous conjunction of circumstances—Is this a day, thinkest thou, on which to indulge thine own hasty resentments?'

'I stand rebuked,' said Sir Geoffrey, 'and by a singular monitor—the grasshopper, as the prayer-book saith, hath become a burden to me.—Julian, I will speak to thee of these matters hereafter;—and for you, Master Bridgenorth, I desire to have no further communication with you, either in peace or in anger. Our time passes fast, and I would fain return to my family. Cause our weapons to be restored; unbar the doors, and let us part without further altercation, which can but disturb and aggravate our spirits.'

'Sir Geoffrey Peveril,' said Bridgenorth, 'I have no desire to vex your spirit or my own; but, for thus soon dismissing you, that may hardly be, it being a course inconsistent with the work which I have on hand.'

'How, sir! Do you mean that we should abide here, whether with or against our inclinations?' said the dwarf. 'Were it not that I am laid under charge to remain here, by one who hath the best right to command this poor microcosm, I would show thee that bolts and bars are unavailing restraints on such as I am.'

'Truly,' said Sir Geoffrey, 'I think, upon an emergency, the little man might make his escape through the keyhole.'

Bridgenorth's face was moved into something like a smile at the swaggering speech of the pigmy hero, and the contemptuous commentary of Sir Geoffrey Peveril; but such an expression never dwelt on his features for two seconds together, and he replied in these words:—'Gentlemen, each and all of you must be fain to content yourselves. Believe me, no hurt is intended towards you; on the contrary, your remaining here will be a means of securing your safety, which would be otherwise deeply endangered. It will be your own fault if a hair of your head is hurt. But the stronger force is on my side; and whatever harm you may meet with should you attempt to break forth by violence, the blame must rest with yourselves. If you will not believe me, I will permit Master Julian Peveril to accompany me, where he shall

see that I am provided fully with the means of repressing violence.'

'Treason! — treason!' exclaimed the old knight — 'Treason against God and King Charles! O, for one half-hour of the broadsword which I parted with like an ass!'

'Hold, my father, I conjure you!' said Julian. 'I will go with Master Bridgenorth, since he requests it. I will satisfy myself whether there be danger, and of what nature. It is possible I may prevail on him to desist from some desperate measure, if such be indeed in agitation. Should it be necessary, fear not that your son will behave as he ought to do.'

'Do your pleasure, Julian,' said his father; 'I will confide in thee. But if you betray my confidence, a father's curse shall cleave to you.'

Bridgenorth now motioned to Peveril to follow him, and they passed through the small door by which he had entered.

The passage led to a vestibule or anteroom, in which several other doors and passages seemed to centre. Through one of these Julian was conducted by Bridgenorth, walking with silence and precaution, in obedience to a signal made by his guide to that effect. As they advanced, he heard sounds, like those of the human voice, engaged in urgent and emphatic declamation. With slow and light steps Bridgenorth conducted him through a door which terminated this passage; and as he entered a little gallery, having a curtain in front, the sound of the preacher's voice — for such it now seemed — became distinct and audible.

Julian now doubted not that he was in one of those conventicles, which, though contrary to the existing laws, still continued to be regularly held in different parts of London and the suburbs. Many of these, as frequented by persons of moderate political principles, though dissenters from the Church for conscience' sake, were connived at by the prudence or timidity of the government. But some of them, in which assembled the fiercer and more exalted sects of Independents, Anabaptists, Fifth-Monarchy men, and other sectaries, whose stern enthusiasm had contributed so greatly to effect the overthrow of the late king's throne, were sought after, suppressed, and dispersed, whenever they could be discovered.

Julian was soon satisfied that the meeting into which he was thus secretly introduced was one of the latter class; and, to judge by the violence of the preacher, of the most desperate character. He was still more effectually convinced of this, when, at a sign from Bridgenorth, he cautiously unclosed a part of the curtain which hung before the gallery, and thus, unseen himself, looked down on the audience, and obtained a view of the preacher.

About two hundred persons were assembled beneath, in an area filled up with benches, as if for the exercise of worship; and they were all of the male sex, and well armed with pikes and muskets, as well as swords and pistols. Most of them had the appearance of veteran soldiers, now past the middle of life, yet retaining such an appearance of strength as might well supply the loss of youthful agility. They stood, or sat, in various attitudes of stern attention; and, resting on their spears and muskets, kept their eyes firmly fixed on the preacher, who ended the violence of his declamation by displaying from the pulpit a banner, on which was represented a lion, with the motto, '*Vicit Leo ex tribu Judæ.*'

The torrent of mystical yet animating eloquence of the preacher—an old grey-haired man, whom zeal seemed to supply with the powers of voice and action, of which years had deprived him—was suited to the taste of his audience, but could not be transferred to these pages without scandal and impropriety. He menaced the rulers of England with all the judgments denounced on those of Moab and Assyria—he called upon the saints to be strong, to be up and doing; and promised those miracles which, in the campaigns of Joshua and his successors, the valiant Judges of Israel, supplied all odds against the Amorites, Midianites, and Philistines. He sounded trumpets, opened vials, broke seals, and denounced approaching judgments under all the mystical signs of the Apocalypse. The end of the world was announced, accompanied with all its preliminary terrors.

Julian, with deep anxiety, soon heard enough to make him aware that the meeting was likely to terminate in open insurrection, like that of the Fifth-Monarchy men, under Venner, at an earlier period of Charles's reign;* and he was not a little concerned at the probability of Bridgenorth being implicated in so criminal and desperate an undertaking. If he had retained any doubts of the issue of the meeting, they must have been removed when the preacher called on his hearers to renounce all expectation which had hitherto been entertained of safety to the nation from the execution of the ordinary laws of the land. This, he said, was at best but a carnal seeking after earthly aid—a going down to Egypt for help, which the jealousy of their Divine Leader would resent as a fleeing to another rock, and a different banner from that which was this day displayed over them.—And here he solemnly swung the bannered lion over their heads, as the only sign under which they ought to seek for life and safety. He then proceeded to insist that recourse to ordinary justice was vain as well as sinful.

'The event of that day at Westminster,' he said, 'might teach them that the man at Whitehall was even as the man his father;' and closed a long tirade against the vices of the court, with assurance 'that Tophet was ordained of old—for the King it was made hot.'

As the preacher entered on a description of the approaching theocracy, which he dared to prophesy, Bridgenorth, who appeared for a time to have forgotten the presence of Julian, whilst with stern and fixed attention he drunk in the

* This insurrection took place in 1660. Those in it believed themselves invulnerable and invincible. They proclaimed the Millennium, and disturbed London greatly. The day after their mad rebellion, they were put down and subdued; and their leaders, not having the good fortune to be convicted as madmen, were tried and punished as traitors.

[This alludes to the insurrection under Thomas Venner, in January 1660-61. Venner, and other prisoners, being tried and condemned, were sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and their heads set on London Bridge.]

words of the preacher, seemed suddenly to collect himself, and, taking Julian by the hand, led him out of the gallery, of which he carefully closed the door, into an apartment at no great distance.

When they arrived there, he anticipated the expostulations of Julian, by asking him, in a tone of severe triumph, whether these men he had seen were likely to do their work negligently, or whether it would not be perilous to attempt to force their way from a house, when all the avenues were guarded by such as he had now seen—men of war from their childhood upwards.

'In the name of Heaven,' said Julian, without replying to Bridgenorth's question, 'for what desperate purpose have you assembled so many desperate men? I am well aware that your sentiments of religion are peculiar; but beware how you deceive yourself—No views of religion can sanction rebellion and murder; and such are the natural and necessary consequences of the doctrine we have just heard poured into the ears of fanatical and violent enthusiasts.'

'My son,' said Bridgenorth calmly, 'in the days of my nonage, I thought as you do. I deemed it sufficient to pay my tithes of cummin and aniseed—my poor petty moral observances of the old law; and I thought I was heaping up precious things, when they were in value no more than the husks of the swine-trough. Praised be Heaven, the scales are fallen from mine eyes; and after forty years' wandering in the desert of Sinai, I am at length arrived in the Land of Promise—My corrupt human nature has left me—I have cast my slough, and can now with some conscience put my hand to the plough, certain that there is no weakness left in me wherethrough I may look back. The furrows,' he added, bending his brows, while a gloomy fire filled his large eyes, 'must be drawn long and deep, and watered by the blood of the mighty.'

There was a change in Bridgenorth's tone and manner, when he used these singular expressions, which convinced Julian that his mind, which had wavered for so many years between his natural good sense and the insane enthusiasm of the time, had finally given way to the latter; and, sensible of the danger in which the unhappy man himself, the innocent and beautiful Alice, and his own father, were likely to be placed—to say nothing of the general risk of the community by a sudden insurrection—he at the same time felt that there was no chance of reasoning effectually with one who would oppose spiritual conviction to all arguments which reason could urge against his wild schemes. To touch his feelings seemed a more probable resource; and Julian therefore conjured Bridgenorth to think how much his daughter's honour and safety were concerned in his abstaining from the dangerous course which he meditated. 'If you fall,' he said, 'must she not pass under the power and guardianship of her uncle, whom you allow to have shown himself capable of the grossest mistake in the choice of her female protectress; and whom I believe, upon good grounds, to have made that infamous choice with his eyes open?'

'Young man,' answered Bridgenorth, 'you make me feel like the poor bird, around whose wing some wanton boy has fixed a line, to pull the struggling wretch to earth at his pleasure. Know, since thou wilt play this cruel part, and drag me down from higher contemplations, that she with whom Alice is placed, and who hath in future full power to guide her motions, and decide her fate, despite of Christian and every one else, is—I will not tell thee who she is—Enough—no one—thou least of all, needs to fear for her safety.'

At this moment a side door opened, and Christian himself came into the apartment. He started and coloured when he saw Julian Peveril; then, turning to Bridgenorth with an assumed air of indifference, asked, 'Is Saul among the prophets?—Is a Peveril among the saints?'

'No, brother,' replied Bridgenorth, 'his time is not come more than thine own—thou art too deep in the ambitious intrigues of manhood, and he in the giddy passions of youth, to hear the still calm voice—You will both hear it, as I trust and pray.'

'Master Ganlesse, or Christian, or by whatever name you are called,' said Julian, 'by whatever reasons you guide yourself in this most perilous matter, *you* at least are not influenced by any idea of an immediate divine command for commencing hostilities against the State. Leaving, therefore, for the present, whatever subjects of discussion may be between us, I implore you, as a man of shrewdness and sense, to join with me in dissuading Master Bridgenorth from the fatal enterprise which he now meditates.'

'Young gentleman,' said Christian with great composure, 'when we met in the west, I was willing to have made a friend of you, but you rejected the overture. You might, however, even then have seen enough of me to be assured that I am not likely to rush too rashly on any desperate undertaking. As to this which lies before us, my brother Bridgenorth brings to it the simplicity, though not the harmlessness of the dove, and I the subtilty of the serpent. He hath the leading of saints who are moved by the spirit; and I can add to their efforts a powerful body, who have for their instigators the world, the devil, and the flesh.'

'And can you,' said Julian, looking at Bridgenorth, 'accede to such an unworthy union?'

'I unite not with them,' said Bridgenorth; 'but I may not, without guilt, reject the aid which Providence sends to assist his servants. We are ourselves few, though determined—Those whose swords come to help the cutting down of the harvest, must be welcome—When their work is wrought, they will be converted or scattered.—Have you been at York Place, brother, with that unstable epicure? We must have his last resolution, and that within an hour.'

Christian looked at Julian, as if his presence prevented him from returning an answer; upon which Bridgenorth arose, and, taking the young man by the arm, led him out of the apartment, into that in which they had left his father; assuring him by the way that determined and vigilant guards were placed in every different

quarter by which escape could be effected, and that he would do well to persuade his father to remain a quiet prisoner for a few hours.

Julian returned him no answer, and Bridgenorth presently retired, leaving him alone with his father and Hudson. To their questions he could only briefly reply that he feared they were trepanned, since they were in the house with at least two hundred fanatics, completely armed, and apparently prepared for some desperate enterprise. Their own want of arms precluded the possibility of open violence; and, however unpleasant it might be to remain in such a condition, it seemed difficult, from the strength of the fastenings at doors and windows, to attempt any secret escape without instantaneous detection.

The violent dwarf alone nursed hopes, with which he in vain endeavoured to inspire his companions in affliction. 'The fair one, whose eyes,' he said, 'were like the twin stars of Leda'—for the little man was a great admirer of lofty language—'had not invited him, the most devoted, and, it might be, not the least favoured of her servants, into this place as a harbour, in order that he might therein suffer shipwreck; and he generously assured his friends that in his safety they also should be safe.'

Sir Geoffrey, little cheered by this intimation, expressed his despair at not being able to get the length of Whitehall, where he trusted to find as many jolly Cavaliers as would help him to stifle the whole nest of wasps in their hive; while Julian was of opinion that the best service he could now render Bridgenorth, would be timeously to disclose his plot, and, if possible, to send him at the same time warning to save his person.

But we must leave them to meditate over their plans at leisure; no one of which, as they all depended on their previous escape from confinement, seemed in any great chance of being executed.

CHAPTER XLIV.

And some for safety took the dreadful leap;
Some for the voice of Heaven seem'd calling on them;
Some for advancement, or for lucre's sake—
I leap'd in frolic.

THE DREAM.

AFTER a private conversation with Bridgenorth, Christian hastened to the Duke of Buckingham's hotel, taking at the same time such a route as to avoid meeting with any acquaintance. He was ushered into the apartment of the duke, whom he found cracking and eating filberts, with a flask of excellent white wine at his elbow. 'Christian,' said his Grace, 'come help me to laugh—I have bit Sir Charles Sedley—flung him for a thousand, by the gods!'

'I am glad at your luck, my lord Duke,' replied Christian; 'but I am come here on serious business.'

'Serious?—why, I shall hardly be serious in my life again—ha, ha, ha!—and for luck, it was no such thing—sheer wit, and excellent contrivance; and but that I don't care to affront Fortune, like the old Greek general, I might tell her to her face—In this thou hadst no share. You have heard, Ned Christian, that Mother Cresswell is dead?' *

'Yes, I did hear that the devil hath got his due,' answered Christian.

'Well,' said the duke, 'you are ungrateful; for I know you have been obliged to her, as well as others. Before George, a most benevolent and helpful old lady; and, that she might not sleep in an unblessed grave, I betted—do you mark me?—with Sedley, that I would write her funeral sermon; that it should be every word in praise of her life and conversation, that it should be all true, and yet that the diocesan should be unable to lay his thumb on Quodling, my little chaplain, who should preach it.'

'I perfectly see the difficulty, my lord,' said Christian, who well knew that, if he wished to secure attention from this volatile nobleman, he must first suffer, nay, encourage him, to exhaust the topic, whatever it might be, that had got temporary possession of his pineal gland.

'Why,' said the duke, 'I had caused my little Quodling to go through his oration thus—"That whatever evil reports had passed current during the lifetime of the worthy matron whom they had restored to dust that day, malice herself could not deny that she was born well, married well, lived well, and died well; since she was born in Shadwell, married to Cresswell, lived in Camberwell, and died in Bridewell." Here ended the oration, and with it Sedley's ambitious hopes of over-reaching Buckingham—ha, ha, ha!—And now, Master Christian, what are your commands for me to-day?'

'First, to thank your Grace for being so attentive as to send so formidable a person as Colonel Blood to wait upon your poor friend and servant. Faith, he took such an interest in my leaving town, that he wanted to compel me to do it at point of fox, so I was obliged to spill a little of his malapert blood. Your Grace's swordsmen have had ill luck of late; and it is hard, since you always choose the best hands, and such scrupleless knaves too.'

'Come now, Christian,' said the duke, 'do not thus exult over me; a great man, if I may so call myself, is never greater than amid miscarriage. I only played this little trick on you, Christian, to impress on you a wholesome idea of the interest I take in your motions. The scoundrel's having dared to draw upon you, is a thing not to be forgiven.—What! injure my old friend Christian?'

'And why not,' said Christian coolly, 'if your old friend was so stubborn as not to go out of town, like a good boy, when your Grace required him to do so, for the civil purpose of entertaining his niece in his absence?'

'How—what!—how do you mean by *my* entertaining our niece, Master Christian?' said the duke. 'She was a personage far beyond my

* [Mother Cresswell, an infamous and noted procuress. The funeral oration given in the text was probably taken from Granger's *Biographical History* (Charles II. chap. 12), who states that she left by will £10 to a preacher, who should officiate at her funeral, provided he should say nothing but what was *well* of her. With some difficulty a preacher was found, who used words similar to those put into the Duke of Buckingham's mouth.]

poor attentions, being destined, if I recollect aright, to something like royal favour.'

'It was her fate, however, to be the guest of your Grace's convent for a brace of days, or so. Marry, my lord, the father confessor was not at home; and—for convents have been scaled of late—returned not till the bird was flown.'

'Christian, thou art an old reynard—I see there is no doubling with thee. It was thou, then, that stole away my pretty prize, but left me something so much prettier in my mind, that, had it not made itself wings to fly away with, I would have placed it in a cage of gold. Never be downcast, man; I forgive thee—I forgive thee.'

'Your Grace is of a most merciful disposition, especially considering it is I who have had the wrong; and sages have said, that he who doth the injury is less apt to forgive than he who only sustains it.'

'True, true, Christian,' said the duke, 'which, as you say, is something quite new, and places my clemency in a striking point of view. Well, then, thou forgiven man, when shall I see my Mauritanian princess again?'

'Whenever I am certain that a quibble, and a carwitchet, for a play or a sermon, will not banish her from your Grace's memory.'

'Not all the wit of South, or of Etherege,' said Buckingham hastily, 'to say nothing of my own, shall in future make me oblivious of what I owe the Morisco princess.'

'Yet, to leave the fair lady out of thought for a little while—a very little while,' said Christian, 'since I swear that in due time your Grace shall see her, and know in her the most extraordinary woman that the age has produced—to leave her, I say, out of sight for a little while, has your Grace had late notice of your Duchess's health?'

'Health,' said the duke. 'Umph—no—nothing particular. She has been ill—but'——

'She is no longer so,' subjoined Christian; 'she died in Yorkshire forty-eight hours since.'

'Thou must deal with the devil,' said the duke.

'It would ill become one of my name to do so,' replied Christian. 'But in the brief interval, since your Grace hath known of an event which hath not yet reached the public ear, you have, I believe, made proposals to the King for the hand of the Lady Anne, second daughter of the Duke of York, and your Grace's proposals have been rejected.'

'Fiends and firebrands, villain!' said the duke, starting up and seizing Christian by the collar; 'who hath told thee that?'

'Take your hand from my cloak, my lord Duke, and I may answer you,' said Christian. 'I have a scurvy touch of old Puritanical humour about me. I abide not the imposition of hands—take off your grasp from my cloak, or I will find means to make you unloose it.'

The duke, who had kept his right hand on his dagger-hilt while he held Christian's collar with his left, unloosed it as he spoke, but slowly, and as one who rather suspends than abandons the execution of some hasty impulse; while Christian, adjusting his cloak with perfect composure, said, 'Soh—my cloak being at liberty, we speak on equal terms. I come not to insult your Grace, but to offer you vengeance for the insult you have received.'

'Vengeance!' said the duke—'It is the dearest proffer man can present to me in my present mood. I hunger for vengeance—thirst for vengeance—could die to insure vengeance!—'Sdeath!' he continued, walking up and down the large apartment with the most unrestrained and violent agitation; 'I have chased this repulse out of my brain with ten thousand trifles, because I thought no one knew it. But it is known, and to thee, the very common-sewer of court secrets—the honour of Villiers is in thy keeping, Ned Christian! Speak, thou man of wiles and of intrigue—on whom dost thou promise the vengeance? Speak, and if thy answers meet my desires, I will make a bargain with thee as willingly as with thy master, Satan himself.'

'I will not be,' said Christian, 'so unreasonable in my terms as stories tell of the old apostate; I will offer your Grace, as he might do, temporal prosperity and revenge, which is his frequent recruiting money, but I leave it to yourself to provide, as you may be pleased, for your future salvation.'

The duke, gazing upon him fixedly and sadly, replied, 'I would to God, Christian, that I could read what purpose of damnable villany thou hast to propose to me in thy countenance, without the necessity of thy using words!'

'Your Grace can but try a guess,' said Christian, calmly smiling.

'No,' replied the duke, after gazing at him again for the space of a minute; 'thou art so deeply-dyed a hypocrite, that thy mean features, and clear grey eye, are as likely to conceal treason, as any petty scheme of theft or larceny more corresponding to your degree.'

'Treason, my lord!' echoed Christian; 'you may have guessed more nearly than you were aware of. I honour your Grace's penetration.'

'Treason!' echoed the duke. 'Who dare name such a crime to me?'

'If a name startles your Grace, you may call it vengeance—vengeance on the cabal of councillors, who have ever countermined you, in spite of your wit and your interest with the King—Vengeance on Arlington, Ormond—on Charles himself.'

'No, by Heaven!' said the duke, resuming his disordered walk through the apartment—'Vengeance on these rats of the Privy Council, —come at it as you will. But the King!—never—never. I have provoked him a hundred times, where he has stirred me once. I have crossed his path in State intrigue—rivalled him in love—had the advantage in both,—and, d—n it, he has forgiven me! If treason would put me in his throne, I have no apology for it—it were worse than bestial ingratitude.'

'Nobly spoken, my lord,' said Christian; 'and consistent alike with the obligations under which your Grace lies to Charles Stuart, and the sense you have ever shown of them. But it signifies not. If your Grace patronize not our enterprise, there is Shaftesbury—there is Monmouth'——

'Scoundrel!' exclaimed the duke, even more vehemently agitated than before; 'think you that you shall carry on with others an enterprise

which I have refused?—No, by every heathen and every Christian god!—Hark ye, Christian, I will arrest you on the spot—I will, by gods and devils, and carry you to unravel your plot at Whitehall.'

'Where the first words I speak,' answered the imperturbable Christian, 'will be to inform the Privy Council in what place they may find certain letters, wherewith your Grace has honoured your poor vassal, containing, as I think, particulars which his Majesty will read with more surprise than pleasure.'

''Sdeath, villain!' said the duke, once more laying his hand on his poniard-hilt, 'thou hast me again at advantage. I know not why I forbear to poniard you where you stand!'

'I might fall, my lord Duke,' said Christian, slightly colouring, and putting his right hand into his bosom, 'though not, I think, unavenged—for I have not put my person into this peril altogether without means of defence. I might fall, but, alas! your Grace's correspondence is in hands which, by that very act, would be rendered sufficiently active in handing it to the King and Privy Council. What say you to the Moorish princess, my lord Duke? What if I have left her executrix of my will, with certain instructions how to proceed if I return not unharmed from York Place? O, my lord, though my head is in the wolf's mouth, I was not goose enough to place it there without settling how many carbines should be fired on the wolf, so soon as my dying cackle was heard—Pshaw, my lord Duke! you deal with a man of sense and courage, yet you speak to him as a child and a coward.'

The duke threw himself into a chair, fixed his eyes on the ground, and spoke without raising them. 'I am about to call Jerningham,' he said; 'but fear nothing—it is only for a draught of wine—That stuff on the table may be a vehicle for filberts and walnuts, but not for such communications as yours.—Bring me champagne,' he said to the attendant who answered on his summons.

The domestic returned, and brought a flask of champagne, with two large silver cups. One of them he filled for Buckingham, who, contrary to the usual etiquette, was always served first at home, and then offered the other to Christian, who declined to receive it.

The duke drank off the large goblet which was presented to him, and for a moment covered his forehead with the palm of his hand; then instantly withdrew it, and said, 'Christian, speak your errand plainly. We know each other. If my reputation be in some degree in your hands, you are well aware that your life is in mine. Sit down,' he said, taking a pistol from his bosom and laying it on the table—'Sit down, and let me hear your proposal.'

'My lord,' said Christian, smiling, 'I shall produce no such ultimate argument on my part, though possibly, in time of need, I may not be found destitute of them. But my defence is in the situation of things, and in the composed view which, doubtless, your Majesty will take of them.'

'Majesty!' repeated the duke—'My good friend Christian, you have kept company with the Puritans so long, that you confuse the ordinary titles of the court.'

'I know not how to apologize,' said Christian, 'unless your Grace will suppose that I spoke by prophecy.'

'Such as the devil delivered to Macbeth,' said the duke—again paced the chamber, and again seated himself, and said, 'Be plain, Christian—speak out at once, and manfully, what is it you intend?'

'*I*,' said Christian—'What should I do?—I can do nothing in such a matter; but I thought it right that your Grace should know that the godly of this city'—(he spoke the word with a kind of ironical grin)—'are impatient of inactivity, and must needs be up and doing. My brother Bridgenorth is at the head of all old Weiver's congregation; for you must know, that, after floundering from one faith to another, he hath now got beyond ordinances, and is become a Fifth-Monarchy man. He has nigh two hundred of Weiver's people, fully equipped, and ready to fall on; and, with slight aid from your Grace's people, they must carry Whitehall, and make prisoners of all within it.'

'Rascal!' said the duke; 'and is it to a peer of England you make this communication?'

'Nay,' answered Christian, 'I admit it would be extreme folly in your Grace to appear until all is over. But let me give Blood and the others a hint on your part. There are the four Germans also—right Knipperdolings and Anabaptists—will be specially useful. You are wise, my lord, and know the value of a corps of domestic gladiators, as well as did Octavius, Lepidus, and Antony, when, by such family forces, they divided the world by indenture tripartite.'

'Stay, stay,' said the duke. 'Even if these bloodhounds were to join with you—not that I would permit it without the most positive assurances for the King's personal safety—but say the villains were to join, what hope have you of carrying the court?'

'Bully Tom Armstrong,* my lord, hath promised his interest with the Life-Guards. Then there are my Lord Shaftesbury's brisk boys in the city—thirty thousand on the holding up a finger.'

'Let him hold up both hands, and if he count a hundred for each finger,' said the duke, 'it will be more than I expect. You have not spoken to him?'

'Surely not till your Grace's pleasure was known. But, if he is not applied to, there is the Dutch train, Hans Snorehout's congregation, in the Strand—there are the French Protestants in Piccadilly—there are the family of Levi in Lewkenor's Lane—the Muggletonians in Thames Street'——

'Ah, faugh!—Out upon them—out upon them!—How the knaves will stink of cheese and tobacco when they come upon action!—they will drown all the perfumes in Whitehall. Spare me the

* Thomas, or Sir Thomas Armstrong, a person who had distinguished himself in youth by duels and drunken exploits. He was particularly connected with the Duke of Monmouth, and was said to be concerned in the Rye-House Plot, for which he suffered capital punishment, 20th June 1684.

detail; and let me know, my dearest Ned, the sum-total of thy most odoriferous forces.'

'Fifteen hundred men, well armed,' said Christian, 'besides the rabble that will rise to a certainty—they have already nearly torn to pieces the prisoners who were this day acquitted on account of the Plot.'

'All, then, I understand.—And now, hark ye, most Christian Christian,' said he, wheeling his chair full in front of that on which his agent was seated, 'you have told me many things to-day—Shall I be equally communicative? Shall I show you that my accuracy of information matches yours? Shall I tell you, in a word, why you have at once resolved to push every one, from the Puritan to the free-thinker, upon a general attack of the palace at Whitehall, without allowing me, a peer of the realm, time either to pause upon or to prepare for a step so desperate? Shall I tell you why you would lead or drive, seduce or compel me, into countenancing your measures?'

'My lord, if you please to form a guess,' said Christian, 'I will answer with all sincerity, if you have assigned the right cause.'

'The Countess of Derby is this day arrived, and attends the court this evening, with hopes of the kindest reception. She may be surprised amid the *mêlée*?—Ha! said I not right, Master Christian? You, who pretend to offer me revenge, know yourself its exquisite sweetness.'

'I would not presume,' said Christian, half smiling, 'to offer your Grace a dish without acting as your taster as well as purveyor.'

'That's honestly said,' said the duke. 'Away, then, my friend. Give Blood this ring—he knows it, and knows how to obey him who bears it. Let him assemble my gladiators, as thou dost most wittily term my *coupe-jarrets*. The old scheme of the German music may be resorted to, for I think thou hast the instruments ready. But take notice, I know nothing on't; and Rowley's person must be safe—I will hang and burn on all hands if a hair of his black periwig* be but singed.—Then what is to follow—a Lord Protector of the realm—or stay—Cromwell has made the word somewhat slovenly and unpopular—a Lord Lieutenant of the kingdom?—The patriots who take it on themselves to avenge the injustice done to the country, and to remove evil counsellors from before the King's throne, that it may be henceforward established in righteousness—so I think the rubric runs—cannot fail to make a fitting choice.'

'They cannot, my lord Duke,' said Christian, 'since there is but one man in the three kingdoms on whom that choice can possibly fall.'

'I thank you, Christian,' said his Grace; 'and I trust you. Away, and make all ready. Be assured your services shall not be forgot. We will have you near to us.'

'My lord Duke,' said Christian, 'you bind me doubly to you. But remember that, as your Grace is spared any obnoxious proceedings which may befall in the way of military execution, or other wise, so it will be advisable that you hold yourself in preparation, upon a moment's notice, to put yourself at the head of a band of honourable friends and allies, and come presently to the palace, where you will be received by the victors as a commander, and by the vanquished as a preserver.'

'I conceive you—I conceive you. I will be in prompt readiness,' said the duke.

'Ay, my lord,' continued Christian; 'and, for Heaven's sake, let none of those toys, which are the very Dalilahs of your imagination, come across your Grace this evening, and interfere with the execution of this sublime scheme.'

'Why, Christian, dost think me mad?' was his Grace's emphatic reply. 'It is you who linger, when all should be ordered for a deed so daring. Go, then.—But hark ye, Ned; ere you go, tell me when I shall again see yonder thing of fire and air—yon Eastern Peri, that glides into apartments by the keyhole, and leaves them through the casement—yon black-eyed houri of the Mahometan paradise—when, I say, shall I see her once more?'

'When your Grace has the truncheon of Lord Lieutenant of the kingdom,' said Christian, and left the apartment.

Buckingham stood fixed in contemplation for a moment after he was gone. 'Should I have done this?' he said, arguing the matter with himself; 'or had I the choice rather of doing aught else? Should I not hasten to the court, and make Charles aware of the treason which besets him? I will, by Heaven!—Here, Jerningham, my coach, with the despatch of light!—I will throw myself at his feet, and tell him of all the follies which I have dreamed of with this Christian.—And then he will laugh at me, and spurn me.—No, I have kneeled to him to-day already, and my repulse was nothing gentle. To be spurned once in the sun's daily round is enough for Buckingham.'

Having made this reflection, he seated himself, and began hastily to mark down the young nobles and gentlemen of quality, and others, their very ignoble companions, who he supposed might be likely to assume him for their leader in any popular disturbance. He had nearly completed it, when Jerningham entered, to say the coach would be ready in an instant, and to bring his master's sword, hat, and cloak.

'Let the coachman draw off,' said the duke, 'but be in readiness. And send to the gentlemen thou wilt find named in this list; say I am but ill at ease, and wish their company to a slight collation. Let instant expedition be made, and care not for expense; you will find most of them at the Club-house in Fuller's Rents.' †

The preparations for festivity were speedily made, and the intended guests, most of them persons who were at leisure for any call that

* Charles, to suit his dark complexion, always wore a black peruke. He used to say of the players, that if they wished to present a villain on the stage, 'Oddsfish, they always clapp'd on him a black periwig, whereas the greatest rogue in England [meaning, probably, Doctor. Oates] wears a white one.—*See* CIBBER'S *Apology*.

† The place of meeting of the Green Ribbon Club. 'Their place of meeting,' says Roger North, 'was in a sort of Carrefour at Chancery Lane, in a centre of business and company most proper for such anglers of fools. The house was double balconied in front, as may yet be seen, for the clubbers to issue forth *in fresco*, with hats and no perukes, pipes in their mouths, merry faces, and dilated throats for vocal encouragement of the canaglia below on usual and unusual occasions.'

promised pleasure, though sometimes more deaf to those of duty, began speedily to assemble. There were many youths of the highest rank, and with them, as is usual in those circles, many of a different class, whom talents, or impudence, or wit, or a turn for gambling, had reared up into companions for the great and the gay. The Duke of Buckingham was a general patron of persons of this description; and a numerous attendance took place on the present occasion.

The festivity was pursued with the usual appliances of wine, music, and games of hazard; with which, however, there mingled in that period much more wit, and a good deal more gross profligacy of conversation, than the talents of the present generation can supply, or their taste would permit.

The duke himself proved the complete command which he possessed over his versatile character, by maintaining the frolic, the laugh, and the jest, while his ear caught up, and with eagerness, the most distant sounds, as intimating the commencement of Christian's revolutionary project. Such sounds were heard from time to time, and from time to time they died away, without any of those consequences which Buckingham expected.

At length, and when it was late in the evening, Jerningham announced Master Chiffinch from the court; and that worthy personage followed the annunciation.

'Strange things have happened, my lord Duke,' he said; 'your presence at court is instantly required by his Majesty.'

'You alarm me,' said Buckingham, standing up. 'I hope nothing has happened—I hope there is nothing wrong—I hope his Majesty is well?'

'Perfectly well,' said Chiffinch; 'and desirous to see your Grace without a moment's delay.'

'This is sudden,' said the duke. 'You see I have had merry fellows about me, and am scarce in case to appear, Chiffinch.'

'Your Grace seems to be in very handsome plight,' said Chiffinch; 'and you know his Majesty is gracious enough to make allowances.'

'True,' said the duke, not a little anxious in his mind touching the cause of this unexpected summons—'True—his Majesty is most gracious—I will order my coach.'

'Mine is below,' replied the royal messenger; 'it will save time, if your Grace will condescend to use it.'

Forced from every evasion, Buckingham took a goblet from the table, and requested his friends to remain at his palace so long as they could find the means of amusement there. He expected, he said, to return almost immediately; if not, he would take farewell of them with his usual toast, 'May all of us that are not hanged in the interval meet together again here on the first Monday of next month.'

This standing toast of the duke bore reference to the character of several of his guests; but he did not drink it on the present occasion without some anticipation concerning his own fate, in case Christian had betrayed him. He hastily made some addition to his dress, and attended Chiffinch in the chariot to Whitehall.

CHAPTER XLV.

High feasting was there there—the gilded roofs
Rung to the wassail-health—the dancer's step
Sprung to the chord responsive—the gay gamester
To fate's disposal flung his heap of gold,
And laugh'd alike when it increased or lessen'd:
Such virtue hath court-air to teach us patience,
Which schoolmen preach in vain.

WHY COME YE NOT TO COURT?

UPON the afternoon of this eventful day Charles held his court in the queen's apartments, which were opened at a particular hour to invited guests of a certain lower degree, but accessible without restriction to the higher classes of nobility who had from birth, and to the courtiers who held by office, the privilege of the *entrée*.

It was one part of Charles's character, which unquestionably rendered him personally popular, and postponed to a subsequent reign the precipitation of his family from the throne, that he banished from his court many of the formal restrictions with which it was in other reigns surrounded. He was conscious of the good-natured grace of his manners, and trusted to it, often not in vain, to remove evil impressions arising from actions which he was sensible could not be justified on the grounds of liberal or national policy.

In the daytime the king was commonly seen in the public walks alone, or only attended by one or two persons; and his answer to the remonstrance of his brother, on the risk of thus exposing his person, is well known,—'Believe me, James,' he said, 'no one will murder *me* to make *you* king.'

In the same manner, Charles's evenings, unless such as were destined to more secret pleasures, were frequently spent amongst all who had any pretence to approach a courtly circle; and thus it was upon the night which we are treating of. Queen Catherine, reconciled or humbled to her fate, had long ceased to express any feelings of jealousy, nay, seemed so absolutely dead to such a passion, that she received at her drawing-room, without scruple and even with encouragement, the Duchesses of Portsmouth and Cleveland, and others, who enjoyed, though in a less avowed character, the credit of having been royal favourites. Constraint of every kind was banished from a circle so composed, and which was frequented at the same time, if not by the wisest, at least by the wittiest courtiers who ever assembled round a monarch, and who, as many of them had shared the wants, and shifts, and frolics of his exile, had then acquired a sort of prospective licence, which the good-natured prince, when he attained his period of prosperity, could hardly have restrained had it suited his temper to do so. This, however, was the least of Charles's thoughts. His manners were such as secured him from indelicate obtrusion; and he sought no other protection from over-familiarity than what these and his ready wit afforded him.

On the present occasion he was peculiarly disposed to enjoy the scene of pleasure which had been prepared. The singular death of Major Coleby, which, taking place in his own presence, had proclaimed, with the voice of a passing bell, the ungrateful neglect of the prince for whom he

had sacrificed everything, had given Charles much pain. But, in his own opinion at least, he had completely atoned for this negligence by the trouble which he had taken for Sir Geoffrey Peveril and his son, whose liberation he looked upon not only as an excellent good deed in itself, but, in spite of the grave rebuke of Ormond, as achieved in a very pardonable manner, considering the difficulties with which he was surrounded. He even felt a degree of satisfaction on receiving intelligence from the city that there had been disturbances in the streets, and that some of the more violent fanatics had betaken themselves to their meeting-houses, upon sudden summons, to inquire, as their preachers phrased it, into the causes of Heaven's wrath, and into the backsliding of the court, lawyers, and jury, by whom the false and bloody favourers of the Popish Plot were screened and cloaked from deserved punishment.

The king, we repeat, seemed to hear these accounts with pleasure, even when he was reminded of the dangerous and susceptible character of those with whom such suspicions originated. 'Will any one now assert,' he said, with self-complacence, 'that I am so utterly negligent of the interest of friends?—You see the peril in which I place myself, and even the risk to which I have exposed the public peace, to rescue a man whom I have scarce seen for twenty years, and then only in his buff-coat and bandoliers, with other Train-Band officers who kissed hands upon the Restoration. They say kings have long hands—I think they have as much occasion for long memories, since they are expected to watch over and reward every man in England who hath but shown his good-will by crying "God save the King!"'

'Nay, the rogues are even more unreasonable still,' said Sedley; 'for every knave of them thinks himself entitled to your Majesty's protection in a good cause whether he has cried "God save the King" or no.'

The king smiled, and turned to another part of the stately hall, where everything was assembled which could, according to the taste of the age, make the time glide pleasantly away.

In one place, a group of the young nobility, and of the ladies of the court, listened to the reader's acquaintance Empson, who was accompanying with his unrivalled breathings on the flute, a young siren, who, while her bosom palpitated with pride and with fear, warbled to the courtly and august presence the beautiful air beginning,

> Young I am, and yet unskill'd
> How to make a lover yield, etc.

She performed her task in a manner so corresponding with the strains of the amatory poet, and the voluptuous air with which the words had been invested by the celebrated Purcel, that the men crowded around in ecstasies, while most of the ladies thought it proper either to look extremely indifferent to the words she sang, or to withdraw from the circle as quietly as possible. To the song succeeded a concerto, performed by a select band of most admirable musicians, which the king, whose taste was indisputable, had himself selected.

At other tables in the apartment the elder courtiers worshipped Fortune at the various fashionable games of ombre, quadrille, hazard, and the like; while heaps of gold, which lay before the players, augmented or dwindled with every turn of a card or cast of a die. Many a year's rent of fair estates was ventured upon the main or the odds; which, spent in the old deserted manor-house, had repaired the ravages of Cromwell upon its walls, and replaced the sources of good housekeeping and hospitality, that, exhausted in the last age by fine and sequestration, were now in a fair way of being annihilated by careless prodigality. Elsewhere, under cover of observing the gamester, or listening to the music, the gallantries of that all-licensed age were practised among the gay and fair, closely watched the whilst by the ugly or the old, who promised themselves at least the pleasure of observing, and it may be that of proclaiming, intrigues in which they could not be sharers.

From one table to another glided the Merry Monarch, exchanging now a glance with a court beauty, now a jest with a court wit, now beating time to the music, and anon losing or winning a few pieces of gold on the chance of the game to which he stood nearest;—the most amiable of voluptuaries—the gayest and best-natured of companions—the man that would, of all others, have best sustained his character, had life been a continued banquet, and its only end to enjoy the passing hour, and send it away as pleasantly as might be.

But kings are least of all exempted from the ordinary lot of humanity; and Seged of Ethiopia is, amongst monarchs, no solitary example of the vanity of reckoning on a day or an hour of undisturbed serenity. An attendant on the court announced suddenly to their Majesties that a lady, who would only announce herself as a peeress of England, desired to be admitted into the Presence.

The queen said, hastily, it was *impossible*. No peeress, without announcing her title, was entitled to the privilege of her rank.

'I could be sworn,' said a nobleman in attendance, 'that it is some whim of the Duchess of Newcastle.'

The attendant who brought the message said that he did indeed believe it to be the duchess, both from the singularity of the message, and that the lady spoke with somewhat a foreign accent.

'In the name of madness, then,' said the king, 'let us admit her. Her Grace is an entire raree-show in her own person—a universal masquerade—indeed, a sort of private bedlam-hospital, her whole ideas being like so many patients crazed upon the subjects of love and literature, who act nothing in their vagaries, save Minerva, Venus, and the nine Muses.'

'Your Majesty's pleasure must always supersede mine,' said the queen. 'I only hope I shall not be expected to entertain so fantastic a personage. The last time she came to court, Isabella' (she spoke to one of her Portuguese ladies of honour), 'you had not returned from our lovely Lisbon!—her Grace had the assurance to assume a right to bring a train-bearer into my

apartment; and when this was not allowed, what then, think you, she did?—even caused her train to be made so long, that three mortal yards of satin and silver remained in the antechamber, supported by four wenches, while the other end was attached to her Grace's person, as she paid her duty at the upper end of the presence-room. Full thirty yards of the most beautiful silk did her Grace's madness employ in this manner.'

'And most beautiful damsels they were who bore this portentous train,' said the king,—'a train never equalled save by that of the great comet in sixty-six. Sedley and Etherege told us wonders of them; for it is one advantage of this new fashion brought up by the duchess, that a matron may be totally unconscious of the coquetry of her train and its attendants.'

'Am I to understand, then, your Majesty's pleasure is, that the lady is to be admitted?' said the usher.

'Certainly,' said the king; 'that is, if the incognita be really entitled to the honour. It may be as well to inquire her title—there are more madwomen abroad than the Duchess of Newcastle. I will walk into the anteroom myself, and receive your answer.'

But ere Charles had reached the lower end of the apartment in his progress to the anteroom, the usher surprised the assembly by announcing a name which had not for many a year been heard in these courtly halls—'the Countess of Derby!'

Stately and tall, and still, at an advanced period of life, having a person unbroken by years, the noble lady advanced towards her sovereign, with a step resembling that with which she might have met a equal. There was indeed nothing in her manner that indicated either haughtiness or assumption unbecoming that presence; but her consciousness of wrongs, sustained from the administration of Charles, and of the superiority of the injured party over those from whom, or in whose name, the injury had been offered, gave her look dignity, and her step firmness. She was dressed in widow's weeds, of the same fashion which were worn at the time her husband was brought to the scaffold; and which, in the thirty years subsequent to that event, she had never permitted her tirewoman to alter.

The surprise was no pleasing one to the king; and, cursing in his heart the rashness which had allowed the lady entrance on the gay scene in which they were engaged, he saw at the same time the necessity of receiving her in a manner suitable to his own character, and her rank in the British court. He approached her with an air of welcome, into which he threw all his natural grace, while he began, '*Chère Comtesse de Derby, puissante Reine de Man, notre très auguste sœur*'——

'Speak English, sire, if I may presume to ask such a favour,' said the countess. 'I am a peeress of this nation—mother to one English Earl, and widow, alas, to another! In England I have spent my brief days of happiness, my long years of widowhood and sorrow. France and its language are but to me the dreams of an uninteresting childhood. I know no tongue save that of my husband and my son. Permit me, as the widow and mother of Derby, thus to render my homage.'

She would have kneeled, but the king gracefully prevented her, and, saluting her cheek, according to the form, led her towards the queen, and himself performed the ceremony of introduction. 'Your Majesty,' he said, 'must be informed that the Countess has imposed a restriction on French—the language of gallantry and compliment. I trust your Majesty will, though a foreigner, like herself, find enough of honest English to assure the Countess of Derby with what pleasure we see her at court, after the absence of so many years.'

'I will endeavour to do so, at least,' said the queen, on whom the appearance of the Countess of Derby made a more favourable impression than that of many strangers, whom, at the king's request, she was in the habit of receiving with courtesy.

Charles himself again spoke. 'To any other lady of the same rank I might put the question, why she was so long absent from the circle? I fear I can only ask the Countess of Derby what fortunate cause produces the pleasure of seeing her here?'

'No fortunate cause, my liege, though one most strong and urgent.'

The king augured nothing agreeable from this commencement; and in truth, from the countess's first entrance, he had anticipated some unpleasant explanation, which he therefore hastened to parry, having first composed his features into an expression of sympathy and interest.

'If,' said he, 'the cause is of a nature in which we can render assistance, we cannot expect your ladyship should enter upon it at the present time; but a memorial addressed to our secretary, or, if it is more satisfactory, to ourselves directly, will receive our immediate, and I trust I need not add, our favourable construction.'

The Countess bowed with some state, and answered, 'My business, sire, is indeed important; but so brief, that it need not for more than a few minutes withdraw your ear from what is more pleasing;—yet it is so urgent, that I am afraid to postpone it even for a moment.'

'This is unusual,' said Charles. 'But you, Countess of Derby, are an unwonted guest, and must command my time. Does the matter require my private ear?'

'For my part,' said the countess, 'the whole court might listen; but your Majesty may prefer hearing me in the presence of one or two of your counsellors.'

'Ormond,' said the king, looking round, 'attend us for an instant—and do you, Arlington, do the same.'

The king led the way into an adjoining cabinet, and, seating himself, requested the countess would also take a chair. 'It needs not, sire,' she replied; then pausing for a moment, as if to collect her spirits, she proceeded with firmness.

'Your Majesty well said that no light cause had drawn me from my lonely habitation. I came not hither when the property of my son—

that property which descended to him from a father who died for your Majesty's rights—was conjured away from him under pretext of justice, that it might first feed the avarice of the rebel Fairfax, and then supply the prodigality of his son-in-law, Buckingham.'

'These are over harsh terms, lady,' said the king. 'A legal penalty was, as we remember, incurred by an act of irregular violence—so our courts and our laws term it, though personally I have no objection to call it, with you, an honourable revenge. But, admit it were such, in prosecution of the laws of honour, bitter legal consequences are often necessarily incurred.'

'I come not to argue for my son's wasted and forfeited inheritance, sire,' said the countess; 'I only take credit for my patience under that afflicting dispensation. I now come to redeem the honour of the House of Derby, more dear to me than all the treasures and lands which ever belonged to it.'

'And by whom is the honour of the House of Derby impeached?' said the king; 'for, on my word, you bring me the first news of it.'

'Has there one Narrative, as these wild fictions are termed, been printed with regard to the Popish Plot—this pretended Plot, as I will call it—in which the honour of our house has not been touched and tainted? And are there not two noble gentlemen, father and son, allies of the House of Stanley, about to be placed in jeopardy of their lives, on account of matters in which we are the parties first impeached?'

The king looked around, and smiled to Arlington and Ormond. 'The Countess's courage, methinks, shames ours. What lips dared have called the immaculate Plot *pretended*, or the Narrative of the witnesses, our preservers from Popish knaves, a wild fiction?—But, madam,' he said, 'though I admire the generosity of your interference in behalf of the two Peverils, I must acquaint you that your interference is unnecessary—they are this morning acquitted.'

'Now may God be praised!' said the countess, folding her hands. 'I have scarce slept since I heard the news of their impeachment; and have arrived here to surrender myself to your Majesty's justice, or to the prejudices of the nation, in hopes, by so doing, I might at least save the lives of my noble and generous friends, enveloped in suspicion only, or chiefly, by their connection with us.—Are they indeed acquitted?'

'They are, by my honour,' said the king. 'I marvel you heard it not.'

'I arrived but last night, and remained in the strictest seclusion,' said the countess, 'afraid to make any inquiries that might occasion discovery ere I saw your Majesty.'

'And now that we have met,' said the king, taking her hand kindly—'a meeting which gives me the greatest pleasure—may I recommend to you speedily to return to your royal island with as little *éclat* as you came hither? The world, my dear Countess, has changed since we were young. Men fought in the Civil War with good swords and muskets; but now we fight with indictments and oaths, and such-like legal weapons. You are no adept in such warfare; and, though I am well aware you know how to hold out a castle, I doubt much if you have the art to parry off an impeachment. This Plot has come upon us like a land storm—there is no steering the vessel in the teeth of the tempest—we must run for the nearest haven, and happy if we can reach one.'

'This is cowardice, my liege,' said the countess—'Forgive the word!—it is but a woman who speaks it. Call your noble friends around you, and make a stand like your royal father. There is but one right and one wrong—one honourable and forward course; and all others which deviate are oblique and unworthy.'

'Your language, my venerated friend,' said Ormond—who saw the necessity of interfering betwixt the dignity of the actual sovereign and the freedom of the countess, who was generally accustomed to receive, not to pay observance,—'your language is strong and decided, but it applies not to the times. It might occasion a renewal of the Civil War, and of all its miseries, but could hardly be attended with the effects you sanguinely anticipate.'

'You are too rash, my lady Countess,' said Arlington, 'not only to rush upon this danger yourself, but to desire to involve his Majesty. Let me say plainly, that, in this jealous time, you have done but ill to exchange the security of Castle Rushin for the chance of a lodging in the Tower of London.'

'And were I to kiss the block there,' said the countess, 'as did my husband at Bolton-on-the-Moors, I would do so willingly, rather than forsake a friend!—and one, too, whom, as in the case of the younger Peveril, I have thrust upon danger.'

'But have I not assured you that both of the Peverils, elder and younger, are freed from peril?' said the king; 'and, my dear Countess, what can else tempt you to thrust *yourself* on danger, from which, doubtless, you expect to be relieved by my intervention? Methinks a lady of your judgment should not voluntarily throw herself into a river, merely that her friends might have the risk and merit of dragging her out.'

The countess reiterated her intention to claim a fair trial. The two counsellors again pressed their advice that she should withdraw, though under the charge of absconding from justice, and remain in her own feudal kingdom.

The king, seeing no termination to the debate, gently reminded the countess that her Majesty would be jealous if he detained her ladyship longer, and offered her his hand to conduct her back to the company. This she was under the necessity of accepting, and returned accordingly to the apartments of state, where an event occurred immediately afterwards, which must be transferred to the next chapter.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Here stand I tight and trim,
Quick of eye, though little of limb;
He who denieth the word I have spoken,
Betwixt him and me shall lances be broken.

LAY OF THE LITTLE JOHN DE SAINTRE.

WHEN Charles had reconducted the Countess of Derby into the presence-chamber, before he

parted with her, he entreated her, in a whisper, to be governed by good counsel, and to regard her own safety; and then turned easily from her, as if to distribute his attentions equally among the other guests.

These were a good deal circumscribed at the instant, by the arrival of a party of five or six musicians; one of whom, a German, under the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham, was particularly renowned for his performance on the violoncello, but had been detained in inactivity in the antechamber by the non-arrival of his instrument, which had now at length made its appearance.

The domestic who placed it before the owner, shrouded as it was within its wooden case, seemed heartily glad to be rid of his load, and lingered for a moment, as if interested in discovering what sort of instrument was to be produced that could weigh so heavily. His curiosity was satisfied, and in a most extraordinary manner; for, while the musician was fumbling with the key, the case being for his greater convenience placed upright against the wall, the case and instrument itself at once flew open, and out started the dwarf, Geoffrey Hudson—at sight of whose unearthly appearance, thus suddenly introduced, the ladies shrieked, and ran backwards; the gentlemen started; and the poor German, on seeing the portentous delivery of his fiddle-case, tumbled on the floor in an agony, supposing, it might be, that his instrument was metamorphosed into the strange figure which supplied its place. So soon, however, as he recovered, he glided out of the apartment, and was followed by most of his companions.

'Hudson!' said the King—'My little old friend, I am not sorry to see you; though Buckingham, who I suppose is the purveyor of this jest, hath served us up but a stale one.'

'Will your Majesty honour me with one moment's attention?' said Hudson.

'Assuredly, my good friend,' said the king. 'Old acquaintances are springing up in every quarter to-night; and our leisure can hardly be better employed than in listening to them.—It was an idle trick of Buckingham,' he added in a whisper to Ormond, 'to send the poor thing hither, especially as he was to-day tried for the affair of the Plot. At any rate, he comes not to ask protection from us, having had the rare fortune to come off *Plot-free*. He is but fishing, I suppose, for some little present or pension.'

The little man, precise in court etiquette, yet impatient of the king's delaying to attend to him, stood in the midst of the floor, most valorously pawing and prancing, like a Scots pony assuming the airs of a war-horse, waving meanwhile his little hat with the tarnished feather, and bowing from time to time, as if impatient to be heard.

'Speak on, then, my friend,' said Charles; 'if thou hast some poetical address penned for thee, out with it, that thou mayst have time to repose these flourishing little limbs of thine.'

'No poetical speech have I, most mighty sovereign,' answered the dwarf; 'but, in plain and most loyal prose, I do accuse, before this company, the once noble Duke of Buckingham of high treason!'

'Well spoken, and manfully—Get on, man,' said the king, who never doubted that this was the introduction to something burlesque or witty, not conceiving that the charge was made in solemn earnest.

A great laugh took place among such courtiers as heard, and among many who did not hear, what was uttered by the dwarf; the former entertained by the extravagant emphasis and gesticulation of the little champion, and the others laughing not the less loud that they laughed for example's sake, and upon trust.

'What matter is there for all this mirth?' said he, very indignantly—'Is it fit subject for laughing, that I, Geoffrey Hudson, Knight, do, before King and nobles, impeach George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, of high treason?'

'No subject of mirth, certainly,' said Charles, composing his features; 'but great matter of wonder.—Come, cease this mouthing, and prancing, and mummery.—If there be a jest, come out with it, man; and if not, even get thee to the beauffet, and drink a cup of wine to refresh thee after thy close lodging.'

'I tell you, my liege,' said Hudson impatiently, yet in a whisper, intended only to be audible by the king, 'that if you spend over much time in trifling, you will be convinced by dire experience of Buckingham's treason. I tell you—I asseverate to your Majesty—two hundred armed fanatics will be here within the hour, to surprise the guards.'

'Stand back, ladies,' said the king, 'or you may hear more than you will care to listen to. My Lord of Buckingham's jests are not always, you know, quite fitted for female ears; besides, we want a few words in private with our little friend. You, my Lord of Ormond—you, Arlington' (and he named one or two others), 'may remain with us.'

The gay crowd bore back, and dispersed through the apartment—the men to conjecture what the end of this mummery, as they supposed it, was likely to prove; and what jest, as Sedley said, the bass fiddle had been brought to bed of—and the ladies to admire and criticise the antique dress and richly embroidered ruff and hood of the Countess of Derby, to whom the queen was showing particular attention.

'And now, in the name of Heaven, and amongst friends,' said the king to the dwarf, 'what means all this?'

'Treason, my lord the King!—Treason to his Majesty of England!—When I was chambered in yonder instrument, my lord, the High-Dutch fellows who bore me carried me into a certain chapel, to see, as they said to each other, that all was ready. Sire, I went where bass-fiddle never went before, even into a conventicle of Fifth-Monarchists; and when they brought me away, the preacher was concluding his sermon, and was within a "Now to apply" of setting off like the bell-wether at the head of his flock, to surprise your Majesty in your royal court! I heard him through the sound-holes of my instrument, when the fellow set me down for a moment to profit by this precious doctrine.'

'It would be singular,' said Lord Arlington,

'were there some reality at the bottom of this buffoonery; for we know these wild men have been consulting together to-day, and five conventicles have held a solemn fast.'

'Nay,' said the king, 'if that be the case, they are certainly determined on some villany.'

'Might I advise,' said the Duke of Ormond, 'I would summon the Duke of Buckingham to this Presence. His connections with the fanatics are well known, though he affects to conceal them.'

'You would not, my lord, do his Grace the injustice to treat him as a criminal on such a charge as this?' said the king. 'However,' he added, after a moment's consideration, 'Buckingham is accessible to every sort of temptation, from the flightiness of his genius. I should not be surprised if he nourished hopes of an aspiring kind—I think we had some proof of it but lately. —Hark ye, Chiffinch; go to him instantly, and bring him here on any fair pretext thou canst devise. I would fain save him from what lawyers call an overt act. The court would be dull as a dead horse were Buckingham to miscarry.'

'Will not your Majesty order the Horse Guards to turn out?' said young Selby, who was present, and an officer.

'No, Selby,' said the king, 'I like not horse-play. But let them be prepared; and let the High Bailiff collect his civil officers, and command the Sheriffs to summon their worshipful attendants, from javelin-men to hangmen,* and have them in readiness, in case of any sudden tumult—double the sentinels on the doors of the palace—and see no strangers get in.'

'Or *out*,' said the Duke of Ormond. 'Where are the foreign fellows who brought in the dwarf?'

They were sought for, but they were not to be found. They had retreated, leaving their instruments—a circumstance which seemed to bear hard on the Duke of Buckingham, their patron.

Hasty preparations were made to provide resistance to any effort of despair which the supposed conspirators might be driven to; and in the meanwhile, the king, withdrawing with Arlington, Ormond, and a few other counsellors, into the cabinet where the Countess of Derby had had her audience, resumed the examination of the little discoverer. His declaration, though singular, was quite coherent; the strain of romance intermingled with it being in fact a part of his character, which often gained him the fate of being laughed at, when he would otherwise have been pitied, or even esteemed.

He commenced with a flourish about his sufferings for the Plot, which the impatience of Ormond would have cut short, had not the king reminded his Grace, that a top, when it is not flogged, must needs go down of itself at the end of a definite time, while the application of the whip may keep it up for hours.

Geoffrey Hudson was, therefore, allowed to exhaust himself on the subject of his prison-house, which he informed the king was not without a beam of light—an emanation of loveliness—a mortal angel—quick of step and beautiful of eye, who had more than once visited his confinement with words of cheering and comfort.

'By my faith,' said the king, 'they fare better in Newgate than I was aware of. Who would have thought of the little gentleman being solaced with female society in such a place?'

'I pray your Majesty,' said the dwarf, after the manner of a solemn protest, 'to understand nothing amiss. My devotion to this fair creature is rather like what we poor Catholics pay to the blessed saints, than mixed with any grosser quality. Indeed, she seems rather a sylphid of the Rosicrucian system, than aught more carnal; being slighter, lighter, and less than the females of common life, who have something of that coarseness of make which is doubtless derived from the sinful and gigantic race of the antediluvians.'

'Well, say on, man,' quoth Charles. 'Didst thou not discover this sylph to be a mere mortal wench after all?'

'Who?—I, my liege?—O fie!'

'Nay, little gentleman, do not be so particularly scandalized,' said the king; 'I promise you I suspect you of no audacity of gallantry.'

'Time wears fast,' said the Duke of Ormond impatiently, and looking at his watch. 'Chiffinch hath been gone ten minutes, and ten minutes will bring him back.'

'True,' said Charles gravely. 'Come to the point, Hudson; and tell us what this female has to do with your coming hither in this extraordinary manner.'

'Everything, my lord,' said little Hudson. 'I saw her twice during my confinement in Newgate, and, in my thought, she is the very angel who guards my life and welfare; for, after my acquittal, as I walked towards the city with two tall gentlemen, who had been in trouble along with me, and just while we stood to our defence against a rascally mob, and just as I had taken possession of an elevated situation, to have some vantage against the great odds of numbers, I heard a heavenly voice sound, as it were, from a window behind me, counselling me to take refuge in a certain house; to which measure I readily persuaded my gallant friends the Peverils, who have always shown themselves willing to be counselled by me.'

'Showing therein their wisdom at once and modesty,' said the king. 'But what chanced next? Be brief—be like thyself, man.'

'For a time, sire,' said the dwarf, 'it seemed as if I were not the principal object of attention. First, the younger Peveril was withdrawn from us by a gentleman of venerable appearance, though something smacking of a Puritan, having boots of neat's leather, and wearing his weapon without a sword-knot. When Master Julian returned, he informed us, for the first time, that we were in the power of a body of armed fanatics, who were, as the poet says, prompt for direful act. And your Majesty will remark, that both father and son were in some measure desperate, and disregardful from that moment of the assurances which I gave them, that the star which I was bound to worship would, in her own time, shine forth in signal of our safety. May it please your Majesty, in answer to my

* Note AA. The Sheriffs.

hilarious exhortations to confidence, the father did but say *tush*, and the son *pshaw*, which showed how men's prudence and manners are disturbed by affliction. Nevertheless, these two gentlemen, the Peverils, forming a strong opinion of the necessity there was to break forth, were it only to convey a knowledge of these dangerous passages to your Majesty, commenced an assault on the door of the apartment, I also assisting with the strength which Heaven hath given, and some threescore years have left me. We could not, as it unhappily proved, manage our attempt so silently, but that our guards overheard us, and, entering in numbers, separated us from each other, and compelled my companions, at point of pike and poniard, to go to some other and more distant apartment, thus separating our fair society. I was again enclosed in the now solitary chamber, and I will own that I felt a certain depression of soul. But when bale is at highest, as the poet singeth, boot is at nighest, for a door of hope was suddenly opened'——

'In the name of God, my liege,' said the Duke of Ormond, 'let this poor creature's story be translated into the language of common sense by some of the scribblers of romances about court, and we may be able to make meaning of it.'

Geoffrey Hudson looked with a frowning countenance of reproof upon the impatient old Irish nobleman, and said, with a very dignified air, 'That one duke upon a poor gentleman's hand was enough at a time, and that, but for his present engagement and dependency with the Duke of Buckingham, he would have endured no such terms from the Duke of Ormond.'

'Abate your valour, and diminish your choler, at our request, most puissant Sir Geoffrey Hudson,' said the king; 'and forgive the Duke of Ormond for my sake; but at all events go on with your story.'

Geoffrey Hudson laid his hand on his bosom, and bowed in proud and dignified submission to his sovereign; then waved his forgiveness gracefully to Ormond, accompanied with a horrible grin, which he designed for a smile of gracious forgiveness and conciliation. 'Under the Duke's favour, then,' he proceeded, 'when I said a door of hope was opened to me, I meant a door behind the tapestry, from whence issued that fair vision—yet not so fair as lustrously dark, like the beauty of a continental night, where the cloudless azure sky shrouds us in a veil more lovely than that of day!—but I note your Majesty's impatience;—enough. I followed my beautiful guide into an apartment, where there lay, strangely intermingled, warlike arms and musical instruments. Amongst these I saw my own late place of temporary obscurity—a violoncello. To my astonishment, she turned around the instrument, and, opening it behind by pressure of a spring, showed that it was filled with pistols, daggers, and ammunition made up in bandoliers. "These," she said, "are this night destined to surprise the court of the unwary Charles"—your Majesty must pardon my using her own words; "but if thou darest go in their stead, thou mayst be the saviour of king and kingdoms; if thou art afraid, keep secret, I will myself try the adventure." Now, may Heaven forbid that Geoffrey Hudson were craven enough, said I, to let thee run such a risk! You know not—you cannot know, what belongs to such ambuscades and concealments—I am accustomed to them—have lurked in the pocket of a giant, and have formed the contents of a pasty. "Get in, then," she said, "and lose no time." Nevertheless, while I prepared to obey, I will not deny that some cold apprehensions came over my hot valour, and I confessed to her, if it might be so, I would rather find my way to the palace on my own feet.* But she would not listen to me, saying hastily, "I would be intercepted, or refused admittance, and that I must embrace the means she offered me of introduction into the Presence, and, when there, tell the King to be on his guard—little more is necessary; for, once the scheme is known, it becomes desperate." Rashly and boldly, I bade adieu to the daylight, which was then fading away. She withdrew the contents of the instrument destined for my concealment, and, having put them behind the chimney-board, introduced me in their room. As she clasped me in, I implored her to warn the men who were to be entrusted with me to take heed and keep the neck of the violoncello uppermost; but ere I had completed my request, I found I was left alone, and in darkness. Presently, two or three fellows entered, whom, by their language, which I in some sort understood, I perceived to be Germans, and under the influence of the Duke of Buckingham. I heard them receive from the leader a charge how they were to deport themselves, when they should assume the concealed arms—and—for I will do the Duke no wrong—I understood their orders were precise, not only to spare the person of the King, but also those of the courtiers, and to protect all who might be in the Presence against an irruption of the fanatics. In other respects, they had charge to disarm the Gentlemen Pensioners in the guard-room, and, in fine, to obtain the command of the court.'

The king looked disconcerted and thoughtful at this communication, and bade Lord Arlington see that Selby quietly made search into the contents of the other cases which had been brought as containing musical instruments. He then signed to the dwarf to proceed in his story, asking him again and again, and very solemnly, whether he was sure that he heard the duke's name mentioned, as commanding or approving this action.

The dwarf answered in the affirmative.

'This,' said the king, 'is carrying the frolic somewhat far.'

The dwarf proceeded to state, that he was carried after his metamorphosis into the chapel, where he heard the preacher seemingly about the close of his harangue, the tenor of which he also mentioned. Words, he said, could not express the agony which he felt when he found

* [Walpole and Granger White say that Jeffrey Hudson, when seven or eight years of age, was served up to table in a cold pie, and presented to the queen of Charles I.; and on another occasion, in a masque at court, the king's gigantic porter drew the dwarf out of his pocket, to the surprise of all the spectators.]

that his bearer, in placing the instrument in a corner, was about to invert its position; in which case, he said, human frailty might have proved too great for love, for loyalty, for true obedience, nay, for the fear of death, which was like to ensue on discovery; and he concluded, that he greatly doubted he could not have stood on his head for many minutes without screaming aloud.

'I could not have blamed you,' said the king; 'placed in such a posture in the royal oak, I must needs have roared myself.—Is this all you have to tell us of this strange conspiracy?' Sir Geoffrey Hudson replied in the affirmative, and the king presently subjoined—'Go, my little friend, your services shall not be forgotten. Since thou hast crept into the bowels of a fiddle for our service, we are bound in duty and conscience to find you a more roomy dwelling in future.'

'It was a violoncello, if your Majesty is pleased to remember,' said the little jealous man, 'not a common fiddle; though, for your Majesty's service, I would have crept even into a kit.'

'Whatever of that nature could have been performed by any subject of ours thou wouldst have enacted in our behalf—of that we hold ourselves certain. Withdraw for a little; and hark ye, for the present, beware what you say about this matter. Let your appearance be considered—do you mark me?—as a frolic of the Duke of Buckingham; and not a word of conspiracy.'

'Were it not better to put him under some restraint, sire?' said the Duke of Ormond, when Hudson had left the room.

'It is unnecessary,' said the king. 'I remember the little wretch of old. Fortune, to make him the model of absurdity, has closed a most lofty soul within that little miserable carcass. For wielding his sword and keeping his word, he is a perfect Don Quixote in decimo-octavo. He shall be taken care of.—But, oddsfish, my lords, is not this freak of Buckingham too villanous and ungrateful?'

'He had not had the means of being so, had your Majesty,' said the Duke of Ormond, 'been less lenient on other occasions.'

'My lord, my lord,' said Charles hastily—'your lordship is Buckingham's known enemy—we will take other and more impartial counsel.—Arlington, what think you of all this?'

'May it please your Majesty,' said Arlington, 'I think the thing is absolutely impossible, unless the Duke has had some quarrel with your Majesty, of which we know nothing. His Grace is very flighty, doubtless, but this seems actual insanity.'

'Why, faith,' said the king, 'some words passed betwixt us this morning—his Duchess, it seems, is dead—and, to lose no time, his Grace had cast his eyes about for means of repairing the loss, and had the assurance to ask our consent to woo my niece, Lady Anne.'

'Which your Majesty of course rejected?' said the statesman.

'And not without rebuking his assurance,' added the king.

'In private, sire, or before any witnesses?' said the Duke of Ormond.

'Before no one,' said the king,—'excepting, indeed, little Chiffinch; and he, you know, is no one.'

'*Hinc illæ lachrymæ*,' said Ormond. 'I know his Grace well. While the rebuke of his aspiring petulance was a matter betwixt your Majesty and him, he might have let it pass by; but a check before a fellow from whom it was likely enough to travel through the court, was a matter to be revenged.'

Here Selby came hastily from the other room, to say that his Grace of Buckingham had just entered the presence-chamber.

The king rose. 'Let a boat be in readiness, with a party of the Yeomen,' said he. 'It may be necessary to attach him of treason, and send him to the Tower.'

'Should not a secretary of state's warrant be prepared?' said Ormond.

'No, my lord Duke,' said the king sharply. 'I still hope that the necessity may be avoided.'

CHAPTER XLVII.

High reaching Buckingham grows circumspect.
RICHARD III.

BEFORE giving the reader an account of the meeting betwixt Buckingham and his injured sovereign, we may mention a trifling circumstance or two which took place betwixt his Grace and Chiffinch, in the short drive betwixt York Place and Whitehall.

In the outset, the duke endeavoured to learn from the courtier the special cause of his being summoned so hastily to the court. Chiffinch answered, cautiously, that he believed there were some gambols going forward, at which the king desired the duke's presence.

This did not quite satisfy Buckingham, for, conscious of his own rash purpose, he could not but apprehend discovery. After a moment's silence, 'Chiffinch,' he said abruptly, 'did you mention to any one what the King said to me this morning touching the Lady Anne?'

'My lord Duke,' said Chiffinch, hesitating, 'surely my duty to the King—my respect to your Grace'——

'You mentioned it to no one, then?' said the duke sternly.

'To no one,' replied Chiffinch faintly, for he was intimidated by the duke's increasing severity of manner.

'Ye lie, like a scoundrel!' said the duke—'You told Christian!'

'Your Grace,' said Chiffinch—'your Grace—your Grace ought to remember that I told you Christian's secret; that the Countess of Derby was come up.'

'And you think the one point of treachery may balance for the other? But no. I must have a better atonement. Be assured I will blow your brains out, ere you leave this carriage, unless you tell me the truth of this message from court.'

As Chiffinch hesitated what reply to make, a man, who, by the blaze of the torches, then always borne, as well by the lackeys who hung behind the carriage, as by the footmen who ran

by the side, might easily see who sat in the coach, approached, and sung in a deep manly voice the burden of an old French song on the battle of Marignan, in which is imitated the German French of the defeated Swiss:

> '*Tout est verlore*
> *La tintelore,*
> *Tout est verlore*
> *Bei Got.*'

'I am betrayed,' said the duke, who instantly conceived that this chorus, expressing 'all is lost,' was sung by one of his faithful agents, as a hint to him that their machinations were discovered.

He attempted to throw himself from the carriage, but Chiffinch held him with a firm, though respectful grasp. 'Do not destroy yourself, my lord,' he said, in a tone of deep humility; 'there are soldiers and officers of the peace around the carriage, to enforce your Grace's coming to Whitehall, and to prevent your escape. To attempt it would be to confess guilt; and I advise you strongly against that—the King is your friend—be your own.'

The duke, after a moment's consideration, said sullenly, 'I believe you are right. Why should I fly, when I am guilty of nothing but sending some fireworks to entertain the court, instead of a concert of music?'

'And the dwarf, who came so unexpectedly out of the bass-viol'——

'Was a masking device of my own, Chiffinch,' said the duke, though the circumstance was then first known to him. 'Chiffinch, you will bind me for ever, if you will permit me to have a minute's conversation with Christian.'

'With Christian, my lord?—Where could you find him?—You are aware we must go straight on to the court.'

'True,' said the duke; 'but I think I cannot miss finding him; and you, Master Chiffinch, are no officer, and have no warrant either to detain me prisoner, or prevent my speaking to whom I please.'

Chiffinch replied, 'My lord Duke, your genius is so great, and your escapes so numerous, that it will be from no wish of my own if I am forced to hurt a man so skilful and so popular.'

'Nay, then, there is life in it yet,' said the duke, and whistled; when, from beside the little cutler's booth, with which the reader is acquainted, appeared, suddenly, Master Christian, and was in a moment at the side of the coach. '*Ganz ist verloren*,' said the duke.

'I know it,' said Christian; 'and all our godly friends are dispersed upon the news. Lucky the Colonel and these German rascals gave a hint. All is safe—You go to court—Hark ye, I will follow.'

'You, Christian? that would be more friendly than wise.'

'Why, what is there against me?' said Christian. 'I am innocent as the child unborn—so is your Grace. There is but one creature who can bear witness to our guilt; but I trust to bring her on the stage in our favour—besides, if I went not, I should presently be sent for.'

'The familiar of whom I have heard you speak, I warrant?'

'Hark in your ear again.'

'I understand,' said the duke, 'and will delay Master Chiffinch—for he, you must know, is my conductor—no longer.—Well, Chiffinch, let them drive on.—*Vogue la galère!*' he exclaimed, as the carriage went onward; 'I have sailed through worse perils than this yet.'

'It is not for me to judge,' said Chiffinch; 'your Grace is a bold commander; and Christian hath the cunning of the devil for a pilot; but—However, I remain your Grace's poor friend, and will heartily rejoice in your extrication.'

'Give me a proof of your friendship,' said the duke. 'Tell me what you know of Christian's familiar, as he calls her.'

'I believe it to be the same dancing wench who came with Empson to my house on the morning that Mistress Alice made her escape from us. But you have seen her, my lord?'

'I?' said the duke; 'when did I see her?'

'She was employed by Christian, I believe, to set his niece at liberty, when he found himself obliged to gratify his fanatical brother-in-law, by restoring his child; besides being prompted by a private desire, as I think, of bantering your Grace.'

'Umph! I suspected so much. I will repay it,' said the duke. 'But first to get out of this dilemma.—That little Numidian witch, then, was his familiar; and she joined in the plot to tantalize me?—But here we reach Whitehall.—Now, Chiffinch, be no worse than thy word, and—now, Buckingham, be thyself!'

But ere we follow Buckingham into the Presence, where he had so difficult a part to sustain, it may not be amiss to follow Christian after his brief conversation with him. On re-entering the house, which he did by a circuitous passage, leading from a distant alley, and, through several courts, Christian hastened to a low matted apartment, in which Bridgenorth sat alone, reading the Bible by the light of a small brazen lamp, with the utmost serenity of countenance.

'Have you dismissed the Peverils?' said Christian hastily.

'I have,' said the major.

'And upon what pledge—that they will not carry information against you to Whitehall?'

'They gave me their promise voluntarily, when I showed them our armed friends were dismissed. To-morrow, I believe, it is their purpose to lodge informations.'

'And why not to-night, I pray you?' said Christian.

'Because they allow us that time for escape.'

'Why, then, do you not avail yourself of it? Wherefore are you here?' said Christian.

'Nay, rather, why do *you* not fly?' said Bridgenorth. 'Of a surety you are as deeply engaged as I.'

'Brother Bridgenorth,' answered Christian, 'I am the fox, who knows a hundred modes of deceiving the hounds; you are the deer, whose sole resource is in hasty flight. Therefore lose no time—begone to the country—or rather, Zedekiah Fish's vessel, the Good Hope, lies in the river, bound for Massachusetts—take the wings of the morning, and begone to America—she can fall down to Gravesend with the tide.'

'And leave to thee, brother Christian,' said

Bridgenorth, 'the charge of my fortune and my daughter? No, brother; my opinion of your good faith must be re-established ere I again trust thee.'

'Go thy ways, then, for a suspicious fool,' said Christian, suppressing his strong desire to use language more offensive; 'or rather, stay where thou art, and take thy chance of the gallows!'

'It is appointed to all men to die once,' said Bridgenorth; 'my life hath been a living death. My fairest boughs have been stripped by the axe of the forester—that which survives must, if it shall blossom, be grafted elsewhere, and at a distance from my aged trunk. The sooner, then, the root feels the axe, the stroke is more welcome. I had been pleased, indeed, had I been called to bringing yonder licentious court to a purer character, and relieving the yoke of the suffering people of God. That youth, too—son to that precious woman, to whom I owe the last tie that feebly links my wearied spirit to humanity—could I have travailed with *him* in the good cause!—But that, with all my other hopes, is broken for ever; and since I am not worthy to be an instrument in so great a work, I have little desire to abide longer in this vale of sorrow.'

'Farewell, then, desponding fool!' said Christian, unable, with all his calmness, any longer to suppress his contempt for the resigned and hopeless predestinarian. 'That fate should have clogged me with such confederates!' he muttered, as he left the apartment—'this bigoted idiot is now nearly irreclaimable—I must to Zarah; for she, or no one, must carry us through these straits. If I can but soothe her sullen temper, and excite her vanity to action—betwixt her address, the King's partiality for the Duke, Buckingham's matchless effrontery, and my own hand upon the helm, we may yet weather the tempest that darkens around us. But what we do must be hastily done.'

In another apartment he found the person he sought—the same who visited the Duke of Buckingham's harem, and, having relieved Alice Bridgenorth from her confinement there, had occupied her place, as has been already narrated, or rather intimated. She was now much more plainly attired than when she had tantalized the duke with her presence; but her dress had still something of the Oriental character, which corresponded with the dark complexion and quick eye of the wearer. She had the kerchief at her eyes as Christian entered the apartment, but suddenly withdrew it, and, flashing on him a glance of scorn and indignation, asked him what he meant by intruding where his company was alike unsought for and undesired.

'A proper question,' said Christian, 'from a slave to her master!'

'Rather say, a proper question, and of all questions the most proper, from a mistress to her slave! Know you not that, from the hour in which you discovered your ineffable baseness, you have made me mistress of your lot? While you seemed but a demon of vengeance, you commanded terror, and to good purpose; but such a foul fiend as thou hast of late shown thyself—such a very worthless, base trickster of the devil—such a sordid, grovelling imp of perdition, can gain nothing but scorn from a soul like mine.'

'Gallantly mouthed,' said Christian, 'and with good emphasis.'

'Yes,' answered Zarah, 'I can speak—sometimes—I can also be mute; and that no one knows better than thou.'

'Thou art a spoiled child, Zarah, and dost but abuse the indulgence I entertain for your freakish humour,' replied Christian; 'thy wits have been disturbed since ever you landed in England, and all for the sake of one who cares for thee no more than for the most worthless object who walks the streets, amongst whom he left you to engage in a brawl for one he loved better.'

'It is no matter,' said Zarah, obviously repressing very bitter emotion; 'it signifies not that he loves another better; there is none—no, none—that ever did, or can, love him so well.'

'I pity you, Zarah!' said Christian, with some scorn.

'I deserve your pity,' she replied, 'were your pity worth my accepting. Whom have I to thank for my wretchedness but you?—You bred me up in thirst of vengeance, ere I knew that good and evil were anything better than names;—to gain your applause, and to gratify the vanity you had excited, I have for years undergone a penance, from which a thousand would have shrunk.'

'A thousand, Zarah!' answered Christian; 'ay, a hundred thousand, and a million to boot; the creature is not on earth, being mere mortal woman, that would have undergone the thirtieth part of thy self-denial.'

'I believe it,' said Zarah, drawing up her slight but elegant figure; 'I believe it—I have gone through a trial that few indeed could have sustained. I have renounced the dear intercourse of my kind; compelled my tongue only to utter, like that of a spy, the knowledge which my ear had only collected as a base eavesdropper. This I have done for years—for years—and all for the sake of your private applause—and the hope of vengeance on a woman, who, if she did ill in murdering my father, has been bitterly repaid by nourishing a serpent in her bosom, that had the tooth, but not the deafened ear of the adder.'

'Well—well—well,' reiterated Christian; 'and had you not your reward in my approbation—in the consciousness of your own unequalled dexterity—by which, superior to anything of thy sex that history has ever known, you endured what woman never before endured,—insolence without notice, admiration without answer, and sarcasm without reply!'

'Not without reply!' said Zarah fiercely. 'Gave not nature to my feelings a course of expression more impressive than words? and did not those tremble at my shrieks, who would have little minded my entreaties or my complaints? And my proud lady, who sauced her charities with the taunts she thought I heard not—she was justly paid by the passing of her dearest and most secret concerns into the hands of her mortal enemy; and the vain Earl—yet he was a thing as insignificant as the plume

that nodded in his cap;—and the maidens and ladies who taunted me—I had, or can easily have, my revenge upon them. But there is *one*,' she added, looking upward, 'who never taunted me; one whose generous feelings could treat the poor dumb girl even as his sister; who never spoke word of her but it was to excuse or defend—and you tell me I must not love him, and that it is madness to love him!—I *will* be mad, then, for I will love him till the latest breath of my life!'

'Think but an instant, silly girl—silly but in one respect, since in all others thou mayst brave the world of women. Think what I have proposed to thee, for the loss of this hopeless affection, a career so brilliant!—Think only that it rests with thyself to be the wife—the wedded wife—of the princely Buckingham! With my talents—with thy wit and beauty—with his passionate love of these attributes—a short space might rank you among England's princesses.—Be but guided by me—he is now at deadly pass—needs every assistance to retrieve his fortunes—above all, that which we alone can render him. Put yourself under my conduct, and not fate itself shall prevent your wearing a duchess's coronet.'

'A coronet of thistle-down, entwined with thorns,' said Zarah.—'I know not a slighter thing than your Buckingham!—I saw him at your request—saw him when, as a man, he should have shown himself generous and noble—I stood the proof at your desire, for I laugh at those dangers from which the poor blushing wailers of my sex shrink and withdraw themselves. What did I find him?—a poor wavering voluptuary—his nearest attempt to passion like the fire on a wretched stubble-field, that may singe, indeed, or smoke, but can neither warm nor devour. Christian! were his coronet at my feet this moment, I would sooner take up a crown of gilded gingerbread, than extend my hand to raise it.'

'You are mad, Zarah—with all your taste and talent, you are utterly mad! But let Buckingham pass—Do you owe *me* nothing on this emergency?—Nothing to one who rescued you from the cruelty of your owner, the posture-master, to place you in ease and affluence?'

'Christian,' she replied, 'I owe you much. Had I not felt I did so, I would, as I have been often tempted to do, have denounced thee to the fierce Countess, who would have gibbeted you on her feudal walls of Castle Rushin, and bid your family seek redress from the eagles, that would long since have thatched their nest with your hair, and fed their young ospreys with your flesh.'

'I am truly glad you have had so much forbearance for me,' answered Christian.

'I have it, in truth and in sincerity,' replied Zarah—'Not for your benefits to me—such as they were, they were every one interested, and conferred from the most selfish considerations. I have overpaid them a thousand times by the devotion to your will, which I have displayed at the greatest personal risk. But till of late I respected your powers of mind—your inimitable command of passion—the force of intellect which I have ever seen you exercise over all others, from the bigot Bridgenorth to the debauched Buckingham—in that, indeed, I have recognised my master.'

'And those powers,' said Christian, 'are unlimited as ever; and with thy assistance, thou shalt see the strongest meshes that the laws of civil society ever wove to limit the natural dignity of man, broke asunder like a spider's web.'

She paused, and answered, 'While a noble motive fired thee—ay, a noble motive, though irregular—for I was born to gaze on the sun which the pale daughters of Europe shrink from—I could serve thee—I could have followed, while revenge or ambition had guided thee—but love of *wealth*, and by what means acquired!—What sympathy can I hold with that?—Wouldst thou not have pandered to the lust of the King, though the object was thine own orphan niece? You smile?—Smile again when I ask you whether you meant not my own prostitution, when you charged me to remain in the house of that wretched Buckingham?—Smile at that question, and by Heaven I stab you to the heart!' And she thrust her hand into her bosom, and partly showed the hilt of a small poniard.

'And if I smile,' said Christian, 'it is but in scorn of so odious an accusation. Girl, I will not tell thee the reason, but there exists not on earth the living thing over whose safety and honour I would keep watch as over thine. Buckingham's wife, indeed, I wished thee; and through thy own beauty and thy wit, I doubted not to bring the match to pass.'

'Vain flatterer,' said Zarah, yet seeming soothed even by the flattery which she scoffed at, 'you would persuade me that it was honourable love which you expected the Duke was to have offered me. How durst you urge so gross a deception, to which time, place, and circumstance gave the lie?—How dare you now again mention it, when you well know that, at the time you mention, the Duchess was still in life?'

'In life, but on her deathbed,' said Christian; 'and for time, place, and circumstance, had your virtue, my Zarah, depended on these, how couldst thou have been the creature thou art? I knew thee all-sufficient to bid him defiance—else—for thou art dearer to me than thou thinkest—I had not risked thee to win the Duke of Buckingham; ay, and the kingdom of England to boot.—So now, wilt thou be ruled and go on with me?'

Zarah, or Fenella, for our readers must have been long aware of the identity of these two personages, cast down her eyes, and was silent for a long time. 'Christian,' she said at last, in a solemn voice, 'if my ideas of right and of wrong be wild and incoherent, I owe it, first, to the wild fever which my native sun communicated to my veins; next, to my childhood, trained amidst the shifts, tricks, and feats of jugglers and mountebanks; and then, to a youth of fraud and deception, through the course thou didst prescribe me, in which I might indeed hear everything, but communicate with no one. The last cause of my wild errors, if such they are, originates, O Christian, with you alone; by whose intrigues I was placed with yonder lady, and who taught me that to revenge my father's death was my first great duty on earth, and that I was bound by

nature to hate and injure her by whom I was fed and fostered, though as she would have fed and caressed a dog, or any other mute animal. I also think—for I will deal fairly with you—that you had not so easily detected your niece, in the child whose surprising agility was making yonder brutal-mountebank's fortune; nor so readily induced him to part with his bond-slave, had you not, for your own purposes, placed me under his charge, and reserved the privilege of claiming me when you pleased. I could not, under any other tuition, have identified myself with the personage of a mute, which it has been your desire that I should perform through life.'

'You do me injustice, Zarah,' said Christian —'I found you capable of discharging, to an uncommon degree, a task necessary to the avenging of your father's death—I consecrated you to it, as I consecrated my own life and hopes; and you held the duty sacred, till these mad feelings towards a youth who loves your cousin'——

'Who—loves—my—cousin,' repeated Zarah (for we will continue to call her by her real name) slowly, and as if the words dropped unconsciously from her lips. 'Well—be it so!—Man of many wiles, I will follow thy course for a little, a very little farther; but take heed—tease me not with remonstrances against the treasure of my secret thoughts—I mean my most hopeless affection to Julian Peveril—and bring me not as an assistant to any snare which you may design to cast around him. You and your Duke shall rue the hour most bitterly in which you provoke me. You may suppose you have me in your power; but remember, the snakes of my burning climate are never so fatal as when you grasp them.'

'I care not for these Peverils,' said Christian —'I care not for their fate a poor straw, unless where it bears on that of the destined woman, whose hands are red in your father's blood. Believe me, I can divide her fate and theirs. I will explain to you how. And for the Duke, he may pass among men of the town for wit, and among soldiers for valour, among courtiers for manners and for form; and why, with his high rank and immense fortune, you should throw away an opportunity, which, as I could now improve it'——

'Speak not of it,' said Zarah, 'if thou wouldst have our truce—remember it is no peace—if, I say, thou wouldst have our truce grow to be an hour old!'

'This then,' said Christian, with a last effort to work upon the vanity of this singular being, 'is she who pretended such superiority to human passion, that she could walk indifferently and unmoved through the halls of the prosperous, and the prison cells of the captive, unknowing and unknown, sympathizing neither with the pleasures of the one, nor the woes of the other, but advancing with sure, though silent steps, her own plans, in despite and regardless of either!'

'My own plans!' said Zarah—'*Thy* plans, Christian—thy plans of extorting from the surprised prisoners means whereby to convict them—thine own plans, formed with those more powerful than thyself, to sound men's secrets, and, by using them as a matter of accusation, to keep up the great delusion of the nation.'

'Such access was indeed given you as my agent,' said Christian, 'and for advancing a great national change. But how did you use it?—to advance your insane passion.'

'Insane!' said Zarah—'Had he been less than insane whom I addressed, he and I had ere now been far from the toils which you have pitched for us both. I had means prepared for everything; and ere this, the shores of Britain had been lost to our sight for ever.'

'The dwarf, too,' said Christian—'Was it worthy of you to delude that poor creature with flattering visions—lull him asleep with drugs? Was *that* my doing?'

'He was my destined tool,' said Zarah haughtily. 'I remembered your lessons too well not to use him as such. Yet scorn him not too much. I tell you, that you very miserable dwarf, whom I made my sport in the prison—you wretched abortion of nature, I would select for a husband, ere I would marry your Buckingham;—the vain and imbecile pigmy has yet the warm heart and noble feelings that a man should hold his highest honour.'

'In God's name, then, take your own way,' said Christian; 'and, from my example, let never man hereafter limit a woman in the use of her tongue, since he must make it amply up to her, in allowing her the privilege of her own will. Who would have thought it? But the colt has slipped the bridle, and I must needs follow, since I cannot guide her.'

Our narrative returns to the court of King Charles at Whitehall.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

——— But O!
What shall I say to thee, Lord Scroop; thou cruel,
Ingrateful, savage, and inhuman creature!
Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,
That knew'st the very bottom of my soul,
That almost might'st have coin'd me into gold,
Would'st thou have practis'd on me for thy use?

HENRY V.

AT no period of his life, not even when that life was in imminent danger, did the constitutional gaiety of Charles seem more overclouded, than when waiting for the return of Chiffinch with the Duke of Buckingham. His mind revolted at the idea that the person to whom he had been so particularly indulgent, and whom he had selected as the friend of his lighter hours and amusements, should prove capable of having tampered with a plot apparently directed against his liberty and life. He more than once examined the dwarf anew, but could extract nothing more than his first narrative contained. The apparition of the female to him in the cell of Newgate, he described in such fanciful and romantic colours, that the king could not help thinking the poor man's head a little turned; and as nothing was found in the kettledrum, and other musical instruments brought for the use of the duke's band of foreigners, he nourished some slight hope that the whole plan might be either a mere jest, or that the idea of an actual conspiracy was founded in mistake.

The persons who had been despatched to watch the motions of Master Weiver's congregation, brought back word that they had quietly dispersed. It was known, at the same time, that they had met in arms, but this augured no particular design of aggression, at a time when all true Protestants conceived themselves in danger of immediate massacre; when the fathers of the city had repeatedly called out the Train-Bands, and alarmed the citizens of London, under the idea of an instant insurrection of the Catholics; and when, to sum the whole up, in the emphatic words of an alderman of the day, there was a general belief that they would all waken some unhappy morning with their throats cut. Who was to do these dire deeds, it was more difficult to suppose; but all admitted the possibility that they might be achieved, since one justice of the peace was already murdered. There was, therefore, no inference of hostile intentions against the State, to be decidedly derived from a congregation of Protestants *par excellence*, military from old associations, bringing their arms with them to a place of worship, in the midst of a panic so universal.

Neither did the violent language of the minister, supposing that to be proved, absolutely infer meditated violence. The favourite parables of the preachers, and the metaphors and ornaments which they selected, were at all times of a military cast; and the taking the kingdom of heaven by storm, a strong and beautiful metaphor, when used generally as in Scripture, was detailed in their sermons in all the technical language of the attack and defence of a fortified place. The danger, in short, whatever might have been its actual degree, had disappeared as suddenly as a bubble upon the water, when broken by a casual touch, and had left as little trace behind it. It became, therefore, matter of much doubt whether it had ever actually existed.

While various reports were making from without, and while their tenor was discussed by the king, and such nobles and statesmen as he thought proper to consult on the occasion, a gradual sadness and anxiety mingled with, and finally silenced, the mirth of the evening. All became sensible that something unusual was going forward; and the unwonted distance which Charles maintained from his guests, while it added greatly to the dulness that began to predominate in the presence-chamber, gave intimation that something unusual was labouring in the king's mind.

Thus gaming was neglected—the music was silent, or played without being heard—gallants ceased to make compliments, and ladies to expect them; and a sort of apprehensive curiosity pervaded the circle. Each asked the others why they were grave; and no answer was returned, any more than could have been rendered by a herd of cattle instinctively disturbed by the approach of a thunderstorm.

To add to the general apprehension, it began to be whispered that one or two of the guests, who were desirous of leaving the palace, had been informed no one could be permitted to retire until the general hour of dismissal. And these, gliding back into the hall, communicated in whispers that the sentinels at the gates were doubled, and that there was a troop of the Horse Guards drawn up in the court—circumstances so unusual as to excite the most anxious curiosity.

Such was the state of the court, when wheels were heard without, and the bustle which took place denoted the arrival of some person of consequence.

'Here comes Chiffinch,' said the king, 'with his prey in his clutch.'

It was indeed the Duke of Buckingham; nor did he approach the royal presence without emotion. On entering the court, the flambeaux which were borne around the carriage gleamed on the scarlet coats, laced hats, and drawn broadswords of the Horse Guards—a sight unusual, and calculated to strike terror into a conscience which was none of the clearest.

The duke alighted from the carriage, and only said to the officer whom he saw upon duty, 'You are late under arms to-night, Captain Carleton.'

'Such are our orders, sir,' answered Carleton, with military brevity; and then commanded the four dismounted sentinels at the under gate to make way for the Duke of Buckingham. His Grace had no sooner entered, than he heard behind him the command, 'Move close up, sentinels—closer yet to the gate.' And he felt as if all chance of rescue were excluded by the sound.

As he advanced up the grand staircase, there were other symptoms of alarm and precaution. The Yeomen of the Guard were mustered in unusual numbers, and carried carabines instead of their halberds; and the Gentlemen Pensioners, with their partisans, appeared also in proportional force. In short, all that sort of defence which the royal household possesses within itself, seemed, for some hasty and urgent reason, to have been placed under arms, and upon duty.

Buckingham ascended the royal staircase with an eye attentive to these preparations, and a step steady and slow, as if he counted each step on which he trod. 'Who,' he asked himself, 'shall insure Christian's fidelity? Let him but stand fast, and we are secure. Otherwise'——

As he shaped the alternative, he entered the presence-chamber.

The king stood in the midst of the apartment, surrounded by the personages with whom he had been consulting. The rest of the brilliant assembly, scattered into groups, looked on at some distance. All were silent when Buckingham entered, in hopes of receiving some explanation of the mysteries of the evening. All bent forward, though etiquette forbade them to advance, to catch, if possible, something of what was about to pass betwixt the king and his intriguing statesman. At the same time, those counsellors who stood around Charles, drew back on either side, so as to permit the duke to pay his respects to his Majesty in the usual form. He went through the ceremonial with his accustomed grace, but was received by Charles with much unwonted gravity.

'We have waited for you for some time, my lord Duke. It is long since Chiffinch left us, to request your attendance here. I see you are

elaborately dressed. Your toilet was needless on the present occasion.'

'Needless to the splendour of your Majesty's court,' said the duke, 'but not needless on my part. This chanced to be Black Monday at York Place, and my club of *Pendables* were in full glee when your Majesty's summons arrived. I could not be in the company of Ogle, Maniduc, Dawson, and so forth, but what I must needs make some preparation, and some ablution, ere entering the circle here.'

'I trust the purification will be complete,' said the king, without any tendency to the smile which always softened features, that, ungilded by its influence, were dark, harsh, and even severe. 'We wished to ask your Grace concerning the import of a sort of musical mask which you designed us here, but which miscarried, as we are given to understand.'

'It must have been a great miscarriage indeed,' said the duke, 'since your Majesty looks so serious on it. I thought to have done your Majesty a pleasure (as I have seen you condescend to be pleased with such passages), by sending the contents of that bass-viol; but I fear the jest has been unacceptable—I fear the fireworks may have done mischief.'

'Not the mischief they were designed for, perhaps,' said the king gravely; 'you see, my lord, we are all alive and unsinged.'

'Long may your Majesty remain so,' said the duke; 'yet I see there is something misconstrued on my part—it must be a matter unpardonable, however little intended, since it hath displeased so indulgent a master.'

'Too indulgent a master, indeed, Buckingham,' replied the king; 'and the fruit of my indulgence has been to change loyal men into traitors.'

'May it please your Majesty, I cannot understand this,' said the duke.

'Follow us, my lord,' answered Charles, 'and we will endeavour to explain our meaning.'

Attended by the same lords who stood around him, and followed by the Duke of Buckingham, on whom all eyes were fixed, Charles retired into the same cabinet which had been the scene of repeated consultations in the course of the evening. There, leaning with his arms crossed on the back of an easy-chair, Charles proceeded to interrogate the suspected nobleman.

'Let us be plain with each other. Speak out, Buckingham. What, in one word, was to have been the regale intended for us this evening?'

'A petty mask, my lord,' answered the duke. 'I had destined a little dancing-girl to come out of that instrument, who, I thought, would have performed to your Majesty's liking—a few Chinese fireworks there were, which, thinking the entertainment was to have taken place in the marble hall, might, I hoped, have been discharged with good effect, and without the slightest alarm, at the first appearance of my little sorceress, and were designed to have masked, as it were, her entrance upon the stage. I hope there have been no perukes singed—no ladies frightened—no hopes of noble descent interrupted by my ill-fancied jest?'

'We have seen no such fireworks, my lord; and your female dancer, of whom we now hear for the first time, came forth in the form of our old acquaintance, Geoffrey Hudson, whose dancing days are surely ended.'

'Your Majesty surprises me! I beseech you, let Christian be sent for—Edward Christian—he will be found lodging in a large old house near Sharper the cutler's, in the Strand. As I live by bread, sire, I trusted him with the arrangement of this matter, as indeed the dancing-girl was his property. If he has done aught to dishonour my concert, or disparage my character, he shall die under the baton.'

'It is singular,' said the king, 'and I have often observed it, that this fellow Christian bears the blame of all men's enormities—he performs the part which, in a great family, is usually assigned to that mischief-doing personage, Nobody. When Chiffinch blunders, he always quotes Christian. When Sheffield writes a lampoon, I am sure to hear of Christian having corrected, or copied, or dispersed it—he is the *ame damnée* of every one about my court—the scapegoat, who is to carry away all their iniquities; and he will have a cruel load to bear into the wilderness. But for Buckingham's sins in particular, he is the regular and uniforn sponsor; and I am convinced his Grace expects Christian should suffer every penalty he has incurred, in this world or the next.'

'Not so,' with the deepest reverence replied the duke. 'I have no hope of being either hanged or damned by proxy; but it is clear some one hath tampered with and altered my device. If I am accused of aught, let me at least hear the charge, and see my accuser.'

'That is but fair,' said the king. 'Bring our little friend from behind the chimney-board.' Hudson being accordingly produced, he continued. 'There stands the Duke of Buckingham. Repeat before him the tale you told us. Let him hear what were those contents of the bass-viol which were removed that you might enter it. Be not afraid of any one, but speak the truth boldly.'

'May it please your Majesty,' said Hudson, 'fear is a thing unknown to me.'

'His body has no room to hold such a passion; or there is too little of it to be worth fearing for,' said Buckingham.—'But let him speak.'

Ere Hudson had completed his tale, Buckingham interrupted him by exclaiming, 'Is it possible that I can be suspected by your Majesty on the word of this pitiful variety of the baboon tribe?'

'Villain lord, I appeal thee to the combat!' said the little man, highly offended at the appellation thus bestowed on him.

'La you there now!' said the duke—'The little animal is quite crazed, and defies a man who need ask no other weapon than a corking-pin to run him through the lungs, and whose single kick could hoist him from Dover to Calais without yacht or wherry. And what can you expect from an idiot, who is *engoué* of a common rope dancing girl, that capered on a packthread at Ghent in Flanders, unless they were to club their talents to set up a booth at Bartholomew Fair?—Is it not plain that, supposing the little animal is not malicious, as indeed his whole kind bear a general and most cankered malice against those who have the

ordinary proportions of humanity—Grant, I say, that this were not a malicious falsehood of his, why, what does it amount to?—That he has mistaken squibs and Chinese crackers for arms! He says not he himself touched or handled them; and, judging by the sight alone, I question if the infirm old creature, when any whim or preconception hath possession of his noddle, can distinguish betwixt a blunderbuss and a black pudding.'

The horrible clamour which the dwarf made so soon as he heard this disparagement of his military skill—the haste with which he blundered out a detail of his warlike experiences—and the absurd grimaces which he made in order to enforce his story, provoked not only the risibility of Charles, but even of the statesmen around him, and added absurdity to the motley complexion of the scene. The king terminated this dispute by commanding the dwarf to withdraw.

A more regular discussion of his evidence was then resumed, and Ormond was the first who pointed out that it went further than had been noticed, since the little man had mentioned a certain extraordinary and treasonable conversation held by the duke's dependents, by whom he had been conveyed to the palace.

'I am sure not to lack my Lord of Ormond's good word,' said the duke scornfully; 'but I defy him alike, and all my other enemies, and shall find it easy to show that this alleged conspiracy, if any grounds for it at all exist, is a mere sham plot, got up to turn the odium justly attached to the Papists upon the Protestants. Here is a half-hanged creature, who, on the very day he escapes from the gallows, which many believe was his most deserved destiny, comes to take away the reputation of a Protestant peer—and on what?—On the treasonable conversation of three or four German fiddlers, heard through the sound-holes of a violoncello, and that, too, when the creature was encased in it, and mounted on a man's shoulders! The urchin, too, in repeating their language, shows he understands German as little as my horse does; and if he did rightly hear, truly comprehend, and accurately report what they said, still, is my honour to be touched by the language held by such persons as these are, with whom I have never communicated, otherwise than men of my rank do with those of their calling and capacity?—Pardon me, sire, if I presume to say that the profound statesmen who endeavoured to stifle the Popish Conspiracy by the pretended Meal-tub Plot, will take little more credit by their figments about fiddles and concertos.'

The assistant counsellors looked at each other; and Charles turned on his heel, and walked through the room with long steps.

At this period the Peverils, father and son, were announced to have reached the palace, and were ordered into the royal presence.

These gentlemen had received the royal mandate at a moment of great interest. After being dismissed from their confinement by the elder Bridgenorth, in the manner and upon the terms which the reader must have gathered from the conversation of the latter with Christian, they reached the lodgings of Lady Peveril, who awaited them with joy, mingled with terror and uncertainty. The news of the acquittal had reached her by the exertions of the faithful Lance Outram, but her mind had been since harassed by the long delay of their appearance, and rumours of disturbances which had taken place in Fleet Street and in the Strand.

When the first rapturous meeting was over, Lady Peveril, with an anxious look towards her son, as if recommending caution, said she was now about to present to him the daughter of an old friend, whom he had *never* (there was an emphasis on the word) seen before. 'This young lady,' she continued, 'was the only child of Colonel Mitford, in North Wales, who had sent her to remain under her guardianship for an interval, finding himself unequal to attempt the task of her education.'

'Ay, ay,' said Sir Geoffrey, 'Dick Mitford must be old now—beyond the threescore and ten, I think. He was no chicken, though a cock of the game, when he joined the Marquis of Hertford at Namptwich with two hundred wild Welshmen.—Before George, Julian, I love that girl as if she was my own flesh and blood! Lady Peveril would never have got through this work without her; and Dick Mitford sent me a thousand pieces, too, in excellent time, when there was scarce a cross to keep the devil from dancing in our pockets, much more for these law-doings. I used it without scruple, for there is wood ready to be cut at Martindale when we get down there, and Dick Mitford knows I would have done the like for him. Strange that he should have been the only one of my friends to reflect I might want a few pieces.'

Whilst Sir Geoffrey thus ran on, the meeting betwixt Alice and Julian Peveril was accomplished, without any particular notice on his side, except to say, 'Kiss her, Julian—kiss her. What the devil! is that the way you learned to accost a lady at the Isle of Man, as if her lips were a red-hot horse-shoe?—And do not you be offended, my pretty one; Julian is naturally bashful, and has been bred by an old lady, but you will find him, by and by, as gallant as thou hast found me, my princess.—And now, Dame Peveril, to dinner, to dinner! the old fox must have his belly-timber, though the hounds have been after him the whole day.'

Lance, whose joyous congratulations were next to be undergone, had the consideration to cut them short, in order to provide a plain but hearty meal from the next cook's shop, at which Julian sat like one enchanted, betwixt his mistress and his mother. He easily conceived that the last was the confidential friend to whom Bridgenorth had finally committed the charge of his daughter, and his only anxiety now was, to anticipate the confusion that was likely to arise when her real parentage was made known to his father. Wisely, however, he suffered not these anticipations to interfere with the delight of his present situation, in the course of which many slight but delightful tokens of recognition were exchanged, without censure, under the eye of Lady Peveril, under cover of the boisterous mirth of the old baronet, who spoke for two, ate for four, and drank wine for half-a-dozen. His progress in the latter exercise might have proceeded rather too far, had he not been interrupted by a gentle-

man bearing the king's orders, that he should instantly attend upon the Presence at Whitehall, and bring his son along with him.

Lady Peveril was alarmed, and Alice grew pale with sympathetic anxiety; but the old knight, who never saw more than what lay straight before him, set it down to the king's hasty anxiety to congratulate him on his escape; an interest on his Majesty's part which he considered by no means extravagant, conscious that it was reciprocal on his own side. It came upon him, indeed, with the more joyful surprise, that he had received a previous hint, ere he left the court of justice, that it would be prudent in him to go down to Martindale before presenting himself at court,—a restriction which he supposed as repugnant to his Majesty's feelings as it was to his own.

While he consulted with Lance Outram about cleaning his buff-belt and sword-hilt, as well as time admitted, Lady Peveril had the means to give Julian more distinct information, that Alice was under her protection by her father's authority, and with his consent to their union, if it could be accomplished. She added that it was her determination to employ the mediation of the Countess of Derby, to overcome the obstacles which might be foreseen on the part of Sir Geoffrey.

CHAPTER XLIX.

In the King's name,
Let fall your swords and daggers!

CRITIC.

WHEN the father and son entered the cabinet of audience, it was easily visible that Sir Geoffrey had obeyed the summons as he would have done the trumpet's call to horse; and his dishevelled grey locks and half-arranged dress, though they showed zeal and haste, such as he would have used when Charles I. called him to attend a council of war, seemed rather indecorous in a pacific drawing-room. He paused at the door of the cabinet, but, when the king called on him to advance, came hastily forward, with every feeling of his earlier and later life afloat and contending in his memory, threw himself on his knees before the king, seized his hand, and, without even an effort to speak, wept aloud. Charles, who generally felt deeply so long as an impressive object was before his eyes, indulged for a moment the old man's rapture.—'My good Sir Geoffrey,' he said, 'you have had some hard measure; we owe you amends, and will find time to pay our debt.'

'No suffering—no debt,' said the old man; 'I cared not what the rogues said of me—I knew they could never get twelve honest fellows to believe a word of their most damnable lies. I did long to beat them when they called me traitor to your Majesty—that I confess—But to have such an early opportunity of paying my duty to your Majesty, overpays it all. The villains would have persuaded me I ought not to come to court—aha!'

The Duke of Ormond perceived that the king coloured much; for in truth it was from the court that the private intimation had been given to Sir Geoffrey to go down to the country without appearing at Whitehall; and he, moreover, suspected that the jolly old knight had not risen from his dinner altogether dry-lipped, after the fatigues of a day so agitating.—'My old friend,' he whispered, 'you forget that your son is to be presented—permit me to have that honour.'

'I crave your Grace's pardon humbly,' said Sir Geoffrey, 'but it is an honour I design for myself, as I apprehend no one can so utterly surrender and deliver him up to his Majesty's service as the father that begot him is entitled to do.—Julian, come forward, and kneel.—Here he is, please your Majesty—Julian Peveril—a chip of the old block—as stout, though scarce so tall a tree, as the old trunk when at the freshest. Take him to you, sir, for a faithful servant, *à vendre et à pendre*, as the French say; if he fears fire or steel, axe or gallows, in your Majesty's service, I renounce him—he is no son of mine—I disown him, and he may go to the Isle of Man, the Isle of Dogs, or the Isle of Devils, for what I care.'

Charles winked to Ormond, and having, with his wonted courtesy, expressed his thorough conviction that Julian would imitate the loyalty of his ancestors, and especially of his father, added, that he believed his Grace of Ormond had something to communicate which was of consequence to his service. Sir Geoffrey made his military reverence at this hint, and marched off in the rear of the duke, who proceeded to inquire of him concerning the events of the day. Charles, in the meanwhile, having, in the first place, ascertained that the son was not in the same genial condition with the father, demanded and received from him a precise account of all the proceedings subsequent to the trial.

Julian, with the plainness and precision which such a subject demanded, when treated in such a presence, narrated all that had happened down to the entrance of Bridgenorth; and his Majesty was so much pleased with his manner, that he congratulated Arlington on their having gained the evidence of at least one man of sense to these dark and mysterious events. But when Bridgenorth was brought upon the scene, Julian hesitated to bestow a name upon him; and although he mentioned the chapel which he had seen filled with men in arms, and the violent language of the preacher, he added, with earnestness, that, notwithstanding all this, the men departed without coming to any extremity, and had all left the place before his father and he were set at liberty.

'And you retired quietly to your dinner in Fleet Street, young man,' said the king severely, 'without giving a magistrate notice of the dangerous meeting which was held in the vicinity of our palace, and who did not conceal their intention of proceeding to extremities?'

Peveril blushed, and was silent. The king frowned, and stepped aside to communicate with Ormond, who reported that the father seemed to have known nothing of the matter.

'And the son, I am sorry to say,' said the king, 'seems more unwilling to speak the truth than I should have expected. We have

all variety of evidence in this singular investigation—a mad witness like the dwarf, a drunken witness like the father, and now a dumb witness.—Young man,' he continued, addressing Julian, 'your behaviour is less frank than I expected from your father's son. I must know who this person is with whom you held such familiar intercourse—you know him, I presume?'

Julian acknowledged that he did, but, kneeling on one knee, entreated his Majesty's forgiveness for concealing his name; 'he had been freed,' he said, 'from his confinement, on promising to that effect.'

'That was a promise made, by your own account, under compulsion,' answered the king, 'and I cannot authorize your keeping it; it is your duty to speak the truth—if you are afraid of Buckingham, the Duke shall withdraw.'

'I have no reason to fear the Duke of Buckingham,' said Peveril; 'that I had an affair with one of his household, was the man's own fault, and not mine.'

'Oddsfish!' said the king, 'the light begins to break in on me—I thought I remembered thy physiognomy. Wert thou not the very fellow whom I met at Chiffinch's yonder morning?—The matter escaped me since; but now I recollect thou saidst then that thou wert the son of that jolly old three-bottle baronet yonder.'

'It is true,' said Julian, 'that I met your Majesty at Master Chiffinch's, and I am afraid had the misfortune to displease you; but'——

'No more of that, young man—no more of that.—But I recollect you had with you that beautiful dancing siren.—Buckingham, I will hold you gold to silver, that she was the intended tenant of that bass fiddle!'

'Your Majesty has rightly guessed it,' said the duke; 'and I suspect she has put a trick upon me, by substituting the dwarf in her place; for Christian thinks'——'

'Damn Christian!' said the king hastily—'I wish they would bring him hither, that universal referee.'—And as the wish was uttered, Christian's arrival was announced. 'Let him attend,' said the king. 'But hark—a thought strikes me.—Here, Master Peveril—yonder dancing maiden that introduced you to us by the singular agility of her performance, is she not, by your account, a dependent on the Countess of Derby?'

'I have known her such for years,' answered Julian.

'Then will we call the Countess hither,' said the king. 'It is fit we should learn who this little fairy really is; and if she be now so absolutely at the beck of Buckingham, and this Master Christian of his—why, I think it would be but charity to let her ladyship know so much, since I question if she will wish, in that case, to retain her in her service. Besides,' he continued, speaking apart, 'this Julian, to whom suspicion attaches in these matters from his obstinate silence, is also of the Countess's household. We will sift this matter to the bottom, and do justice to all.'

The Countess of Derby, hastily summoned, entered the royal closet at one door, just as Christian and Zarah, or Fenella, were ushered in by the other. The old Knight of Martindale, who had ere this returned to the Presence, was scarce controlled, even by the signs which she made, so much was he desirous of greeting his old friend; but, as Ormond laid a kind restraining hand upon his arm, he was prevailed on to sit still.

The countess, after a deep reverence to the king, acknowledged the rest of the nobility present by a slighter reverence, smiled to Julian Peveril, and looked with surprise at the unexpected apparition of Fenella. Buckingham bit his lip, for he saw the introduction of Lady Derby was likely to confuse and embroil every preparation which he had arranged for his defence; and he stole a glance at Christian, whose eye, when fixed on the countess, assumed the deadly sharpness which sparkles in the adder's, while his cheek grew almost black under the influence of strong emotion.

'Is there any one in this Presence whom your ladyship recognises,' said the king graciously, 'besides your old friends of Ormond and Arlington?'

'I see, my liege, two worthy friends of my husband's house,' replied the countess; 'Sir Geoffrey Peveril and his son—the latter a distinguished member of my son's household.'

'Any one else?' continued the king.

'An unfortunate female of my family, who disappeared from the Island of Man at the same time when Julian Peveril left it upon business of importance. She was thought to have fallen from the cliff into the sea.'

'Had your ladyship any reason to suspect—pardon me,' said the king, 'for putting such a question—any improper intimacy between Master Peveril and this same female attendant?'

'My liege,' said the countess, colouring indignantly, 'my household is of reputation.'

'Nay, my lady, be not angry,' said the king; 'I did but ask—such things will befall in the best regulated families.'

'Not in mine, sire,' said the countess. 'Besides that, in common pride and in common honesty, Julian Peveril is incapable of intriguing with an unhappy creature, removed by her misfortune almost beyond the limits of humanity.'

Zarah looked at her, and compressed her lips, as if to keep in the words that would fain break from them.

'I know not how it is,' said the king—'What your ladyship says may be true in the main, yet men's tastes have strange vagaries. This girl is lost in Man as soon as the youth leaves it, and is found in Saint James's Park, bouncing and dancing like a fairy, so soon as he appears in London.'

'Impossible!' said the countess; 'she cannot dance.'

'I suspect,' said the king, 'she can do more feats than your ladyship either suspects or would approve of.'

The countess drew up, and was indignantly silent.

The king proceeded—'No sooner is Peveril in Newgate, than, by the account of the venerable little gentleman, this merry maiden is even there also for company. Now, without inquiring how she got in, I think charitably that she had better taste than to come there on the dwarf's account.

—Ah ha! I think Master Julian is touched in conscience!'

Julian did indeed start as the king spoke, for it reminded him of the midnight visit in his cell.

The king looked fixedly at him, and then proceeded—'Well, gentlemen, Peveril is carried to his trial, and is no sooner at liberty, than we find him in the house where the Duke of Buckingham was arranging what he calls a musical mask.—Egad, I hold it next to certain, that this wench put the change on his Grace, and popped the poor dwarf into the bass-viol, reserving her own more precious hours to be spent with Master Julian Peveril.—Think you not so, Sir Christian, you, the universal referee? Is there any truth in this conjecture?'

Christian stole a glance at Zarah, and read that in her eye which embarrassed him. 'He did not know,' he said; 'he had indeed engaged this unrivalled performer to take the proposed part in the mask; and she was to have come forth in the midst of a shower of lambent fire, very artificially prepared with perfumes, to overcome the smell of the powder; but he knew not why—excepting that she was wilful and capricious, like all great geniuses—she had certainly spoiled the concert by cramming in that more bulky dwarf.'

'I should like,' said the king, 'to see this little maiden stand forth, and bear witness in such manner as she can express herself, on this mysterious matter. Can any one here understand her mode of communication?'

Christian said he knew something of it since he had become acquainted with her in London. The countess spoke not till the king asked her, and then owned dryly that she had necessarily some habitual means of intercourse with one who had been immediately about her person for so many years.

'I should think,' said Charles, 'that this same Master Peveril has the more direct key to her language, after all we have heard.'

The king looked first at Peveril, who blushed like a maiden at the inference which the king's remark implied, and then suddenly turned his eyes on the supposed mute, on whose cheek a faint colour was dying away. A moment afterwards, at a signal from the countess, Fenella, or Zarah, stepped forward, and, having kissed her lady's hand, stood with her arms folded on her breast, with a humble air, as different from that which she wore in the harem of the Duke of Buckingham, as that of a Magdalene from a Judith. Yet this was the least show of her talent of versatility, for so well did she play the part of the dumb girl, that Buckingham, sharp as his discernment was, remained undecided whether the creature which stood before him could possibly be the same with her, who had, in a different dress, made such an impression on his imagination, or indeed was the imperfect creature she now represented. She had at once all that could mark the imperfection of hearing, and all that could show the wonderful address by which nature so often makes up for the deficiency. There was the lip that trembled not at any sound—the seeming insensibility to the conversation that passed around; while, on the other hand, was the quick and vivid glance, that seemed anxious to devour the meaning of those sounds, which she could gather no otherwise than by the motion of the lips.

Examined after her own fashion, Zarah confirmed the tale of Christian in all its points, and admitted that she had deranged the project laid for a mask, by placing the dwarf in her own stead; the cause of her doing so she declined to assign, and the countess pressed her no further.

'Everything tells to exculpate my Lord of Buckingham,' said Charles, 'from so absurd an accusation: the dwarf's testimony is too fantastic, that of the two Peverils does not in the least affect the Duke; that of the dumb damsel completely contradicts the possibility of his guilt. Methinks, my lords, we should acquaint him that he stands acquitted of a complaint, too ridiculous to have been subjected to a more serious scrutiny than we have hastily made upon this occasion.'

Arlington bowed in acquiescence, but Ormond spoke plainly.—'I should suffer, sire, in the opinion of the Duke of Buckingham, brilliant as his talents are known to be, should I say that I am satisfied in my own mind on this occasion. But I subscribe to the spirit of the times; and I agree it would be highly dangerous, on such accusations as we have been able to collect, to impeach the character of a zealous Protestant like his Grace.—Had he been a Catholic, under such circumstances of suspicion, the Tower had been too good a prison for him.'

Buckingham bowed to the Duke of Ormond, with a meaning which even his triumph could not disguise.—'*Tu me la pagherai!*' he muttered, in a tone of deep and abiding resentment; but the stout old Irishman, who had long since already braved his utmost wrath, cared little for this expression of his displeasure.

The king then, signing to the other nobles to pass into the public apartments, stopped Buckingham as he was about to follow them; and when they were alone, asked, with a significant tone, which brought all the blood in the duke's veins into his countenance, 'When was it, George, that your useful friend Colonel Blood* became a musician?—You are silent,' he said; 'do not deny the charge, for yonder villain, once seen, is remembered for ever. Down, down on your knees, George, and acknowledge that you have abused my easy temper.—Seek for no apology—none will serve your turn. I saw the man myself, among your Germans, as you call them; and you know what I must needs believe from such a circumstance.'

'Believe that I have been guilty—most guilty, my liege and King,' said the duke, conscience-stricken, and kneeling down;—'believe that I was misguided—that I was mad—Believe anything but that I was capable of harming, or being accessory to harm, your person.'

'I do not believe it,' said the king; 'I think of you, Villiers, as the companion of my dangers and my exile, and am so far from supposing you mean worse than you say, that I am convinced

* Note BB. History of C[illegible]el Blood.

you acknowledge more than ever you meant to attempt.'

'By all that is sacred,' said the duke, still kneeling, 'had I not been involved to the extent of life and fortune with the villain Christian'——

'Nay, if you bring Christian on the stage again,' said the king, smiling, 'it is time for me to withdraw. Come, Villiers, rise—I forgive thee, and only recommend one act of penance—the curse you yourself bestowed on the dog who bit you—marriage, and retirement to your country-seat.'

The duke rose abashed, and followed the king into the circle, which Charles entered, leaning on the shoulder of his repentant peer; to whom he showed so much countenance, as led the most acute observers present to doubt the possibility of there existing any real cause for the surmises to the duke's prejudice.

The Countess of Derby had in the meanwhile consulted with the Duke of Ormond, with the Peverils, and with her other friends; and, by their unanimous advice, though with considerable difficulty, became satisfied, that to have thus shown herself at court was sufficient to vindicate the honour of her house; and that it was her wisest course, after having done so, to retire to her insular dominions, without further provoking the resentment of a powerful faction. She took farewell of the king in form, and demanded his permission to carry back with her the helpless creature who had so strangely escaped from her protection, into a world where her condition rendered her so subject to every species of misfortune.

'Will your ladyship forgive me?' said Charles. 'I have studied your sex long—I am mistaken if your little maiden is not as capable of caring for herself as any of us.'

'Impossible!' said the countess.

'Possible, and most true,' whispered the king. 'I will instantly convince you of the fact, though the experiment is too delicate to be made by any but your ladyship. Yonder she stands, looking as if she heard no more than the marble pillar against which she leans. Now, if Lady Derby will contrive either to place her hand near the region of the damsel's heart, or at least on her arm, so that she can feel the sensation of the blood when the pulse increases, then do you, my Lord of Ormond, beckon Julian Peveril out of sight - I will show you in a moment that it can stir at sounds spoken.'

The countess, much surprised, afraid of some embarrassing pleasantry on the part of Charles, yet unable to repress her curiosity, placed herself near Fenella, as she called her little mute; and, while making signs to her, contrived to place her hand on her wrist.

At this moment the king, passing near them, said, 'This is a horrid deed—the villain Christian has stabbed young Peveril!'

The mute evidence of the pulse, which bounded as if a cannon had been discharged close by the poor girl's ear, was accompanied by such a loud scream of agony, as distressed, while it startled, the good-natured monarch himself. 'I did but jest,' he said; 'Julian is well, my pretty maiden. I only used the wand of a certain blind deity, called Cupid, to bring a deaf and dumb vassal of his to the exercise of her faculties.'*

'I am betrayed!' she said, with her eyes fixed on the ground—'I am betrayed!—and it is fit that she, whose life has been spent in practising treason on others, should be caught in her own snare.—But where is my tutor in iniquity?—where is Christian, who taught me to play the part of spy on this unsuspicious lady, until I had well-nigh delivered her into his bloody hands?'

'This,' said the king, 'craves more secret examination. Let all leave the apartment who are not immediately connected with these proceedings, and let this Christian be again brought before us.—Wretched man,' he continued, addressing Christian, 'what wiles are these you have practised, and by what extraordinary means?'

'She has betrayed me, then!' said Christian—'Betrayed me to bonds and death, merely for an idle passion, which can never be successful.—But know, Zarah,' he added, addressing her sternly, 'when my life is forfeited through thy evidence, the daughter has murdered the father!'

The unfortunate girl stared on him in astonishment. 'You said,' at length she stammered forth, 'that I was the daughter of your slaughtered brother?'

'That was partly to reconcile thee to the part thou wert to play in my destined drama of vengeance—partly to hide what men call the infamy of thy birth. But *my* daughter thou art! and from the Eastern clime, in which thy mother was born, you derive that fierce torrent of passion which I laboured to train to my purposes, but which, turned into another channel, has become the cause of your father's destruction.—My destiny is the Tower, I suppose?'

He spoke these words with great composure, and scarce seemed to regard the agonies of his daughter, who, throwing herself at his feet, sobbed and wept most bitterly.

'This must not be,' said the king, moved with compassion at this scene of misery. 'If you consent, Christian, to leave this country, there is a vessel in the river bound for New England—Go, carry your dark intrigues to other lands.'

'I might dispute the sentence,' said Christian boldly; 'and if I submit to it, it is a matter of my own choice.—One half-hour had made me even with that proud woman, but fortune hath cast the balance against me.—Rise, Zarah, Fenella no more! Tell the Lady of Derby, that if the daughter of Edward Christian, the niece of her murdered victim, served her as a menial, it was but for the purpose of vengeance—miserably, miserably frustrated!—Thou seest thy folly now—thou wouldst follow yonder ungrateful stripling—thou wouldst forsake all other thoughts to gain his slightest notice; and now thou art a forlorn outcast, ridiculed and insulted by those on whose necks you might have trod, had you governed yourself with more wisdom!—But come, thou art still my daughter

* Note CC. Vassal Mutes.

—there are other skies than that which canopies Britain.'

'Stop him,' said the king; 'we must know by what means this maiden found access to those confined in our prisons.'

'I refer your Majesty to your most Protestant jailor, and to the most Protestant peers, who, in order to obtain perfect knowledge of the depth of the Popish Plot, have contrived these ingenious apertures for visiting them in their cells by night or day. His Grace of Buckingham can assist your Majesty, if you are inclined to make the inquiry.' *

'Christian,' said the duke, 'thou art the most barefaced villain who ever breathed.'

'Of a commoner, I may,' answered Christian, and led his daughter out of the Presence.

'See after him, Selby,' said the king; 'lose not sight of him till the ship sail; if he dare return to Britain, it shall be at his peril. Would to God we had as good riddance of others as dangerous! And I would also,' he added, after a moment's pause, 'that all our political intrigues and feverish alarms could terminate as harmlessly as now. Here is a plot without a drop of blood; and all the elements of a romance, without its conclusion. Here we have a wandering island princess (I pray my Lady of Derby's pardon), a dwarf, a Moorish sorceress, an impenitent rogue, and a repentant man of rank, and yet all ends without either hanging or marriage.'

* It was said that very unfai [illegible] ere used to compel the prisoners, committed on account of the Popish Plot, to make disclosures, and that several of them were privately put to the torture.

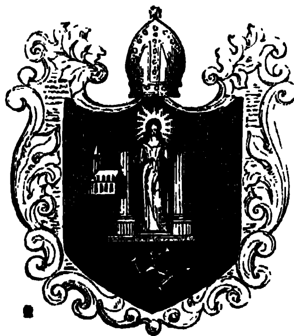
'Not altogether without the latter,' said the countess, who had an opportunity, during the evening, of much private conversation with Julian Peveril. 'There is a certain Major Bridgenorth, who, since your Majesty relinquishes further inquiry into these proceedings, which he had otherwise intended to abide, designs, as we are informed, to leave England for ever. Now, this Bridgenorth, by dint of the law, hath acquired strong possession over the domains of Peveril, which he is desirous to restore to the ancient owners, with much fair land besides, conditionally, that our young Julian will receive them as the dowry of his only child and heir.'

'By my faith,' said the king, 'she must be a foul-favoured wench, indeed, if Julian requires to be pressed to accept her on such fair conditions.'

'They love each other like lovers of the last age,' said the countess; 'but the stout old knight likes not the Roundheaded alliance.'

'Our royal recommendation shall put that to rights,' said the king; 'Sir Geoffrey Peveril has not suffered hardship so often at our command, that he will refuse our recommendation when it comes to make him amends for all his losses.'

It may be supposed the king did not speak without being fully aware of the unlimited ascendancy which he possessed over the old Tory; for within four weeks afterwards the bells of Martindale-Moultrassie were ringing for the union of the families, from whose estates it takes its compound name, and the beacon-light of the Castle blazed high over hill and dale, and summoned all to rejoice who were within twenty miles of its gleam.



NOTES TO PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

NOTE A, p. 731.—STRICTURES ON PEVERIL.

[Mr. Lockhart, in rather censorious terms, says that 'Peveril of the Peak, which appeared in January 1823, met with a reception somewhat colder than that of its three immediate predecessors. The post-haste rapidity of the Novelist's execution was put to a severe trial, from his adoption of so wide a canvas as was presented by a period of twenty busy years, and filled by so very large and multifarious an assemblage of persons, not a few of them, as it were, struggling for prominence. Fenella was an unfortunate conception; what is good in it is not original, and the rest extravagantly absurd and incredible. Even worse was that condescension to the practice of vulgar romances in his treatment of the trial scenes—scenes usually the very citadels of his strength—which outraged every feeling of probability with those who had studied the terrible tragedies of the Popish Plot, in the authentic records of, perhaps, the most disgraceful epoch in our history. The story is clumsy and perplexed, the catastrophe (another signal exception to his rules) foreseen from the beginning, and yet most inartificially brought about. All this is true: and yet might not criticisms of the same sort be applied to half the masterpieces of Shakespeare? And did any dramatist—to say nothing of any other novelist—ever produce, in spite of all the surrounding bewilderment of the fable, characters more powerfully conceived, or, on the whole, more happily portrayed, than those (I name but a few) of Christian, Bridgenorth, Buckingham, and Chiffinch? sketches more vivid than those of young Derby, Colonel Blood, and the keeper of Newgate? The severest censor of this novel was Mr. Senior, in the *London Review*; yet he was just, as well as severe. He could not dismiss the work without admitting that Peveril, "though entitled to no precedency," was, on the whole, "not inferior to its brethren, taken as a class;" and upon that class he introduced a general eulogy.']

NOTE B, p. 754.—CAVALIERS AND PURITANS.

The attempt to contrast the manners of the jovial Cavaliers, and enthusiastic, yet firm and courageous Puritans, was partly taken from a hint of Shadwell, who sketched several scenes of humour with great force, although they hung heavy on his pencil when he attempted to finish them for the stage.

In a dull play, named 'The Volunteers, or the Stock-jobbers,' the *dramatist personæ* present 'Major-General Blunt, an old Cavalier officer, somewhat rough in speech, but very brave and honest, and of good understanding, and a good patriot.' A contrast to the General is 'Colonel Hackwell, senior, an old Anabaptist Colonel of Cromwell's, very stout and godly, but somewhat immoral.'

These worthies, so characterized, hold a dialogue together, which will form a good example of Shadwell's power of dramatizing. The stage is filled by Major-General Blunt, and some of his old acquaintance Cavaliers, and Hackwell, the ancient Parliamentarian.

'*Major-General Blunt.*—Fear not, my old Cavaliers. According to your laudable customs, you shall be drunk, swagger, and fight over all your battles, from Edgehill to Brentford. You have not forgotten how this gentleman (*points to Colonel Hackwell*) and his demure psalm-singing fellows used to drub us?

'*1st Cavalier.*—No, 'gad! I felt 'em once to purpose.

'*M.-G. Blunt.*—Ah! a-dod, in high-crowned hats, collared bands, great loose coats, long tucks under 'em, and calves'-leather boots, they used to sing a psalm, fall on, and beat us to the devil!

'*Hackwell, senior.*—In that day we stood up to the cause; and the cause, the spiritual cause, did not suffer under our carnal weapons, but the enemy was discomfited, and lo! they used to flee before us.

'*1st Cavalier.*—Who would think such a snivelling psalm-singing puppy would fight? But these godly fellows would lay about them as if the devil were in 'em.

'*Sir Nicholas.*—What a filthy, slovenly army was th[ere]; I warrant you not a well-dressed man among the Roundheads.

'*M.-G. Blunt.*—But these plain fellows would so thrash your swearing, drinking, fine fellows in laced coats—just such as you of the drawing-room and Locket's fellows are now—and so strip them, by the Lord Harry, that after a battle those saints looked like the Israelites loaden with the Egyptian baggage.

'*Hackwell.*—Verily, we did take the spoil; and it served us to turn the penny, and advanced the cause thereby; we fought upon a principle that carried us through.

'*M.-G. Blunt.*—Prithee, Colonel, we know thy principle—'twas not right; thou foughtest against children's baptism, and not for liberty, but who should be your tyrant; none so zealous for Cromwell as thou wert then, nor such a furious agitator and test-man as thou hast been lately.

'*Hackwell, senior.*—Look you, Colonel, we but proceeded in the way of liberty of worship.

'*M.-G. Blunt.*—A-dod, there is something more in it. This was thy principle, Colonel—*Dominion is founded in grace, and the righteous shall inherit the earth.* And, by the Lord Harry, thou didst so; thou gottest three thousand pound a-year by fighting against the Court, and I lost a thousand by fighting for it.'—See *The Volunteers, or Stock-jobbers*, SHADWELL'S Works, vol. iv. p. 437.

In a former scene, Hackwell, the old fanatic officer, conceiving himself offended by one of the *dramatis personæ*, says, with great *naïveté*—'I prithee, friend, put me not to use the carnal weapon in my own defence.' Such are the traits of phraseology with which Shadwell painted the old Puritan officers, many of whom he—no mean observer of human nature—must have known familiarly.

NOTE C, p. 755.—CONCEALMENT OF THE COUNTESS OF DERBY.

The concealment and discovery of the Countess of Derby is taken from a picturesque account of a similar event, described to me by the person by whom it was witnessed in childhood. This lady, by name Mistress Margaret Swinton, and a daughter of that ancient house, was a sister of my maternal grandmother, and of course my grand-aunt. She was, as often happens on such occasions, our constant resource in sickness, or when we tired of noisy play, and closed around her to listen to her tales. As she might be supposed to look back to the beginning of the last century, the fund which supplied us with amusement often related to events of that period. I may here notice that she told me the unhappy story of the Bride of Lammermoor, being nearly related to the Lord President, whose daughter was the heroine of that melancholy tragedy.

The present tale, though of a different character, was also sufficiently striking when told by an eye-witness. Aunt Margaret was, I suppose, seven or eight years old, when residing in the old mansion-house of Swinton, and already displayed the firmness and sagacity which distinguished her through life. Being one of a large family she was, owing to slight indisposition, left at home one day when the rest of the family went to church, with Sir John and Lady Swinton, their parents. Before leaving the little invalid, she was strictly enjoined not to go into

the parlour where the elder party had breakfasted. But when she found herself alone in the upper part of the house, the spirit of her great ancestress Eve took possession of my Aunt Margaret, and forth she went to examine the parlour in question. She was struck with admiration and fear at what she saw there. A lady, 'beautiful exceedingly,' was seated by the breakfast-table, and employed in washing the dishes which had been used. Little Margaret would have had no doubt in accounting this singular vision an emanation from the angelical world, but for her employment, which she could not so easily reconcile to her ideas of angels.

The lady, with great presence of mind, called the astonished child to her, fondled her with much tenderness, and, judiciously avoiding to render the necessity of secrecy too severe, she told the girl she must not let any one except her mother know that she had seen her. Having allowed this escape-valve for the benefit of her curiosity, the mysterious stranger desired the little girl to look from the window of the parlour to see if her mother was returning from church. When she turned her head again, the fair vision had vanished, but by what means Miss Margaret was unable to form a conjecture.

Long watched, and eagerly waited for, the Lady Swinton at last returned from church, and her daughter lost no time in telling her extraordinary tale. 'You are a very sensible girl, Peggy,' answered her mother, 'for if you had spoken of that poor lady to any one but me, it might have cost her her life. But now I will not be afraid of trusting you with any secret, and I will show you where the poor lady lives.' In fact, she introduced her to a concealed apartment, opening by a sliding panel from the parlour, and showed her the lady in the hiding place, which she inhabited. It may be said, in passing, that there were few Scottish houses belonging to families of rank which had not such contrivances, the political incidents of the times often calling them into occupation.

The history of the lady of the closet was both melancholy and bloody, and, though I have seen various accounts of the story, I do not pretend to distinguish the right edition. She was a young woman of extreme beauty, who had been married to an old man, a writer, named MacFarlane. Her situation, and perhaps her manners, gave courage to some who desired to be accounted her suitors. Among them was a young Englishman, named Cayley, who was a commissioner of government upon the estates forfeited in the Rebellion of 1715. In 1716, Mr. Cayley visited this lady in her lodgings, when they quarrelled, either on account of his having offered her some violence, or, as another account said, because she reproached him with having boasted of former favours. It ended in her seizing upon a pair of pistols, which lay loaded in a closet, her husband intending to take them with him on a journey. The gallant commissioner approached with an air of drollery, saying, 'What, madam, do you intend to perform a comedy?'—'You shall find it a tragedy,' answered the lady; and fired both pistols, by which Commissioner Cayley [illegible] dead.

She [illegible] and remained concealed for a certain time. Her [illegible] of refuge in Swinton House I do not know—it arose probably from some of the indescribable genealogical filaments which connect Scottish families. A very small cause would even at any time have been a reason for interfering between an individual and the law.

Whatever were the circumstances of Mrs. MacFarlane's case, it is certain that she returned, and lived and died in Edinburgh, without being brought to trial. Indeed, considering the times, there was no great wonder; for, to one strong party, the death of an English commissioner was not a circumstance to require much apology. The Swintons, however, could not be of that opinion, the family being of Presbyterian and Whig principles.

[John Cayley was not, as above mentioned, a commissioner on the forfeited estates, but one of the Commissioners of Customs. Various papers, and verses relating to his murder by Mrs. Mackfarlain, 28th September 1716, are collected in the Appendix to a curious volume of 'Scottish Elegiac Verses, 1629-1729,' edited by James Maidment, Edinb. 1842. These, however, leave the whole matter in a very uncertain state, as to the immediate cause which led to this tragedy.]

NOTE D, p. 759.—EXECUTION OF CHRISTIAN.

The reader will find, in Appendix to Introduction, No. I., p. 969, an account of this tragedy, as related by one who may be said to favour the sufferer. It must be admitted, on the other hand, that Captain Christian's trial and execution were conducted according to the laws of the island. He was tried in all due form, by the Dempster, or chief judge, then named Norris, the Keys of the island, and other constituted authorities, making what is called a Tinwald Court. This word, yet retained in many parts of Scotland, signifies *Vallis Negotii*, and is applied to those artificial mounds which were in ancient times assigned to the meeting of the inhabitants for holding their *Comitia*. It was pleaded that the articles of accusation against Christian were found fully relevant, and, as he refused to plead at the bar, that he was, according to the laws of Man, most justly sentenced to death. It was also stated that full time was left for appeal to England, as he was apprehended about the end of September, and not executed until the 2nd January 1662-63. These defences were made for the various officers of the Isle of Man called before the Privy Council, on account of Christian's death, and supported with many quotations from the laws of the island, and appear to have been received as a sufficient defence for their share in those proceedings.

I am obliged to the present reverend Vicar of Malew, for a certified extract to the following effect:—'Malew Burials, A.D. 1662. Mr. William Christian of Ronaldswing, late receiver, was shot to death at Hange Hall, the 2d January. He died most penitently and couradgeously, made a good end, prayed earnestly, made an excellent speech, and the next day was buried in the chancell of Kirk Malew.'

It is certain that the death of William Christian made a very deep impression upon the minds of the islanders, and a Mr. Calcell or Colquit was much blamed on the occasion. Two lesser incidents are worth preservation as occurring at his execution. The place on which he stood was covered with white blankets, that his blood might not fall on the ground; and, secondly, the precaution proved unnecessary, for, the musket wounds bleeding internally, there was no outward effusion of blood.

Many on the island deny Christian's guilt altogether, like hi able the De but there are others, and those men of judgment and respectability, who are so far of a different opinion, that they only allow the execution to have been wrong in so far as the culprit died by a military rather than a civil death. I willingly drop the veil over a transaction, which took place *flagrantibus odiis* at the conclusion of a civil war, when Revenge at least was awake if Justice slept.

NOTE E, p. 763.—PAGES.

Even down to a later period than that in which the tale is laid, the ladies of distinction had for their pages young gentlemen of distinguished rank, whose education proceeded within the family of their patroness. Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, who in several respects laid claim to the honour due to royal blood, was, I believe, the last person of rank who kept up this old custom. A general officer distinguished in the American war was bred up as a page in her family. At present the youths whom we sometimes see in the capacity of pages of great ladies, are, I believe, mere lackeys.

NOTE F, p. 772.—EJECTION OF PRESBYTERIAN CLERGY.

The ejection of the Presbyterian clergy took place on Saint Bartholomew's Day (24th August 1662), thence called Black Bartholomew. Two thousand Presbyterian pastors were on that day displaced and silenced throughout England. The preachers, indeed, had only the alternative to renounce their principles, or subscribe certain articles of uniformity. And, to their great honour, Calamy, Baxter, and Reynolds refused bishoprics, and many other Presbyterian ministers declined deaneries and other preferments, and submitted to deprivation in preference.

NOTE G, p. 781.—PERSECUTION OF THE PURITANS.

It is naturally to be supposed that the twenty years' triumph of the Puritans, and the violence towards the malignants, as they were wont to call the Cavaliers, had generated many grudges and feuds in almost every neighbourhood, which the victorious royalists failed not to act upon, so soon as the Restoration gave them a superiority. Captain Hodgson, a Parliamentary officer, who wrote his own memoirs, gives us many instances of this. I shall somewhat compress his long-winded account of his sufferings.

'It was after the King's return to London, one night a parcel of armed men comes to my house at Coalley

near Halifax, and in an unseasonable hour in the night demands entrance, and my servants having some discourse with them on the outside, they gave threatening language, and put their pistols in at the window. My wife being with child, I ordered the doors to be opened, and they came in. After they had presented a pistol to my breast, they showed me their authority to apprehend me under the hands and seals of two knights and deputy-lieutenants, "for speaking treasonable words against the King."' The *ci-devant* captain was conveyed to prison at Bradford, and bail refused. His prosecutor proved to be one Daniel Lyster, brother to the peace-officer who headed the troop for his apprehension. It seems that the prisoner Hodgson had once in former days bound over to his good behaviour

was added, that he alleged he had 'never been a turncoat —never took the oath of allegiance, and never would do.' Little or no part of the charge was proved, while, on the contrary, it was shown that the prosecutor had been heard to say that, if times ever changed, he would sit on Hodgson's skirts. In fine, Hodgson escaped for five months' imprisonment, about thirty pounds expenses, and the necessity of swallowing the oath of allegiance, which seems to have been a bitter pill.

About the middle of June 1662, Captain Hodgson was again arrested in a summary manner by one Peebles, an attorney, quartermaster to Sir John Armytage's troop of horse-militia, with about twelve other Cavaliers, who used him rudely, called him rebel and traitor, and seemed to wish to pick a quarrel with him, upon which he demanded to see their authority. Peebles laid his hand on his sword, and told him it was better authority than any ever granted by Cromwell. They suffered him, however, to depart, which he partly owed to the valour of his landlady, who sat down at the table-end betwixt him and danger, and kept his antagonist at some distance.

He was afterwards accused of having assembled some troopers, from his having been accidentally seen riding with a soldier, from which accusation he also escaped. Finally, he fell under suspicion of being concerned in a plot, of which the scene is called Sowerby. On this charge he is not explicit, but the grand jury found the bill ignoramus.

After this the poor Roundhead was again repeatedly accused and arrested; and the last occasion we shall notice occurred on 11th September 1662, when he was disarmed by his old friend Mr. Peebles, at the head of a party. He demanded to see the warrant; on which he was answered as formerly by the quartermaster laying his hand on his sword-hilt, saying it was a better order than Oliver used to give. At length a warrant was produced, and Hodgson submitting to the search, they took from his dwelling-house better than £20 value in fowling-pieces, pistols, muskets, carabines, and such-like. A quarrel ensued about his buff-coat, which Hodgson refused to deliver, alleging they had no authority to take his wearing apparel. To this he remained constant, even upon the personal threats of Sir John Armytage, who called him rebel and traitor, and said, 'If I did not send the buff-coat with all speed, he would commit me to jail. I told him,' says Hodgson, 'I was no rebel, and he did not well to call me so before these soldiers and gentlemen, to make me the mark for every one to shoot at.' The buff-coat was then peremptorily demanded, and at length seized by open force. One of Sir John Armytage's brethren wore it for many years after, making good Prince Henry's observation, that a buff jerkin is a most sweet robe of durance. An agent of Sir John's came to compound for this garment of proof. Hodgson says he would not have taken ten pounds for it. Sir John would have given about four, but, insisting on the owner's receipt for the money, which its former possessor was unwilling to grant, the Tory magistrate kept both sides, and Hodgson never received satisfaction.

We will not prosecute Mr. Hodgson's tale of petty grievances any further. Enough has been said to display the melancholy picture of the country after the Civil War, and to show the state of irritability and oppression which must have extended itself over the face of England, since there was scarcely a county in which battles had not been fought, and deep injuries sustained, during the ascendancy of the Roundheads, which were not afterwards retaliated by the vengeance of the Cavaliers.

Note H, p. 782.—Manx Festivities.

Waldron mentions the two popular festivities in the Isle of Man which are alluded to in the text, and vestiges of them are, I believe, still to be traced in this singular island. The Contest of Winter and Summer seems directly derived from the Scandinavians, long the masters in Man, as Olaus Magnus mentions a similar festival among the northern nations. On the first of May, he says, 'the country is divided into two bands, the captain of one of which hath the name and appearance of Winter, is clothed in skins of beasts, and he and his band armed with fire-forks. They fling about ashes, by way of prolonging the reign of Winter; while another band, whose captain is called Florro, represents Spring, with green boughs, such as the season offers. These parties skirmish in sport, and the mimic contest concludes with a general feast.'—*History of the Northern Nations, by* Olaus, book xv. chap. 2.

Waldron gives an account of a festival in Wales, exactly similar:—

'In almost all the great parishes, they choose from among the daughters of the most wealthy farmers, a young maid for the Queen of May. She is dressed in the gayest and best manner they can, and is attended by about twenty others, who are called maids of honour. She has also a young man, who is her captain, and has under his command a good number of inferior officers. In opposition to her is the Queen of Winter, who is a man drest in woman's clothes, with woollen hoods, fur tippets, and loaded with the warmest and heaviest habits, one upon another; in the same manner are those, who represent her attendants, drest; nor is she without a captain and troop for her defence. Both being equipt as proper emblems of the beauty of the spring, and the deformity of the winter, they set forth from their respective quarters, the one preceded by violins and flutes, the other with the rough music of the tongs and cleavers. Both companies march till they meet on a common, and then their trains engage in a mock battle. If the Queen of Winter's forces get the better, so far as to take the Queen of May prisoner, she is ransomed for as much as pays the expenses of the day. After this ceremony, Winter and her company retire, and divert themselves in a barn, and the others remain on the green, where, having danced a considerable time, they conclude the evening with a feast; the queen at one table with her maids, the captain with his troop at another. There are seldom less than fifty or sixty persons at each board, but not more than three or four knives. Christmas is ushered in with a form much less meaning, and infinitely more fatiguing. On the 24th of December, towards evening, all the servants in general have a holiday, they go not to bed all night, but ramble about till the bells ring in all the churches, which is at twelve o'clock; prayers being over, they go to hunt the wren, and, after having found one of these poor birds, they kill her, and lay her on a bier with the utmost solemnity, bringing her to the parish church, and burying her with a whimsical kind of solemnity, singing dirges over her in the Manx language, which they call her knell; after which Christmas begins. There is not a barn unoccupied the whole twelve days, every parish hiring fiddlers at the public charge, and all the youth, nay, sometimes people well advanced in years, making no scruple to be among these nocturnal dancers.'—Waldron's *Description of the Isle of Man*, folio, 1731, p. 154.

With regard to horse-racing in the Isle of Man, I am furnished with a certified copy of the rules on which that sport was conducted, under the permission of the Earl of Derby, in which the curious may see that a descendant of the unfortunate Christian entered a horse for the prize. I am indebted for this curiosity to my kind friend the learned Dr. Dibdin.

Insula Monæ. } *Articles for the plate which is to be run for in the said island, being of the value of five pounds sterling (the fashion included), given by the Right Honourable William Earl of Derby, Lord of the said Isle, &c.*

'*1st.* The said plate is to be run for upon the 28th day of July, in euery year, whiles his honour is pleased to allow the same (being the day of the nativity of the Honourable James Lord Strange), except it happen upon a Sunday, and if soe, the said plate is to be run for upon the day following.

'*2d.* That noe horse, gelding, or mair, shall be admitted to run for the said plate, but such as was foaled within the said island, or in the Calfe of Mann.

'*3d.* That euery horse, gelding, or mair, that is designed to run, shall be entred at or before the viijth day of July, with his master's name and his owne if he be generally knowne by any, or els his collour, and

whether horse, mair, or gelding, and that to be done at the x comprs. office, by the cleark of the rolls for the time being.

'4th. That euery person that puts in either horse, mair, or gelding, shall, at the time of their entring, depositt the sume of fiue shill. apiece into the hands of the said cleark of the rolls, which is to goe towards the augmenting of the plate for the year following, besides one shill. apiece to be giuen by them to the said cleark of the rolls, for entring their names and engrossing these articles.

'5th. That euery horse, mair, or gelding, shall carry horseman's weight, that is to say, ten stone weight, at fourteen pounds to each stone, besides sadle and bridle.

'6th. That euery horse, mair, or gelding, shall haue a person for its tryer, to be named by the owner of the said horse, mair, or gelding, which tryers are to have the comand of the scales and weights, and to see that euery rider doe carry full weight, according as is mencioned in the foregoing article, and especially that the wining rider be soe with the usuall allowance of one pound for ——.

'7th. That a person be assigned by the tryers to start the runinge horses, who are to run for the said plate, betwixt the howers of one and three of the clock in the afternoon.

'8th. That euery rider shall leave the two first powles which are sett upp in Macybreas close, in this maner following, that is to say, the first of the said two powles upon his right hand, and the other upon his left hand; and the two powles by the rockes are to be left upon the left hand likewise; and the fifth powle which is sett up at the lower end of the Conney-warren, to be left alsoe upon the left hand, and soe the turning powle next to Wm. Looreyes house to be left in like maner upon the left hand, and the other two powles, leading to the ending powle, to be left upon the right hand; all which powles are to be left by the riders as aforesaid, excepting only the distance-powle, which may be rid on either hand, at the discrecion of the rider,' etc. etc. etc.

'*July 14th*, 1687.

'The names of the persons who have entered their horses to run for the within plate for this present year:

'Ro. Heywood, Esq., Governor of this Isle, hath entered one bay gelding, called by the name of Loggerhead, and hath deposited towards the augmenting of the plate for the next year	£00 05 00
'Captain Tho. Hudlston hath entred one white gelding called Snowball, and hath deposited	00 05 00
'Mr. William Faigler hath entred his gray gelding, called the Gray-Carraine, and deposited	00 05 00
'Mr. Nicho. Williams hath entred one gray stone horse, called the Yorkshire gray, and deposited	00 05 00
'Mr. Demster Christian hath entred one gelding, called the Dapple-gray, and hath deposited	00 05 00

'MEMORANDUM, *28th July*, 1687.

'That this day the above plate was run for by the forementioned horse, and the same was fairly won by the right worshipful governor's horse, at the two first heates.

17th August, 1688.

'Received this day the above , which I am to pay to my master to augment ye plate, by me,

'JOHN WOOD.

'It is my good-will and pleasure yt ye 2 prizes formerly granted (by me) for hors runing and shouting, shall continue as they did, to be run, or shot for, and soe to continue dureing my good-will and pleasure. Given under my hand att Lathom, ye 12 of July, 1669.

'DERBY.

'To my governor's deputy-governor, and ye rest of my officers in my Isle of Man.'

NOTE I, p. 799.—WHALLEY THE REGICIDE.

There is a common tradition in America that this person, who was never heard of after the Restoration, fled to Massachusetts, and, living for some years concealed in that province, finally closed his days there. The remarkable and beautiful story of his having suddenly emerged from his place of concealment, and, placing himself at the head of a party of settlers, shown them the mode of acquiring a victory, which they were on the point of yielding to the Indians, is also told; and in all probability truly. I have seen the whole tradition commented upon at large in a late North American publication, which goes so far as to ascertain the obscure grave to which the remains of Whalley were secretly committed. This singular story has lately afforded the justly celebrated American novelist, Mr. Cooper, the materials from which he has compiled one of those impressive narratives of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Transatlantic woods, and the hardy Europeans by whom they were invaded and dispossessed.

NOTE J, p. 800.—HOLM PEEL.

The Author has never seen this ancient fortress, which has in its circuit so much that is fascinating to the antiquary. Waldron has given the following description, which is perhaps somewhat exaggerated:—

'Peel, or Pile Town, is so called from its garrison and castle; though in effect the castle cannot properly be said to be in the town, an arm of the sea running between them, which in high tides would be deep enough to bear a ship of forty or fifty ton, though sometimes quite drained of salt water; but then it is supplied with fresh by a river which runs from Kirk Jarmyn Mountains, and empties itself into the sea. This castle, for its situation, antiquity, strength, and beauty, might justly come in for one of the wonders of the world. Art and nature seem to have vied with each other in the model, nor ought the most minute particular to escape observation. As to its situation, it is built upon the top of a huge rock, which rears itself a stupendous height above the sea, with which, as I said before, it is surrounded. And also by natural fortifications of other lesser rocks, which render it inaccessible but by passing that little arm of the sea which divides it from the town; this you may do in a small boat; and the natives, tucking up their clothes under their arms, and plucking off their shoes and stockings, frequently wade it in low tides. When you arrive at the foot of the rock, you ascend about some threescore steps, which are cut out of it to the first wall, which is immensely thick and high, and built of a very durable and bright stone, though not of the same sort with that of Castle Russin in Castle Town; and has on it four little houses, or watch-towers, which overlook the sea. The gates are wood, but most curiously arched, carved, and adorned with pilasters. Having passed the first, you have other stairs of near half the number with the former to mount, before you come at the second wall, which, as well as the other, is full of port-holes, for cannon, which are planted on stone crosses on a third wall. Being entered, you find yourself in a wide plain, in the midst of which stands the castle, encompassed by four churches, three of which time has so much decayed, that there is little remaining besides the walls, and some few tombs, which seem to have been erected with so much care as to perpetuate the memory of those buried in them, till the final dissolution of all things. The fourth is kept a little better in repair; but not so much for its own sake, though it has been the most magnificent of them all, as for a chapel within it; which is appropriated to the use of the bishop, and has under it a prison, or rather dungeon, for those offenders who are so miserable as to incur the spiritual censure. This is certainly one of the most dreadful places that imagination can form. The sea runs under it through the hollows of the rock with such a continual roar, that you would think it were every moment breaking in upon you, and over it are the vaults for burying the dead. The stairs descending to this place of terrors are not above thirty, but so steep and narrow, that they are very difficult to go down, a child of eight or nine years old not being able to pass them but sideways. Within it are thirteen pillars, on which the whole chapel is supported. They have a superstition that whatsoever stranger goes to see this cavern out of curiosity, and omits to count the pillars, shall do something to occasion being confined there. There are places for penance also under all the other churches, containing several very dark and horrid cells; some have nothing in them either to sit or lie down on, others a small piece of brick work; some are lower and more dark than others, but all of them, in my opinion, dreadful enough for almost any crime humanity is capable of being guilty of, though 'tis supposed they were built with different degrees of horror, that the punishment might be proportionate to the faults of those wretches who were to be confined in them. These have never been made use of since the times of Popery; but that under the bishop's chapel is the common and only prison for all offences in the spiritual court, and to that the delinquents are sentenced. But the soldiers of the garrison permit them to suffer their confinement in the castle, it being morally impossible for the strongest constitution to sustain the damps and noisomeness of the cavern even for a few hours, much less for

months and years, as is the punishment sometimes allotted. But I shall speak hereafter more fully of the severity of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. 'Tis certain that here have been very great architects in this island; for the noble monuments in this church, which is kept in repair, and indeed the ruins of the others also, show the builders to be masters of all the orders in that art, though the great number of Doric pillars prove them to be chiefly admirers of that. Nor are the epitaphs and inscriptions on the tombstones less worthy of remark; the various languages in which they are engraved, testify by what a diversity of nations this little spot of earth has been possessed. Though time has defaced too many of the letters to render the remainder intelligible, yet you may easily perceive fragments of the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabian, Saxon, Scotch, and Irish characters; some dates yet visible declare they were written before the coming of Christ; and, indeed, if one considers the walls, the thickness of them, and the durableness of the stone of which they are composed, one must be sensible that a great number of centuries must pass before such strong workmanship could be reduced to the condition it now is. These churches, therefore, were doubtless once the temples of Pagan deities, though since consecrated to the worship of the true divinity; and what confirms me more strongly in this conjecture, is, that there is still a part of one remaining, where stands a large stone directly in form and manner like the Triposes, which in those days of ignorance, the priests stood upon, to deliver their fabulous oracles. Through one of these old churches there was formerly a passage to the apartment belonging to the captain of the guard, but is now closed up. The reason they give you for it is a pretty odd one; but as I think it not sufficient satisfaction to my curious reader, to acquaint him with what sort of buildings this island affords, without letting him know also what traditions are concerning them, I shall have little regard to the censure of those critics, who find fault with everything out of the common road; and in this, as well as in all other places, where it falls in my way, shall make it my endeavour to lead him into the humours and very souls of the Manx people. They say, that an apparition, called in their language the Mauthe Doog, in the shape of a large black spaniel, with curled shaggy hair, was used to haunt Peel Castle, and has been frequently seen in every room, but particularly in the guard chamber, where, as soon as candles were lighted, it came and lay down before the fire, in presence of all the soldiers, who at length, by being so much accustomed to the sight of it, lost great part of the terror they were seized with at its first appearance. They still, however, retained a certain awe, as believing it was an evil spirit which only waited permission to do them hurt, and for that reason forbore swearing and all profane discourse while in its company. But though they endured the shock of such a guest when altogether in a body, none cared to be left alone with it. It being the custom, therefore, for one of the soldiers to lock the gates of the castle at a certain hour, and carry the keys to the captain, to whose apartment, as I said before, the way led through a church, they agreed among themselves, that whoever was to succeed the ensuing night his fellow in this errand should accompany him that went first, and by this means no man would be exposed singly to the danger; for I forgot to mention that the Mauthe Doog was always seen to come out from that passage at the close of day, and return to it again as soon as the morning dawned, which made them look on this place as its peculiar residence. One night, a fellow being drunk, and by the strength of his liquor rendered more daring than ordinary, laughed at the simplicity of his companions, and though it was not his turn to go with the keys, would needs take that office upon him to testify his courage. All the soldiers endeavoured to dissuade him, but the more they said, the more resolute he seemed, and swore that he desired nothing more than that Mauthe Doog would follow him, as it had done the others, for he would try if it were dog or devil. After having talked in a very reprobate manner for some time, he snatched up the keys, and went out of the guard-room; in some time after his departure a great noise was heard, but nobody had the boldness to see what occasioned it, till the adventurer returning, they demanded the knowledge of him; but as loud and noisy as he had been at leaving them, he was now become sober and silent enough, for he was never heard to speak more; and though all the time he lived, which was three days, he was entreated by all who came near him, either to speak, or, if he could not do that, to make some signs by which they might understand what had happened to him, yet nothing intelligible could be got from him, only that by the distortion of his limbs and features, it might be guessed that he died in agonies more than is common in a natural death. The Mauthe Doog was, however, never seen after in the castle, nor would any one attempt to go through that passage, for which reason it was closed up, and another way made. This accident happened about threescore years since, and I heard it attested by several, but especially by an old soldier, who assured me he had seen it oftener than he had then hairs on his head. Having taken notice of everything remarkable in the churches, I believe my reader will be impatient to come to the castle itself, which, in spite of the magnificence the pride of modern ages has adorned the palaces of princes with, exceeds not only everything I have seen, but also read of, in nobleness of structure. Though now no more than a garrison for soldiers, you cannot enter it without being struck with a veneration, which the most beautiful buildings of later years cannot inspire you with; the largeness and loftiness of the rooms, the vast echo resounding through them, the many winding galleries, the prospect of the sea, and the ships, which, by reason of the height of the place, seem but like buoys floating on the waves, make you fancy yourself in a superior orb to what the rest of mankind inhabit, and fill you with contemplations the most refined and pure that the soul is capable of conceiving.'—WALDRON'S *Description of the Isle of Man*, folio, 1731, p. 103.

In this description, the account of the inscriptions in so many Oriental languages, and bearing date before the Christian era, is certainly as much exaggerated as the story of the *Mauthe Doog* itself. It would be very desirable to find out the meaning of the word *Mauthe* in the Manx language, which is a dialect of the Gaelic. I observe, that Maithe in Gaelic, amongst other significations, has that of *active* or *speedy*; and also that a dog of Richard II., mentioned by Froissart, and supposed to intimate the fall of his master's authority, by leaving him and fawning on Bolingbroke, was termed Mauthe; but neither of these particulars tends to explain the very impressive story of the fiendish hound of Peel Castle.

NOTE K, p. 805.—MANX SUPERSTITIONS.

The story often alludes to the various superstitions which are, or at least were, received by the inhabitants of the Isle of Man, an ancient Celtic race, still speaking the language of their fathers. They retained a plentiful stock of those wild legends which overawed the reason of a dark age, and in our own time annoy the imagination of those who listen to the fascination of the tale, while they despise its claims to belief. The following curious legendary traditions are extracted from Waldron, a huge mine, in which I have attempted to discover some specimens of spar, if I cannot find treasure.

''Tis this ignorance,' meaning that of the islanders, 'which is the occasion of the excessive superstition which reigns among them. I have already given some hints of it, but not enough to show the world what a Manksman truly is, and what power the prejudice of education has over weak minds. If books were of any use among them,' one would swear the Count of Gabalis had been not only translated into the Manks tongue, but that it was a sort of rule of faith to them, since there is no fictitious being mentioned by him, in his book of absurdities, which they would not readily give credit to. I know not, idolizers as they are of the clergy, whether they would not be even refractory to them, were they to preach against the existence of fairies, or even against their being commonly seen; for though the priesthood are a kind of gods among them, yet still tradition is a greater god than they; and as they confidently assert that the first inhabitants of their island were fairies, so do they maintain that these little people have still their residence among them. They call them the Good People, and say they live in wilds and forests, and on mountains, and shun great cities because of the wickedness acted therein; all the houses are blessed where they visit, for they fly vice. A person would be thought impudently profane, who should suffer his family to go to bed without having first set a tub, or pail, full of clean water, for these guests to bathe themselves in, which the natives aver they constantly do, as soon as ever the eyes of the family are closed, wherever they vouchsafe to come. If anything happened to be mislaid, and found again in some place where it was not expected, they presently tell you a fairy took it, and returned it; if you chance to get a fall and hurt yourself, a fairy laid something in your way to throw you down, as a punishment for some sin you have committed. I have heard many of them protest they have been carried insensibly great distances from home, and, without knowing how they came there, found themselves on the top of a mountain. One story in particular was told me of a man who had been led by invisible musicians for several miles

together; and not being able to resist the harmony, followed till it conducted him to a large common, where were a great number of little people sitting round a table, and eating and drinking in a very jovial manner. Among them were some faces whom he thought he had formerly seen, but forbore taking any notice, or they of him, till the little people, offering him drink, one of them whose features seemed not unknown to him, plucked him by the coat, and forbade him, whatever he did, to taste anything he saw before him; for if you do, added he, you will be as I am, and return no more to your family. The poor man was much affrighted, but resolved to obey the injunction; accordingly a large silver cup, filled with some sort of liquor, being put into his hand, he found an opportunity to throw what it contained on the ground. Soon after, the music ceasing, all the company disappeared, leaving the cup in his hand, and he returned home, though much wearied and fatigued. He went the next day and communicated to the minister of the parish all that had happened, and asked his advice how he should dispose of the cup, to which the parson replied, he could not do better than devote it to the service of the Church, and this very cup, they tell me, is that which is now used for the consecrated wine in Kirk-Merlugh.

'Another instance they gave me to prove the reality of fairies, was of a fiddler, who, having agreed with a person, who was a stranger, for so much money, to play to some company he should bring him to, all the twelve days of Christmas, and received earnest for it, saw his new master vanish into the earth the moment he had made the bargain. Nothing could be more terrified than was the poor fiddler, he found he had entered himself into the devil's service, and looked on himself as already damned, but having recourse also to a clergyman, he received some hope, he ordered him, however, as he had taken earnest, to go when he should be called: but that whatever tune should be called for, to play none but psalms. On the day appointed, the same person appeared, with whom he went, though with what inward reluctance 'tis easy to guess; but punctually obeying the minister's directions, the company to whom he played were so angry, that they all vanished at once, leaving him at the top of a high hill, and so bruised and hurt, though he was not sensible [illegible] what hand, [illegible] rece[illegible] the [illegible] home without the utmost difficulty. The [illegible] d [illegible] infants being changed in their cradles, is he[illegible] credit, that mothers are in continual terror at th[illegible] of it. I was prevailed upon myself to go and see a child, who they told me was one of these changelings; and, indeed, must own was not a little surprised, as well as [illegible] beautiful face, but though between five and six years old, and seemingly healthy, he was so far from being able to walk or stand, that he could not so much as [illegible] age, but smaller than an infant's of six months; his complexion was perfectly delicate, and he had the finest hair in the world; he never spoke nor cried, ate scarce anything, and was very seldom seen to smile; but if any one called him a fairy elf, he would frown and fix his eyes so earnestly on those who said it, as if he would look them through. His mother, or at least his supposed mother, being very poor, frequently went out a-charing, and left him a whole day together; the neighbours, out of curiosity, have often looked in at the window to see how he behaved when alone; which, whenever they did, they were sure to find him laughing, and in the utmost delight. This made them judge that he was not without company more pleasing to him than any mortals could be; and what made this conjecture seem the more reasonable, was, that if he were left ever so dirty, the woman, at her return, saw him with a clean face, and his hair combed with the utmost exactness and nicety.

'A second account of this nature I had from a woman to whose offspring the fairies seemed to have taken a particular fancy. The fourth or fifth night after she was delivered of her first child, the family were alarmed with a most terrible cry of fire, on which everybody ran out of the house to see whence it proceeded, not excepting the nurse, who, being as much frighted as the others, made one of the number. The poor woman lay trembling in her bed alone, unable to help herself, and her back being turned to the infant, saw not that it was taken away by an invisible hand. Those who had left her having inquired about the neighbourhood, and finding there was no cause for the outcry they had heard, laughed at each other for the mistake; but as they were going to re-enter the house, the poor babe lay on the threshold, and by its cries preserved itself from being trod upon. This exceedingly amazed all that saw it, and the mother being still in bed, they could ascribe no reason for finding it there, but having been removed by fairies, who, by their sudden return, had been prevented from carrying it any farther. About a year after, the same woman was brought to bed of a second child, which had not been born many nights before a great noise was heard in the house where they kept their cattle (for in this island, where there is no shelter in the fields from the excessive cold and damps, they put all their milch-kine into a barn, which they call a cattle-house). Everybody that was stirring ran to see what was the matter, believing that the cows had got loose; the nurse was as ready as the rest, but, finding all safe, and the barn door close, immediately returned, but not so suddenly but that the new-born babe was taken out of the bed, as the former had been, and dropt on their coming, in the middle of the entry. This was enough to prove the fairies had made a second attempt; and the parents sending for a minister, joined with him in thanksgiving to God, who had twice delivered their children from being taken from them. But in the time of her third lying-in, everybody seemed to have forgot what had happened in the first and second, and on a noise in the cattle-house, ran out to know what had occasioned it. The nurse was the only person, excepting the woman in the straw, who stayed in the house, nor was she detained through care or want of curiosity, but by the bonds of sleep, having drank a little too plentifully the preceding day. The mother, who was broad awake, saw her child lifted out of the bed, and carried out of the chamber, though she could not see any person touch it; on which she cried out as loud as she could, "Nurse, nurse! my child, my child is taken away!' but the old woman was [illegible] d by [illegible] she [illegible] nd the infant was irretrievably gone. When her husband, and those who had accompanied him, returned, they found her wringing her hands, and uttering the most piteous lamentations for the loss of her child; on which, said the husband, looking into the bed, "The woman is mad, do not you see the child lies by you?" On which she turned, and saw indeed something like a child, but far different from her own, who was a very beautiful, fat, well-featured babe; whereas, what was now in the room of it, was a [illegible] l, deformed creature. It lay quite [illegible] aked, bu[illegible] the clothe[illegible] be[illegible] the child th[illegible] ged for it lay wrapped up altogether on the bed. This creature lived with them near the space of nine years, in all which time it ate nothing except a few herbs, nor was ever seen to void any other excrement than water. It neither spoke, nor could stand or go, but seemed enervate in every joint, like the changeling I mentioned before, and in all its actions showed itself to be of the same nature.

'A woman, who lived about two miles distant from Ballasalli, and used to serve my family with butter, made me once very merry, with a story she told me of her daughter, a girl of about ten years old, who, being sent over the fields to the town, for a pennyworth of tobacco for her father, was on the top of a mountain surrounded by a great number of little men, who would not suffer her to pass any farther. Some of them said she should go with them, and accordingly laid hold of her; but one seeming more pitiful, desired they would let her alone; which they refusing, there ensued a quarrel, and the person who took her part fought bravely in her defence. This so incensed the others, that, to be revenged on her for being the cause, two or three of them seized her, and, pulling up her clothes, whipped her heartily; after which, it seems, they had no further power over her, and she run home directly, telling what had befallen her, and showing her buttocks, on which were the prints of several small hands. Several of the townspeople went with her to the mountain, and she conducting them to the spot, the little antagonists were gone, but had left behind them proofs (as the good woman said) that what the girl had informed them was true, for there was a great deal of blood to be seen on the stones. This did she aver with all the solemnity imaginable.

'Another woman, equally superstitious and fanciful as the former, told me, that being great with child, and expecting every moment the good hour, as she lay awake one night in her bed, she saw seven or eight little women come into her chamber, one of whom had an infant in her arms; they were followed by a man of the same size with themselves, but in the habit of a minister. One of them went to the pail, and finding no water in it, cried out to the others, what must they do to christen the child? On which they replied, it should be done in beer. With that the seeming parson took the child in his arms, and performed the ceremony of baptism, dipping his hand into a great tub of strong beer, which the woman had brewed the day before to be ready for her lying-in. She told me that

they baptized the infant by the name of Joan, which made her know she was pregnant of a girl, as it proved a few days after, when she was delivered. She added also, that it was common for the fairies to make a mock christening when any person was near her time, and that according to what child, male or female, they brought, such should the woman bring into the world.

'But I cannot give over this subject without mentioning what they say befell a young sailor, who, coming off a long voyage, though it was late at night, chose to land rather than be another night in the vessel; being permitted to do so, he was set on shore at Douglas. It happened to be a fine moonlight night, and very dry, being a small frost; he therefore forbore going into any house to refresh himself, but made the best of his way to the house of a sister he had at Kirk-Merlugh. As he was going over a pretty high mountain, he heard the noise of horses, the hollow of a huntsman, and the finest horn in the world. He was a little surprised that anybody pursued those kinds of sports in the night, but he had not time for much reflection before they all passed by him, so near that he was able to count what number there was of them, which, he said, was thirteen, and that they were all dressed in green, and gallantly mounted. He was so well pleased with the sight, that he would gladly have followed, could he have kept pace with them; he crossed the footway, however, that he might see them again, which he did more than once, and lost not the sound of the horn for some miles. At length, being arrived at his sister's, he tells her the story, who presently clapped her hands for joy that he was come home safe; for, said she, those you saw were fairies, and 'tis well they did not take you away with them. There is no persuading them but that these huntings are frequent in the island, and that these little gentry, being too proud to ride on Manks horses, which they might find in the field, make use of the English and Irish ones, which are brought over and kept by gentlemen. They say that nothing is more common than to find these poor beasts, in a morning, all over in a sweat and foam, and tired almost to death, when their owners have believed they have never been out of the stable. A gentleman of Ballafletcher assured me he had three or four of his best horses killed with these nocturnal journeys.

'At my first coming into the island, and hearing these sort of stories, I imputed the giving credit to them merely to the simplicity of the poor creatures who related them; but was strangely surprised when I heard other narratives of this kind, and altogether as absurd, attested by men who passed for persons of sound judgment. Among this number was a gentleman, my near neighbour, who affirmed, with the most solemn asseverations, that being of my opinion, and entirely averse to the belief that any such beings were permitted to wander for the purposes related of them, he had been at last convinced by the appearance of several little figures playing and leaping over some stones in a field, whom at a few yards' distance he imagined were schoolboys, and intended, when he came near enough, to reprimand for being absent from their exercises at that time of the day, it being then, he said, between three and four of the clock; but when he approached, as near as he could guess, within twenty paces, they all immediately disappeared, though he had never taken his eye off them from the first moment he beheld them; nor was there any place where they could so suddenly retreat, it being an open field without hedge or bush, and, as I said before, broad day.

'Another instance, which might serve to strengthen the credit of the other, was told me by a person who had the reputation of the utmost integrity. This man being desirous of disposing of a horse he had at that time no great occasion for, and riding him to market for that purpose, was accosted, in passing over the mountains, by a little man in a plain dress, who asked him if he would sell his horse. 'Tis the design I am going on, replied the person who told me the story. On which the other desired to know the price. Eight pounds, said he. No, resumed the purchaser, I will give no more than seven; which, if you will take, here is your money. The owner, thinking he had bid pretty fair, agreed with him; and the money being told out, the one dismounted, and the other got on the back of the horse, which he had no sooner done, than both beast and rider sunk into the earth immediately, leaving the person who had made the bargain in the utmost terror and consternation. As soon as he had a little recovered himself, he went directly to the parson of the parish, and related what had passed, desiring he would give his opinion whether he ought to make use of the money he had received or not. To which he replied, that as he had made a fair bargain, and no way circumvented, nor endeavoured to circumvent, the buyer, he saw no reason to believe, in case it was an evil spirit, it could have any power over him. On this assurance, he went home well satisfied, and nothing afterward happened to give him any disquiet concerning this affair.

'A second account of the same nature I had from a clergyman, and a person of more sanctity than the generality of his function in this island. It was his custom to pass some hours every evening in a field near his house indulging meditation, and calling himself to an account for the transactions of the past day. As he was in this place one night, more than ordinarily wrapped in contemplation, he wandered, without thinking where he was, a considerable way farther than it was usual for him to do; and, as he told me, he knew not how far the deep musing he was in might have carried him, if it had not been suddenly interrupted by a noise, which, at first, he took to be the distant bellowing of a bull; but as he listened more heedfully to it, found there was something more terrible in the sound than could proceed from that creature. He confessed to me, that he was no less affrighted than surprised, especially when, the noise coming still nearer, he imagined, whatever it was that it proceeded from, it must pass him. He had, however, presence enough of mind to place himself with his back to a hedge, where he fell on his knees, and began to pray to God with all the vehemence so dreadful an occasion required. He had not been long in that position, before he beheld something in the form of a bull, but infinitely larger than ever he had seen in England, much less in Man, where the cattle are very small in general. The eyes, he said, seemed to shoot forth flames, and the running of it was with such a force, that the ground shook under it as an earthquake. It made directly toward a little cottage, and thereafter most horribly disappeared. The moon being then at the full, and shining in her utmost splendour, all these passages were visible to our amazed divine, who, having finished his ejaculation, and given thanks to God for his preservation, went to the cottage, the owner of which, they told him, was that moment dead. The good old gentleman was loath to pass a censure which might be judged an uncharitable one; but the deceased having the character of a very ill liver, most people who heard the story were apt to imagine this terrible apparition came to attend his last moments.

'A mighty bustle they also make of an apparition, which, they say, haunts Castle Rushin, in the form of a woman, who was some years since executed for the murder of her child. I have heard not only persons who have been confined there for debt, but also the soldiers of the garrison, affirm they have seen it various times; but what I took most notice of, was the report of a gentleman, of whose good understanding, as well as veracity, I have a very great opinion. He told me, that happening to be abroad late one night, and catched in an excessive storm of wind and rain, he saw a woman stand before the castle gate, where, being not the least shelter, it something surprised him that anybody, much less one of that sex, should not rather run to some little porch, or shed, of which there are several in Castle Town, than chuse to stand still, exposed and alone, to such a dreadful tempest. His curiosity exciting him to draw nearer, that he might discover who it was that seemed so little to regard the fury of the elements, he perceived she retreated on his approach, and, at last, he thought, went into the castle, though the gates were shut. This obliging him to think he had seen a spirit, sent him home very much terrified; but the next day, relating his adventure to some people who lived in the castle, and describing, as near as he could, the garb and stature of the apparition, they told him it was that of the woman above mentioned, who had been frequently seen, by the soldiers on guard, to pass in and out of the gates, as well as to walk through the rooms, though there was no visible means to enter. Though so familiar to the eye, no person has yet, however, had the courage to speak to it, and, as they say a spirit has no power to reveal its mind without being conjured to do so in a proper manner, the reason of its being permitted to wander is unknown.

'Another story of the like nature I have heard concerning an apparition, which has frequently been seen on a wild common near Kirk Jarmyn mountains, which, they say, assumes the shape of a wolf, and fills the air with most terrible howlings. But having run on so far in the account of supernatural appearances, I cannot forget what was told me by an English gentleman, and my particular friend. He was about passing over Douglas Bridge before it was broken down, but the tide being high, he was obliged to take the river, having an excellent horse under him, and one accustomed to swim. As he was in the middle of it, he heard, or imagined he heard, the finest symphony, I will not say in the world, for nothing human ever came up to it. The horse was no less sensible of the harmony than

himself, and kept in an immovable posture all the time it lasted; which, he said, could not be less than three quarters of an hour, according to the most exact calculation he could make, when he arrived at the end of his little journey, and found how long he had been coming He, who before laughed at all the stories told of fairies, now became a convert, and believed as much as ever a Manksman of them all. As to circles in the grass, and the impression of small feet among the snow, I cannot deny but I have seen them frequently, and once thought I heard a whistle, as though in my ear, when nobody that could make it was near me. For my part, I shall not pretend to determine if such appearances have any reality, or are only the effect of the imagination, but as I had much rather give credit to them, than be convinced by ocular demonstration, I shall leave the point to be discussed by those who have made it more their study, and only say, that whatever belief we ought to give to some accounts of this kind, there are others, and those much more numerous, which merit only to be laughed at, it not being at all consonant to reason, or the idea religion gives us of the fallen angel, to suppose spirits so eminent in wisdom and knowledge as to be exceeded by nothing but their Creator, should visit the earth for such trifling purposes as to throw bottles and glasses about a room, and a thousand other as ridiculous gambols mentioned in those voluminous treatises of apparitions

The natives of this island tell you also that before any person dies the procession of the funeral is acted by a sort of beings which for that end render themselves visible I know several that have offered to make oath that as they have been passing the road, one of these funerals has come behind them, and even laid the bier on their shoulders as though to assist the bearers One person who assured me he had been so served, told me that the flesh of his shoulders had been very much bruised and was black for many weeks after There are few or none of them who pretend not to have seen or heard these imaginary obsequies (for I must not omit that they sing psalms in the same manner as those do who accompany the corpse of a dead friend) which so little differ from real ones that they are not to be known till both the coffin and mourners are seen to vanish at the church doors These they take to be a sort of friendly demons, and their business, they say, is to warn people of what is to befall them accordingly, they give notice of any stranger's approach, by the trampling of horses at the gate of the house where they are to arrive As difficult as I found it to bring myself to give any faith to this I have frequently been very much surprised when on visiting a friend, I have found the table ready spread and everything in order to receive me and been told by the person to whom I went that he had knowledge of my coming, or some other guest, by these good natured intelligencers nay, when obliged to be absent some time from home, my own servants have assured me they were informed by these means of my return, and expected me the very hour I came, though perhaps it was some days before I hoped it myself at my going abroad That this is fact, I am positively convinced by many proofs, but how or wherefore it should be so has frequently given me much matter of reflection, yet left me in the same uncertainty as before Here, therefore, I will quit the subject and proceed to things much easier to be accounted for — WALDRON'S *Description of the Isle of Man* folio 1731 p 125

This long quotation is extremely curious, as containing an account of those very superstitions in the Isle of Man, which are frequently collected both in Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland, and which have employed the attention of Mr Crofton Croker and of the author of the Fairy Mythology The superstitions are in every respect so like each other, that they may be referred to one common source, unless we conclude that they are natural to the human mind, and, like the common orders of vegetables, which naturally spring up in every climate, these naturally arise in every bosom, as the best philologists are of opinion that fragments of an original speech are to be discovered in almost all languages in the globe

NOTE L, p 823 —SALE OF A DANCING-GIRL.

An instance of such a sale of an unfortunate dancing girl occurred in Edinburgh in the end of the seventeenth century.

'13th January, 1687 —Reid the mountebank pursues Scott of Harden and his lady, for stealing away from him a little girl called *The tumbling lassie*, that danced upon his stage, and he claimed damages, and [illegible] by which he bought her from her [illegible] pounds Scots [£2, 10s sterling]. But we have no slaves in Scotland,' continues the liberal reporter, 'and mothers cannot sell their bairns, and physicians attested that the employment of tumbling would kill her, and her joints were now grown stiff, and she declined to return, though she was at least an apprentice, and could not run away from her master Yet some quoted Moses's Law, that if a servant shelter himself with thee, against his master's cruelty, thou shalt surely not deliver him up The Lords, *renitente cancellario*, assoilzied [*i e* acquitted] Harden.' FOUNTAINHALL'S *Decisions*, vol i p 441

A man may entertain some vanity in being connected with a patron of the cause of humanity, so the Author may be pardoned mentioning, that he derives his own direct descent from the father of this champion of humanity

Reid the mountebank apparently knew well how to set the sails of his own interest to whatever wind proved most likely to turn them He failed not to avail himself of King James's rage for the conversion of heretics, on which subject Fountainhall has this sarcastic memorandum

'Reid the mountebank is received into the Popish Church, and one of his blackamoors was persuaded to accept of baptism from the Popish priest, and to turn Christian Papist, which was a great trophy He was christened James after the King, and Chancellor, and the Apostle James' —*Ibid* p 440

NOTE M, p 825 —WITNESSES OF THE PLOT.

The infamous character of those who contrived and carried on the pretended Popish Plot, may be best estimated by the account given in North's *Examen*, who describes Oates himself with considerable power of colouring 'He was now in his trine exaltation, his Plot in full force, efficacy and virtue he walked about with his guards [assigned for fear of the Papists murdering him] He had lodgings in Whitehall and £1200 per annum pension: and no wonder, after he had the impudence to say to the House of Lords in plain terms that if they would not help him to more money, he must be forced to help himself He put on an Episcopal garb (except the lawn sleeves), silk gown and cassock, great hat satin hatband and rose, long scarf and was called, or most blasphemously called himself the Saviour of the nation whoever he pointed at, was taken up and committed, so that many people got out of his way, as from a blast and glad they could prove their two last years' conversation The very breath of him was pestilential, and if it brought not imprisonment, or death, over such on whom it fell, it surely poisoned reputation, and left good Protestants arrant Papists, and something worse than that in danger of being put in the Plot as traitors Upon his examination before the Commons, the Lord Chief Justice Scroggs was sent for to the House, and there signed warrants for the imprisonment of five Roman Catholic peers upon which they were laid up in the Tower. The votes of the Houses seemed to confirm the whole A solemn form of prayer was desired upon the subject of the Plot, and when one was prepared it was found faulty, because the Papists were not named as authors of it God only knew whether it were so or not however, it was yielded that omniscience might not want information. The queen herself was accused at the Commons bar. The city for fear of the Papists, put up their posts and chains and the chamberlain, Sir Thomas Player, in the Court of Aldermen, gave his reason for the city's using that caution, which was, that he did not know but the next morning they might all rise with their throats cut The trials, convictions, and executions of the priests, Jesuits, and others, were had, and attended with vast mob and noise Nothing ordinary or moderate was to be heard in people's communication, but every debate and action was high flown and tumultuous All freedom of speech was taken away, and not to believe the Plot, was worse than being Turk, Jew, or infidel For this fact of Godfrey's murder the three poor men of Somerset House were, as was said, convicted The most pitiful circumstance was that of their trial, under the popular prejudice against them The Lord Chief Justice Scroggs took in with the tide, and ranted for the Plot, hewing down Popery, as Scanderbeg hewed the Turk, which was but little [illegible] pitious to them The other judges were passive, [illegible] meddled little, except some that were taken in [illegible] particularly the good Recorder Terby, who [illegible] Attorney-General, for he seldom asked a question [illegible] [illegible]ght guess he foresaw the answer. [illegible] (at best) passive behaviour of the [illegible] sidering it was impossible to stem [illegible] nearing to do it in vain had been [illegible]

it had inflamed the great and small rout, drawn scandal on themselves, and disabled them from taking in, when opportunity should be more favourable. The prisoners, under these hardships, had enough to do to make any defence; for where the testimony was positive, it was conclusive; for no reasoning *ab improbabili* would serve the turn; it must be *ab impossibili*, or not at all. Whoever doth not well observe the power of judging, may think many things, in the course of justice, very strange. If one side is held to demonstration, and the other allowed presumptions for proofs, any cause may be carried. In a word, anger, policy, inhumanity, and prejudice, had at this time a planetary possession of the minds of most men, and destroyed in them that golden rule, of doing as they would be done unto.'—*Examen*, pp. 205, 206.

In another passage Oates's personal appearance is thus described:—'He was a low man, of an ill cut, very short neck, and his visage and features were most particular. His mouth was the centre of his face; and a compass there would sweep his nose, forehead, and chin, within the perimeter. *Cave quos ipse Deus notavit.* In a word, he was a most consummate cheat, blasphemer, vicious, perjured, impudent, and saucy, foul-mouth'd wretch; and were it not for the truth of history, and the great emotions in the public he was the cause of, not fit (so little deserving) to be remembered.'—*Ib.* p. 225.

NOTE N, p. 831.—NARRATIVES OF THE PLOT.

There is no more odious feature of this detestable Plot, than that the forsworn witnesses by whose oaths the fraud was supported, claimed a sort of literary interest in their own fabrications, by publications under such titles as the following:—'A narrative and impartial discovery of the horrid Popish Plot, carried on for burning and destroying the cities of London and Westminster, with their suburbs, setting forth the several councils, orders, and resolutions of the Jesuits, concerning the same, by (a person so and so named), lately engaged in that horrid design, and one of the Popish committee for carrying on such fires.'

At any other period it would have appeared equally unjust and illegal to poison the public mind with stuff of this kind before the witnesses had made their depositions in open court. But in this moment of frenzy everything which could confirm the existence of these senseless delusions was eagerly listened to; and whatever seemed to infer doubt of the witnesses, or hesitation concerning the existence of the Plot, was a stifling, strangling, or undervaluing the discovery of the grand conspiracy. In short, as expressed by Dryden,

> 'Twas worse than plotting to suspect the Plot.

NOTE O, p. 832.—RICHARD GANLESSE.

It will be afterwards found that in the supposed Richard Ganlesse is first introduced into the story the detestable Edward Christian, a character with as few redeeming good qualities as the Author's too prolific pencil has ever attempted to draw. He is a mere creature of the imagination; and although he may receive some dignity of character from his talents, energy, and influence over others, he is, in other respects, a moral monster, since even his affection for his brother, and resentment of his death, are grounded on vindictive feelings, which scruple at no means, even the foulest, for their gratification. The Author will be readily believed when he affirms, that no original of the present times, or those which preceded them, has given the outline for a character so odious. The personage is a mere fancy-piece. In particular, the Author disclaims all allusion to a gentleman named Edward Christian, who actually existed during those troublesome times, was brother of William Christian, the Dempster, and died in prison in the Isle of Man. With this unfortunate gentleman the character in the novel has not the slightest connection, nor do the incidents of their lives in any respect agree. There existed, as already stated, an Edward Christian of the period, who was capable of very bad things, since he was a companion and associate of the robber Thomas Blood, and convicted along with him of a conspiracy against the celebrated Duke of Buckingham. This character was probably not unlike that of his namesake in the novel, at least the feats ascribed to him are *haud aliena a Scævolæ studiis*. But Mr. Christian of Unwin, if there existed a rogue of his name during that period of general corruption, has the more right to have him distinguished from his unfortunate relative, who died in prison before the period mentioned.

NOTE P, p. 834.—CUTLAR MACCULLOCH.

This alludes to a singular custom of the inhabitants of the northern coast of the Isle of Man, who used of old to eat the sodden meat before they supped the broth, lest, it is said, they should be deprived of the more substantial part of the meal, if they waited to eat it at the second course.

They account for this anomaly in the following manner:—About the commencement of the sixteenth century, the Earl of Derby, being a fiery young chief, fond of war and honour, made a furious inroad, with all his forces, into the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, and committed great ravages, still remembered in Manx song. Mr. Train, with his usual kindness, sent me the following literal translation of the verses:—

> There came Thomas Derby, born king,
> He it was who bore the golden crupper;
> There was not one lord in wide England itself,
> With so many vassals as he had.
> On Scottishmen he avenged himself,
> He went over to Kirkcudbright,
> And there made such havoc of houses,
> That some are uninhabitable to this day.
> Was not that fair in a youth,
> To avenge himself on his foe while he was so young,
> Before his beard had grown around his mouth,
> And to bring home his men in safety?

This incursion of the Earl with the Golden Crupper was severely revenged. The gentlemen of the name of MacCulloch, a clan then and now powerful in Galloway, had at their head, at the time, a chief of courage and activity named Cutlar MacCulloch. He was an excellent seaman, and speedily equipped a predatory flotilla, with which he made repeated descents on the northern shores of the Isle of Man, the dominions of the Earl of Derby, carrying off all that was not, in the Border phrase, too hot or too heavy.

The following is the deposition of John Macharistic concerning the losses he had suffered by this sea-king and his Galloway men. It is dated at Peel Castle:—'Taken by Collard MacCulloch and his men by wrongous spoilation, Twa box beddes, and aykin buides, i c lathe, a fedder bouster, a cote of Mailzie, a mete burde, two kystis, five barrels, a gyle-fat, xx pipes, twa gunys, three bolls of malt, a querne of rosate of vi stane, certain petes [peats], extending to i c load, viii bolls of threschit corn, xii unthraschin, and xl knowte.'—CHALLERSON, p. 47, edit. London, 1653.

This active rover rendered his name so formidable, that the custom of eating the meat before the broth was introduced by the islanders, whose festivities he often interrupted. They also remembered him in their prayers and graces; as,

> God keep the house and all within
> From Cut MacCulloch and his kin;

or, as I have heard it recited,

> God keep the good corn, and the sheep, and the bullock,
> From Satan, from sin, and from Cutlar MacCulloch.

It is said to have chanced, as the master of the house had uttered one of these popular benisons, that Cutlar in person entered the habitation with this reply:

> 'Gudeman, gudeman, ye pray too late,
> MacCulloch's ships are at the Yaite.'

The *Yaite* is a well-known landing-place on the north side of the Isle of Man.

This redoubted corsair is, I believe, now represented by the chief of the name, James MacCulloch, Esq., of Ardwall, the Author's friend and near connection.

NOTE Q, p. 835.—COLEMAN.

The unfortunate Coleman, executed for the Popish Plot, was secretary to the late Duchess of York, and had been a correspondent of the French king's confessor, Père la Chaise. Their correspondence was seized, and although the papers contained nothing to confirm the monstrous fictions of the accusers, yet there was a great deal to show that he and other zealous Catholics anxiously sought for and desired to find the means to bring back England to the faith of Rome. 'It is certain,' says Hume, 'that the restless and enterprising spirit of the Catholic Church, particularly of the Jesuits, merits attention, and is in some degree dangerous to every other communion. Such zeal of proselytism actuates that sect, that its missionaries have penetrated into every region of the globe, and in one sense there is a Popish Plot continually carrying on against all states, Protestant, Pagan, and Mahometan.'—*History of England*, vol. vii. p. 72, edit. 1797.

NOTE R, p 835.—GODFREY'S FUNERAL.

This solemnity is specially mentioned by North 'The crowd was prodigious, both at the procession and in and about the church, and so heated, that anything called Papist, were it a cat or a dog, had probably gone to pieces in a moment The Catholics all kept close in their houses and lodgings, thinking it a good compensation to be safe there, so far were they from acting violently at that time But there was all that which upheld among the common people an artificial fright, so that every one almost fancied a Popish knife just at his throat and at the sermon, beside the preacher, two thumping divines stood upright in the pulpit, to guard him from being killed, while he was preaching, by the Papists I did not see this spectre, but was credibly told by some that affirmed that they did see it, and I never met with any that did contradict it A most portentous spectacle, sure three parsons in one pulpit! Enough of itself, on a less occasion, to excite terror in the audience The like, I guess was never seen before, and probably will never be seen again, and it had not been so now, as is most evident but for some stratagem founded upon the impetuosity of the mob —*Examen* p 104

It may be however remarked that the singular circumstance of Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey, the justice before whom Oates had made his deposition, being found murdered, was the incident upon which most men relied as complete proof of the existence of the Plot As he was believed to have lost his life by the Papists for having taken Oates's deposition, the panic spread with inconceivable rapidity, and every species of horror was apprehended —every report, the more absurd the better eagerly listened to and believed Whether this unfortunate gentleman lost his life by Papist or Protestant by private enemies or by his own hand (for he was a low spirited and melancholy man), will probably never be discovered

NOTE S, p 856.—FIRST CHECK TO THE PLOT

The first check received by Doctor Oates and his colleagues in the task of supporting the Plot by their testimony was in this manner —After a good deal of prevarication the prime witness at length made a direct charge against Sir George Wakeman the queen's physician of an attempt to poison the king and even connected the queen with this accusation, whom he represented as Wakeman's accomplice This last piece of effrontery recalled the king to some generous sentiments 'The villains' said Charles 'think I am tired of my wife but they shall find I will not permit an innocent woman to be persecuted' Scroggs the Lord Chief Justice, accordingly received instruction to be favourable to the accused and for the first time he was so Wakeman was acquitted but thought it more for his safety to retire abroad His acquittal, however, indicated a turn of the tide which had so long set in favour of the Plot and of the witnesses by whom it had hitherto been supported

NOTE T, p 863.—EMPLOYMENT OF ASSASSINS IN ENGLAND

It was the unworthy distinction of men of wit and honour about town, to revenge their own quarrels with inferior persons by the hands of bravoes Even in the days of chivalry, the knights, as may be learned from Don Quixote, turned over to the chastisement of their squires such adversaries as were not dubbed, and thus it was not unusual for men of quality, in Charles II's time, to avenge their wrongs by means of private assassination Rochester writes composedly concerning a satire imputed to Dryden, but in reality composed by Mulgrave 'If he falls upon me with the blunt, which is his very good weapon in wit, I will forgive him, if you please, and leave the repartee to Black Will with a cudgel And, in conformity with this cowardly and brutal intimation, that distinguished poet was waylaid and beaten severely in Rose Street, Covent Garden, by ruffians who could not be discovered, but whom all concluded to be the agents of Rochester's mean revenge.

NOTE U, p. 863.—EARL OF ARLINGTON.

Bennet, Earl of Arlington, was one of Charles's most attached courtiers during his exile. After the Restoration he was employed in the ministry, and the name of Bennet supplies its initial B to the celebrated word Cabal, but the king was supposed to have lost respect for him and several persons at court took the liberty to mimic his person and behaviour, which was stiff and formal. Thus it was a common jest for some courtier to put a black patch on his nose, and strut about with a white staff in his hand, to make the king merry But, notwithstanding, he retained his office of Lord Chamberlain and his seat in the Privy Council till his death in 1685

NOTE V, p 865.—LETTER FROM THE DEAD TO THE LIVING

The application of the very respectable old English name of Jerningham to the valet de chambre of the Duke of Buckingham, has proved of force sufficient to wake the resentment of the dead, who had in early days won that illustrious surname,—for the Author received by post the following expostulation on the subject —

To the learned Clerk and Worshipful Knight, Sir Walter Scott give these

'Mye mortal frame has long since mouldered into dust, and the young saplinge that was planted on the daye of mye funeral is now a doddered oak, standinge hard bye the mansion of the familie The windes doe whistle thro its leaves moaninge among its moss covered branches, and awakeninge in the soules of my descendants, that pensive melancholy which leads back to the contemplating those that are gone!—I who was once the courtly dame, that held high revelry in these gaye bowers, am now light as the blast!

If I essaye from vain affection to make my name be thought of by producing the noise of rustlinge silkes, or the slow tread of a midnight foot along the chapel floor, alas! I only scare the simple maidens, and my wearie efforts (how wearie none alive can tell) are derided and jeered at by my knightlie descendants Once, indeed—but it boots not to burthen your ear with this particular, nor why I am still doomed and hang between earth and heaven! Know only that I still walk this place (as mye playmate, your great grandmother did hers) I sit in my wonted chair, tho now it stands in a dusty garret I frequent my ladye's room and I have hushed her wailinge babes when all the cunning of the nurse has failed I sat at the window where sorrowing a succession of honorable dames have presided their daye and are passed away! But in the change that centuries brought honour and truth have remained, and as liberty to King Henry's eldest daughter as true subjects to her successor, as faithful followers of the unfortunate Charles and his persecuted, and as loyal and attached servants of the present royal stock, the name of *Jerningham* has ever remained unsullied in honor, and uncontaminated in aught unbefitting its ancient knightlie origin You, noble and learned sir whose quill is as the trumpet arousinge the slumberinge soule to feelings of loftie chivalrie —you Sir Knight who feel and doe honor to your noble lineage, wherefore did you say, in your chronicle of the brave knight, Peveril of the Peake, that my Lord of Buckingham's servaunte was a Jerningham!! a vile varlet to a viler noble! Many honorable families have indeed shot and spread from the parent stock into wilde entangled mazes, and reached perchance beyond the confines of gentle blood but it so pleased Providence, that mye worshipful husband, good Sir Harry's line, has flowed in one confined, but clear deep stream, down to my well beloued son, the present Sir George Jerningham (by just claim Lorde Stafforde) and if any of your courtly ancestors that hover round your bed, could speak, they would tell you that the Duke's valet was not Jerningham, but Sayer or Sims —Act as you shall think mete hereon, but defend the honored names of those whose champion you so well deserve to be

'J JERNINGHAM'

Having no mode of knowing how to reply to this ancient dignitary, I am compelled to lay the blame of any error upon wicked example, which has misled me and to plead that I should never have been guilty of so great a misnomer, but for the authority of one Oliver Goldsmith, who, in an elegant dialogue between the Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs, makes the former assure Miss Skeggs as a fact, that the next morning my lord called out three times to his valet-de-chambre, 'Jernigan, Jernigan, Jernigan! bring me my garters!' Some inaccurate recollection of this passage has occasioned the offence rendered, for which I make this imperfect yet respectful apology.

NOTE W, p. 884.—SILK ARMOUR.

Roger North gives us a ridiculous description of these warlike habiliments, when talking of the Whig Club in Fuller's Rents: 'The conversation and ordinary discourse of the club was chiefly on the subject of bravery in defending the cause of liberty and property, and what every Protestant Englishman ought to venture and do, rather than be overrun with Popery and slavery. There was much recommendation of silk armour, and the prudence of being provided with it, against the time that Protestants were to be massacred; and accordingly there were abundance of these silken backs, breasts, and pots [*i.e.* head-pieces], made and sold, which were pretended to be pistol-proof, in which any man dressed up was as safe as in a house; for it was impossible any one could go to strike him for laughing, so ridiculous was the figure, as they say, of hogs in armour—an image of derision insensible but to the view, as I have had it [viz. that none can imagine without seeing it as I have]. This was armour of defence, but our sparks were not altogether so tame as to carry their provisions no farther; for truly they intended to be assailants upon fair occasion, and had for that end recommended to them a certain pocket weapon, which, for its design and efficacy, had the honour to be called a Protestant flail. It was for street and crowd work, and the instrument, lurking *perdue* in a coat-pocket, might readily sally out to execution, and by clearing a great hall, piazza, or so, carry an election, by a choice way of polling called "knocking down." The handle resembled a farrier's blood-stick, and the fall was joined to the end by a strong nervous ligature, that in its swing fell short of the hand, and was made of *lignum-vitæ*, or rather, as the poet termed it, *mortis*.'—*Examen*, p. 173.

This last weapon will remind the reader of the blood-stick so cruelly used, as was alleged, in a murder committed in England some years ago, and for a participation in which two persons were tried and acquitted at the assizes of autumn, 1830.

NOTE X, p. 890.—JEFFREY HUDSON.

Geoffrey or Jeffrey Hudson is often mentioned in anecdotes of Charles I.'s time. His first appearance at court was his being presented, as mentioned in the text, in a pie at an entertainment given by the Duke of Buckingham to Charles I. and Henrietta Maria. Upon the same occasion, the duke presented the tenant of the pasty to the queen, who retained him as her page. When about eight years of age, he was but eighteen or twenty inches high; and remained stationary at that stature till he was thirty years old, when he grew to the height of three feet nine inches, and there stopped.

This singular *lusus naturæ* was trusted in some negotiations of consequence. He went to France to fetch over a midwife to his mistress, Henrietta Maria. On his return, he was taken by Dunkirk privateers, when he lost many valuable presents sent to the queen from France, and about £2500 of his own. Sir William Davenant makes a real or supposed combat between the dwarf and a turkey-cock, the subject of a poem called Jeffreidos. The scene is laid at Dunkirk, where, as the satire concludes—

> Jeffrey strait was thrown, when, faint and weak,
> The cruel fowl assaults him with his beak.
> A lady midwife now he there by chance
> Espied, that came along with him from France.
>
> 'A heart brought up in war, that ne'er before
> This time could bow,' he said, 'doth now implore
> Thou that *delivered* hast so many, be
> So kind of nature as deliver me.'

We are not acquainted how far Jeffrey resented this lampoon. But we are assured he was a consequential personage, and endured with little temper the teasing of the domestics and courtiers, and had many squabbles with the king's gigantic porter.

The fatal duel with Mr. Crofts actually took place, as mentioned in the text. It happened in France. The poor dwarf had also the misfortune to be taken prisoner by a Turkish pirate. He was, however, probably soon set at liberty, for Hudson was a captain for the king during the Civil War. In 1644, the dwarf attended his royal mistress to France. The Restoration recalled him, with other Royalists, to England. But this poor being, who received, it would seem, hard measure both from nature and fortune, was not doomed to close his days in peace. Poor Jeffrey, upon [illegible] suspicion respecting the Popish Plot, was taken up in [illegible], and confined in the Gatehouse Prison, Westminster, where he ended his life in the sixty-third year of his age.

Jeffrey Hudson has been immortalized by the brush of Vandyke, and his clothes are said to be preserved as articles of curiosity in Sir John Sloan's Museum, London.

NOTE Y, p. 906.—COLONEL BLOOD'S NARRATIVE.

Of Blood's Narrative, Roger North takes the following notice:—'There was another sham plot of one Netterville. ——And here the good Colonel Blood, that stole the Duke of Ormond, and, if a timely rescue had not come in, had hanged him at Tyburn, and afterwards stole the crown, though he was not so happy as to carry it off; no player at small games, he, even he, the virtuous colonel, as this sham plot says, was to have been destroyed by the Papists. It seems these Papists would let no eminent Protestant be safe. But some amends were made to the colonel by sale of the narrative licensed Thomas Blood. It would have been strange if so much mischief were stirring, and he had not come in for a snack.'—*Examen*, edit. 1711, p. 311.

NOTE Z, p. 915.—COLONEL BLOOD.

The conspirator Blood even fought or made his way into good society, and sat at good men's feasts. Evelyn's Diary bears, 10th May 1671,—'Dined at Mr. Treasurer's, where dined Monsieur de Grammont and several French noblemen, and one Blood, that impudent, bold fellow, that had not long ago attempted to steal the imperial crown itself out of the Tower, pretending curiosity of seeing the Regalia, when, stabbing the keeper, though not mortally, he boldly went away with it through all the guards, taken only by the accident of his horse falling down. How he came to be pardoned, and even received into favour, not only after this, but several other exploits almost as daring, both in Ireland and here, I could never come to understand. Some believed he became a spy of several parties, being well with the sectaries and enthusiasts, and did his Majesty service that way, which none alive could do so well as he. But it was certainly, as the boldest attempt, so the only treason of the sort that was ever pardoned. The man had not only a daring, but a villanous unmerciful look, a false countenance, but very well spoken and dangerously insinuating.'—EVELYN'S *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 413.

This is one of the many occasions on which we might make curious remarks on the disregard of our forefathers for appearances, even in the regulation of society. What should we think of a Lord of the Treasury, who, to make up a party of French nobles and English gentlemen of condition, should invite as a guest Barrington or Major Semple, or any well-known *chevalier d'industrie*? Yet Evelyn does not seem to have been shocked at the man being brought into society, but only at his remaining unhanged.

NOTE AA, p. 937.—THE SHERIFFS.

It can hardly be forgotten that one of the great difficulties of Charles II.'s reign was to obtain for the crown the power of choosing the sheriffs of London. Roger North gives a lively account of his brother, Sir Dudley North, who agreed to serve for the court. 'I omit the share he had in composing the tumults about burning the Pope, because that is accounted for in the *Examen*, and the Life of the Lord Keeper North. Neither is there occasion to say anything of the rise and discovery of the Rye Plot, for the same reason. Nor is my subject much concerned with this latter, further than that the conspirators had taken especial care of Sir Dudley North. For he was one of those who, if they had succeeded, was to have been knocked on the head, and his skin to be stuffed, and hung up in Guildhall. But, all that apart, he reckoned it a great unhappiness, that so many trials for high treason, and executions, should happen in his year. However, in these affairs, the sheriffs were passive; for all returns of panels, and other despatches of the law, were issued and done by under officers; which was a fair screen for them. They attended at the trials and executions, to coerce the crowds, and keep order, which was enough for them to do. I have heard Sir Dudley North say, that, striking with his cane he wondered to see what blows his countrymen would take upon their bare heads, and never look up at it. And indeed, nothing can match the zeal of the common people to see executions. The worst grievance was the [illegible]

tioner coming to him for orders, touching the absconded members, and to know where to dispose of them. Once, while he was abroad, a cart, with some of them, came into the court-yard of his house, and frighted his lady almost out of her wits, and she could never be reconciled to the dog hangman's saying he came to speak with his master. These are inconveniences that attend the stations of public magistracy, and are necessary to be borne with, as magistracy itself is necessary. I have now no more to say of any incidents during the shrievalty, but that, at the year's end, he delivered up his charges to his successors in like manner as he had received them from his predecessor, and, having reinstated his family, he lived well and easy at his own house, as he did before these disturbances put him out of order.

NOTE BB, p. 947.—HISTORY OF COLONEL BLOOD.

This person, who was capable of framing and carrying into execution the most desperate enterprises, was one of those extraordinary characters, who can only arise amid the bloodshed, confusion, destruction of morality, and wide-spreading violence which take place during civil war. We cannot, perhaps, enter upon a subject more extraordinary or entertaining than the history of this notorious desperado, who exhibited all the elements of a most accomplished ruffian. As the account of these adventures is scattered in various and scarce publications, it will probably be a service to the reader to bring the most remarkable of them under his eye, in a simultaneous point of view.

Blood's father is reported to have been a blacksmith, but this was only a disparaging mode of describing a person who had a concern in iron works, and had thus acquired independence. He entered early in life into the Civil War, served as a lieutenant in the Parliament forces, and was put by Henry Cromwell, Lord Deputy of Ireland, into the commission of the peace when he was scarcely two-and-twenty. This outset in life decided his political party for ever, and his very unfit the principles of such a man rendered him for the society of those who professed a rigidity of religion and morals, so useful was Blood's rapidity of invention, and so well was he known that he was held capable of framing with sagacity and conduct, and with skill, the most desperate undertakings, and in a turbulent time was allowed to associate with the nonjurors, who affected a peculiar austerity of conduct and sentiments. In 1663 the Act of Settlement in Ireland, and the proceedings thereupon, affected Blood deeply in his fortune, and from that moment he appears to have nourished the most inveterate hatred to the Duke of Ormond, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whom he considered as the author of the measures under which he suffered. There were at this time many malcontents of the same party with himself, so that Lieutenant Blood, as the most daring among them, was able to put himself at the head of a conspiracy which had for its purpose the exciting a general insurrection, and, as a preliminary step, the surprising of the Castle of Dublin. The means proposed for the last purpose, which was to be the prelude to the rising, augured the desperation of the person by whom it was contrived, and yet might probably have succeeded, from its very boldness. A declaration was drawn up by the hand of Blood himself, calling upon all persons to take arms for the liberty of the subject, and the restoration of the Solemn League and Covenant. For the surprise of the castle, it was provided that several persons with petitions in their hands, were to wait within the walls, as if they stayed to present them to the Lord Lieutenant, while about fourscore of the old daring disbanded soldiers were to remain on the outside, dressed like carpenters, smiths, shoemakers, and other ordinary mechanics. As soon as the Lord Lieutenant went in, a baker was to pass by the main guard with a large basket of white bread on his back. By making a false step, he was to throw down his burden, which might create a scramble among the soldiers, and offer the fourscore men before mentioned an opportunity of disarming them, while the others with petitions in their hands secured all within, and, being once master of the castle and the Duke of Ormond's person, they were to publish their declaration. But some of the principal conspirators were apprehended about twelve hours before the time appointed for the execution of the design, in which no less than seven members of the House of Commons (for the Parliament of Ireland was then sitting) were concerned. Leckie, a minister, the brother-in-law of Blood, was with several others tried, condemned, and executed. Blood effected his escape, but was still so much the object of public apprehension, that a rumour having arisen during Leckie's execution, that Major Blood was at hand with a party to rescue the prisoner, every one of the guards, and the executioner himself, shifted for themselves, leaving Leckie, with the halter about his neck, standing alone under the gallows; but as no rescue appeared, the sheriff's officers returned to their duty, and the criminal was executed. Meantime Blood retired among the mountains of Ireland, where he herded alternately with fanatics and Papists, provided only they were discontented with the government. There were few persons better acquainted with the intrigues of the time than this active partisan, who was alternately Quaker, Anabaptist, or Catholic, but always a rebel and revolutionist. He shifted from place to place, and from kingdom to kingdom, became known to the Admiral de Ruyter, and was the soul of every desperate plot.

In particular, about 1665, Mr. Blood was one of a revolutionary committee, or secret council, which continued its sittings, notwithstanding that government knew of its meetings. For their security they had about thirty stout fellows posted around the place where they met, in the nature of a *corps de garde*. It fell out, that two of the members of the council, to save themselves, and perhaps for the sake of a reward, betrayed all their transactions to the ministry, which Mr. Blood soon suspected, and in a short time got to the bottom of the whole affair. He appointed these two persons to meet him at a tavern in the city, where he had his guard ready, who secured them without any noise, and carried them to a private place provided for the purpose, where he called a kind of court-martial, before whom they were tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be shot two days after in the same place. When the time appointed came they were brought out, and all the necessary preparations made for putting the sentence in execution, and the poor men seeing no hopes of escape, disposed themselves to suffer as well as they could. At this critical juncture Mr. Blood was graciously pleased to grant them his pardon, and at the same time advised them to go to their new master, tell him all that had happened, and request him in the name of their old confederates to be as favourable to such of them as should at any time stand in need of his mercy. Whether these unfortunate people carried Mr. Blood's message to the king, does not anywhere appear. It is, however, certain, that not long after the whole conspiracy was discovered, in consequence of which on the 26th of April 1666, Colonel John Rathbone and some other officers of the late disbanded army were tried and convicted at the Old Bailey for a plot to surprise the Tower, and to kill General Monk.

After his concern with this desperate conclave, who were chiefly fanatics and Fifth Monarchy men, Blood exchanged the scene for Scotland, where he mingled among the Cameronians, and must have been a most acceptable associate to John Balfour of Burley, or any other who joined the insurgents more out of spleen or desire of plunder than from religious motives. The writers of the sect seem to have thought his name a discredit, or perhaps did not know it; nevertheless, it is affirmed in a pamphlet written by a person who seems to have been well acquainted with the incidents of his life, that he shared the dangers of the defeat at Pentland Hills, 27th November 1666, in which the Cameronians were totally routed. After the engagement he found his way again to Ireland, but was hunted out of Ulster by Lord Dungannon, who pursued him very closely. On his return to England he made himself again notorious by an exploit, of which the very singular particulars are contained in the pamphlet already mentioned.* The narrative runs as follows:—"Among the persons apprehended for the late fanatic conspiracy, was one Captain Mason, a person for whom Mr. Blood had a particular affection and friendship. This person was to be removed from London to one of the northern counties, in order to his trial at the assizes; and to that intent was sent down with eight of the duke's troop to guard him, being reckoned to be a person bold and courageous. Mr. Blood having notice of this journey, resolves by the way to rescue his friend. The prisoner and his guard went away in the morning, and Mr. Blood, having made choice of three more of his acquaintance, set forward the same day, at night, without boots, upon small horses, and their pistols in their trousers to prevent suspicion. But opportunities are not so easily had, neither were the places convenient, so that the convoy and their prisoner were gone a good way beyond Newark, before Mr. Blood and his friends had any scent of the prisoner. At one place, they set a sentinel to watch his coming by;

* Remarks on the Life of the famed Mr. 1680, Folio.

whether it was out of fear, or that the person was tired with a tedious expectation, the sentinel brought them no tidings either of the prisoner or his guard, insomuch that Mr. Blood and his companions began to think their friend so far before them upon the road that it would be in vain to follow him. Yet not willing to give over an enterprise so generously undertaken, upon Mr. Blood's encouragement, they rode on, though despairing of success, till, finding it grow towards evening, and meeting with a convenient inn upon the road, in a small village not far from Doncaster, they resolved to lie there all night, and return for London the next morning. In that inn they had not sat long in a room next the street, condoling among themselves the ill success of such a tedious journey, and the misfortune of their friend, before the convoy came thundering up to the door of the said inn with their prisoner, Captain Mason having made choice of that inn, as being the best known to him, to give his guardians the refreshment of a dozen of drink. There Mr. Blood, unseen, had a full view of his friend, and of the persons he had to deal with. He had bespoke a small supper, which was at the fire, so that he had but very little time for consultation, finding that Captain Mason's party did not intend to alight. On this account he only gave general directions to his associates to follow his example in whatever they saw him do. In haste, therefore, they called for their horses, and threw down their money for their reckoning, telling the woman of the house that, since they had met with such good company, they were resolved to go forward. Captain Mason went off first upon a sorry beast, and with him the commander of the party, and four more; the rest stayed behind to make an end of their liquor. Then away marched one more single, and in a very small time after, the last two. By this time Mr. Blood and one of his friends being horsed, followed the two that were hindmost, and soon overtook them. These four rode some little time together, Mr. Blood on the right hand of the two soldiers, and his friend on the left. But upon a sudden, Mr. Blood laid hold of the reins of the horse next him, while his friend, in observation to his directions, did the same on the other hand; and having presently by surprise dismounted the soldiers, pulled off their bridles, and sent their horses to pick their grass where they pleased. These two being thus made sure of, Mr. Blood pursues his game, intending to have reached the single trooper; but he being got to the rest of his fellows, now reduced to six, and a barber of York, that travelled in their company, Mr. Blood made up, heads the whole party, and stops them, of which some of the foremost, looking upon him to be either drunk or mad, thought the rebuke of a switch to be a sufficient chastisement of such a rash presumption, which they exercised with more contempt than fury, till, by the rudeness of his compliments in return, he gave them to understand he was not in jest, but in very good earnest. He was soon seconded by his friend that was with him in his first exploit; but there had been several rough blows dealt between the unequal number of six to two, before Mr. Blood's two other friends came up to their assistance; nay, I may safely say six to two; for the barber of York, whether out of his natural propensity to the sport, or that his pot-valiantness had made him so generous as to help his fellow-travellers, would needs show his valour at the beginning of the fray; but better had he been at the latter end of a feast; for though he showed his prudence to take the stronger side, as he guessed by the number, yet because he would take no warning, which was often given him, not to put himself to the hazard of losing a guitar-finger by meddling in a business that nothing concerned him, he lost his life, as they were forced to despatch him, in the first place, for giving them a needless trouble. The barber being become an useless instrument, and the other of Mr. Blood's friends being come up, the skirmish began to be very smart, the four assailants having singled out their champions as fairly and equally as they could. All this while, Captain Mason, being rode before upon his thirty-shilling steed, wondering his guard came not with him, looked back, and observing a combustion, and that they were altogether by the ears, knew not what to think. He conjectured it at first to have been some intrigue upon him, as if the troopers had a design to tempt him to an escape, which might afterwards prove more to his prejudice; just like cats, that, with regardless scorn, seem [to] give the distressed mouse all the liberty in the world [to ge]t away out of their paws, but soon recover their prey again at one jump. Thereupon, unwilling to undergo the hazard of such a trial, he comes back, at which time Mr. Blood cried out to him, 'Horse, horse, quickly!' an alarm so amazing at first, that he could not believe it to be his friend's voice when he heard it; but as the thoughts of military men are soon summoned together, and never hold Spanish councils, the captain presently settled his resolution, mounts the next horse that wanted a rider, and puts it in for a share of his own self-preservation. In this bloody conflict, Mr. Blood was three times unhorsed, occasioned by his forgetfulness, as having omitted to new girt his saddle, which the ostler had unloosed upon the wadding at his first coming into the inn. Being, then, so often dismounted, and not knowing the reason, which the occasion would not give him leave to consider, he resolved to fight it out on foot; of which two of the soldiers taking the advantage, singled him out, and drove him into a court-yard, where he made a stand with a full body, his sword in one hand, and his pistol in the other. One of the soldiers taking that advantage of his open body, shot him near the shoulder-blade of his pistol-arm, at which time he had four other bullets in his body that he had received before; which the soldier observing, flung his discharged pistol at him with that good aim and violence, that he hit him a stunning blow just under the forehead, upon the upper part of the nose between the eyes, which for the present so amazed him, that he gave himself over for a dead man; yet resolving to give one sparring blow before he expired, such is the strange provocation and success of despair, with one vigorous stroke of his sword he brought his adversary with a vengeance from his horse, and laid him in a far worse condition than himself at his horse's feet. At that time, full of anger and revenge, he was just going to make an end of his conquest, by giving him the fatal stab, but that in the very nick of time, Captain Mason, having, by the help of his friends, done his business where they had fought, by the death of some, and the disabling of others that opposed them, came in, and bid him hold and spare the life of one that had been the civilest person to him upon the road—a fortunate piece of kindness in the one, and of gratitude in the other; which Mr. Blood easily condescending to, by the joint assistance of the captain, the other soldier was soon mastered, and the victory, after a sharp fight, that lasted above two hours, was at length completed. You may be sure the fight was well maintained on both sides, while two of the soldiers, besides the barber, were slain upon the place, three unhorsed, and the rest wounded. And it was observable, that though the encounter happened in a village, where a great number of people were spectators of the combat, yet none would adventure the rescue of either party, as not knowing which was in the wrong, or which in the right, and were therefore wary of being arbitrators in such a desperate contest, where they saw the reward of assistance to be nothing but present death. After the combat was over, Mr. Blood and his friends divided themselves, and parted several ways.'

Before he had engaged in this adventure, Blood had placed his wife and son in an apothecary's shop at Rumford, under the name of Weston. He himself afterwards affected to practise as a physician under that of Ayliffe, under which guise he remained concealed until his wounds were cured, and the hue and cry against him and his accomplices was somewhat abated.

In the meantime, this extraordinary man, whose spirits toiled in framing the most daring enterprises, had devised a plot which, as it respected the person at whom it was aimed, was of a much more ambitious character than that for the delivery of Mason. It had for its object the seizure of the person of the Duke of Ormond, his ancient enemy, in the streets of London. In this some have thought he only meant to gratify his resentment, while others suppose that he might hope to extort some important advantages by detaining his Grace in his hands as a prisoner. The duke's historian, Carte, gives the following account of this extraordinary enterprise:—'The Prince of Orange came this year (1670) into England, and being invited, on Dec. 6, to an entertainment in the city of London, his Grace attended him thither. As he was returning homewards in a dark night, and going up St. James's Street, at the end of which, facing the palace, stood Clarendon House, where he then lived, he was attacked by Blood and five of his accomplices. The duke always used to go attended with six footmen; but as they were too heavy a load to ride upon a coach, he always had iron spikes behind it to keep them from getting up; and continued the practice to his dying day, even after this attempt of assassination. These six footmen used to walk on both sides of the street, over against the coach; but by some contrivance or other, they were all stopped and out of the way, when the duke was taken out of his coach by Blood and his son, and mounted on horseback, behind one of the horsemen in his company. The coachman drove on to Clarendon House, and told the porter that the duke had been seized by two men, who had carried him down Pickadilly. The porter immediately

ran that way, and Mr. James Clarke chancing to be at that time in the court of the house, followed with all possible haste, having first alarmed the family, and ordered the servants to come after him as fast as they could. Blood, it seems, either to gratify the humour of his patron, who had set him upon this work, or to glut his own revenge by putting his Grace to the same ignominious death which his accomplices in the treasonable design upon Dublin Castle had suffered, had taken a strong fancy into his head to hang the duke at Tyburn. Nothing could have saved his Grace's life, but that extravagant imagination and passion of the villain, who, leaving the duke mounted and buckled to one of his comrades, rode on before, and (as is said) actually tied a rope to the gallows, and then rode back to see what was become of his accomplices, whom he met riding off in a great hurry. The horseman to whom the duke was tied was a person of great strength, but, being embarrassed by his Grace's struggling, could not advance as fast as he desired. He was, however, got a good way beyond Berkeley (now Devonshire) House, towards Knightsbridge, when the duke, having got his foot under the man's, unhorsed him, and they both fell down together in the mud, where they were struggling, when the porter and Mr Clarke came up. The villain then disengaged himself, and seeing the neighbourhood alarmed, and numbers of people running towards them, got on horseback, and having, with one of his comrades, fired their pistols at the duke (but missed him, as taking their aim in the dark, and in a hurry), rode off as fast as they could to save themselves. The duke (now sixty years of age) was quite spent with struggling, so that when Mr Clarke and the porter came up they knew him rather by feeling his star, than by any sound of voice he could utter, and they were forced to carry him home and lay him on a bed to recover his spirits. He received some wounds and bruises in the struggle, which confined him within doors for some days. The king, when he heard of this intended assassination of the Duke of Ormond, expressed a great resentment on that occasion, and issued out a proclamation for the discovery and apprehension of the miscreants concerned in the attempt.'

Blood, however, lay concealed, and, with his usual success, escaped apprehension. While thus lurking he entertained and digested an exploit evincing the same atrocity which had characterized the undertakings he had formerly been engaged in; there was also to be traced in his new device something of that peculiar disposition which inclined him to be desirous of adding to the murder of the Duke of Ormond the singular infamy of putting him to death at Tyburn. With something of the same spirit, he now resolved to show his contempt of monarchy and all its symbols, by stealing the crown, sceptre, and other articles of the regalia out of the office in which they were deposited, and enriching himself and his needy associates with the produce of the spoils. This feat, by which Blood is now chiefly remembered, is like all his transactions, marked with a daring strain of courage and duplicity, and, like most of his undertakings, was very likely to have proved successful. John Bayley, Esq., in his *History and Antiquities of the Tower of London*, gives the following distinct account of this curious exploit. At this period, Sir Gilbert Talbot was Keeper, as it was called, of the Jewel House.

'It was soon after the appointment of Sir Gilbert Talbot that the regalia in the Tower first became objects of public inspection, which King Charles allowed in consequence of the reduction in the emoluments of the master's office. The profits which arose from showing the jewels to strangers, Sir Gilbert assigned in lieu of a salary to the person whom he had appointed to the care of them. This was an old confidential servant of his father's, one Talbot Edwards, whose name is handed down to posterity as keeper of the regalia, when the notorious attempt to steal the crown was made in the year 1673, the following account of which is chiefly derived from a relation which Mr. Edwards himself made of the transaction.

'About three weeks before this audacious villain Blood made his attempt upon the crown, he came to the Tower in the habit of a parson, with a long cloak, cassock, and canonical girdle, accompanied by a woman, whom he called his wife. They desired to see the regalia, and, just as their wishes had been gratified, the lady feigned sudden indisposition; this called forth the kind offices of Mrs Edwards, the keeper's wife, who, having courteously invited her into their house to repose herself, she soon recovered, and on their departure, professed themselves thankful for this civility. A few days after, Blood came again, bringing a present to Mrs Edwards, of four pairs of white gloves from his pretended wife; and having thus begun the acquaintance, they made frequent visits to improve it. After a short respite of their compliments, the disguised ruffian returned again, and in conversation with Mrs. Edwards, said that his wife could discourse of nothing but the kindness of those good people in the Tower—that she had long studied, and at length bethought herself of a handsome way of requital. You have, quoth he, a pretty young gentlewoman for your daughter, and I have a young nephew, who has two or three hundred a year in land, and is at my disposal. If your daughter be free, and you approve it, I'll bring him here to see her, and we will endeavour to make it a match. This was easily assented to by old Mr Edwards, who invited the parson to dine with him on that day; he readily accepted the invitation and, taking upon him to say grace, performed it with great seeming devotion, and, casting up his eyes, concluded it with a prayer for the king, queen, and royal family. After dinner, he went up to see the rooms, and observing a handsome case of pistols hang there, expressed a great desire to buy them, to present to a young lord, who was his neighbour; a pretence by which he thought of disarming the house against the period intended for the execution of his design. At his departure, which was a canonical benediction of the good company, he appointed a day and hour to bring his nephew to see his mistress, which was the very day that he made his daring attempt. The good old gentleman had got up ready to receive his guest, and the daughter was in her best dress to entertain her expected lover; when, behold, Parson Blood, with three more came to the Jewel House, all armed with rapier blades in their canes, and every one a dagger, and a brace of pocket pistols. Two of his companions entered in with him, on pretence of seeing the crown, and the third stood at the door, as if to look after the young lady, a jewel of a more charming description, but in reality as a watch. The daughter, who thought it not modest to come down till she was called, sent the maid to take a view of the company, and bring a description of her gallant; and the servant, conceiving that he was the intended bridegroom who stood at the door, being the youngest of the party, returned to soothe the anxiety of her young mistress with the idea she had formed of his person. Blood told Mr Edwards that they would not go up stairs till his wife came, and desired him to show his friends the crown to pass the time till then; and they had no sooner entered the room, and the door, as usual, shut, than a cloak was thrown over the old man's head, and a gag put in his mouth. Thus secured, they told him that their resolution was to have the crown, globe, and sceptre; and if he would quietly submit to it, they would spare his life; otherwise he was to expect no mercy. He thereupon endeavoured to make all the noise he possibly could, to be heard above; they then knocked him down with a wooden mallet, and told him that if yet he would lie quietly, they would spare his life; but if not, upon his next attempt to discover them, they would kill him. Mr Edwards, however, according to his own account, was not intimidated by this threat, but strained himself to make the greater noise, and in consequence, received several more blows on the head with the mallet, and was stabbed in the belly; this again brought the poor old man to the ground, where he lay for some time in so senseless a state, that one of the villains pronounced him dead. Edwards had come a little to himself, and hearing this, lay quietly, conceiving it best to be thought so. The booty was now to be disposed of, and one of them, named Parrot, secreted the orb. Blood held the crown under his cloak, and the third was about to file the sceptre in two, in order that it might be placed in a bag brought for that purpose; but, fortunately, the son of Mr Edwards, who had been in Flanders with Sir John Talbot, and on his landing in England, had obtained leave to come away post to visit his father, happened to arrive whilst this scene was acting; and on coming to the door, the person that stood sentinel asked with whom he would speak; to which he answered, that he belonged to the house; and perceiving the person to be a stranger, told him that if he had any business with his father, that he would acquaint him with it, and so hastened up stairs to salute his friends. This unexpected accident spread confusion amongst the party, and they instantly decamped with the crown and orb, leaving the sceptre yet unfiled. The aged keeper now raised himself upon his legs, for[illegible] the gag from his mouth, and cried, "Treason, murde[illegible] which being heard by his daughter, who was, per[illegible] anxiously expecting far other sounds, ran out and [illegible]ated the cry. The alarm now became general, a[illegible] Edwards and his brother-in-law, Captain Beck[illegible] after the conspirators, whom a warder put himself in [illegible] position to stop, but Blood discharged a pistol at him, and he fell, although unhurt, and the thieves proceeded safely to the next post, where one Sill, who had been a soldier

under Cromwell, stood sentinel; but he offered no opposition, and they accordingly passed the drawbridge. Horses were waiting for them at St. Catherine's Gate; and as they ran that way along the Tower wharf, they themselves cried out, "Stop the rogues!" by which they passed on unsuspected, till Captain Beckman overtook them. At his head Blood fired another pistol, but missed him and was seized. Under the cloak of this daring villain was found the crown, and although he saw himself a prisoner, he had yet the impudence to struggle for his prey; and when it was finally wrested from him, said, "It was a gallant attempt, however unsuccessful; it was for a crown!" Parrot, who had formerly served under General Harrison, was also taken; but Hunt, Blood's son-in-law, reached his horse and rode off, as did two other of the thieves; but he was soon afterwards stopped, and likewise committed to custody. In this struggle and confusion, the great pearl, a large diamond, and several smaller stones, were lost from the crown; but the two former, and some of the latter, were afterwards found and restored; and the Ballas ruby, broken off the sceptre, being found in Parrot's pocket, nothing considerable was eventually missing.

'As soon as the prisoners were secured, young Edwards hastened to Sir Gilbert Talbot, who was then master and treasurer of the Jewel House, and gave him an account of the transaction. Sir Gilbert instantly went to the king, and acquainted his majesty with it; and his majesty commanded him to proceed forthwith to the Tower, to see how matters stood; to take the examination of Blood and the others; and to return and report it to him. Sir Gilbert accordingly went; but the king in the meantime was persuaded by some about him, to hear the examination himself, and the prisoners were in consequence sent for to Whitehall; a circumstance which is supposed to have saved these daring wretches from the gallows.'

On his examination under such an atrocious charge, Blood audaciously replied, 'That he would never betray an associate, or defend himself at the expense of uttering a falsehood.' He even averred, perhaps, more than was true against himself, when he confessed that he had lain concealed among the reeds for the purpose of killing the king with a carabine, while Charles was bathing; but he pretended that on this occasion his purpose was disconcerted by a secret awe—appearing to verify the allegation in Shakespeare, 'There's such divinity doth hedge a king, that treason can but peep to what it would, acts little of its will.' To this story, true or false, Blood added a declaration that he was at the head of a numerous following, disbanded soldiers and others, who, from motives of religion, were determined to take the life of the king, as the only obstacle to their obtaining freedom of worship and liberty of conscience. These men, he said, would be determined, by his execution, to persist in the resolution of putting Charles to death; whereas, he averred that, by sparing his life, the king might disarm a hundred poniards directed against his own. This view of the case made a strong impression on Charles, whose selfishness was uncommonly acute: yet he felt the impropriety of pardoning the attempt upon the life of the Duke of Ormond, and condescended to ask that faithful servant's permission, before he would exert his authority, to spare the assassin. Ormond answered, that if the king chose to pardon the attempt to steal his crown, he himself might easily consent that the attempt upon his life, as a crime of much less importance, should also be forgiven. Charles, accordingly, not only gave Blood a pardon, but endowed him with a pension of £500 a-year; which led many persons to infer, not only that the king wished to preserve himself from the future attempts of this desperate man, but that he had it also in view to secure the services of so determined a ruffian, in case he should have an opportunity of employing him in his own line of business. There is a striking contrast between the fate of Blood, pensioned and rewarded for this audacious attempt, and that of the faithful Edwards, who may be safely said to have sacrificed his life in defence of the property entrusted to him! In remuneration for his fidelity and his sufferings, Edwards only obtained a grant of £200 from the Exchequer, with £100 to his son; but so little pains were taken about the regular discharge of these donatives, that the parties entitled to them were glad to sell them for half the sum. After this wonderful escape from justice, Blood seems to have affected the airs of a person in favour, and was known to solicit the suits of many of the old republican party, for whom he is said to have gained considerable indulgences, when the old Cavaliers, who had ruined themselves in the cause of Charles the First, could obtain neither countenance nor restitution. During the ministry called the Cabal, he was high in favour with the Duke of Buckingham; till upon their declension, his favour began also to fail, and we find him again engaged in opposition to the court. Blood was not likely to lie idle amid the busy intrigues and factions which succeeded the celebrated discovery of Oates. He appears to have passed again into violent opposition to the court, but his steps were no longer so sounding as to be heard above his contemporaries. North hints at his being involved in a plot against his former friend and patron, the Duke of Buckingham. The passage is quoted at length in Note Y, p. 962.

The plot, it appears, consisted in an attempt to throw some scandalous imputation upon the Duke of Buckingham, for a conspiracy to effect which Edward Christian, Arthur O'Brien, and Thomas Blood were indicted in the King's Bench, and found guilty, 25th June 1680. The damages sued for were laid as high as ten thousand pounds, for which Colonel Blood found bail. But he appears to have been severely affected in health, as, 24th August 1680, he departed this life in a species of lethargy. It is remarkable enough that the story of his death and funeral was generally regarded as fabricated, preparative to some exploit of his own; nay, so general was this report, that the coroner caused his body to be raised, and a jury to sit upon it, for the purpose of insuring that the celebrated Blood had at length undergone the common fate of mankind. There was found unexpected difficulty in proving that the miserable corpse before the jury was that of the celebrated conspirator. It was at length recognised by some of his acquaintances, who swore to the preternatural size of the thumb, so that the coroner, convinced of the identity, remanded this once active, and now quiet person, to his final rest in Tothill Fields.

Such were the adventures of an individual, whose real exploits, whether the motive, the danger, or the character of the enterprises be considered, equal, or rather surpass, those fictions of violence and peril which we love to peruse in romance. They cannot, therefore, be deemed foreign to a work dedicated, like the present, to the preservation of extraordinary occurrences, whether real or fictitious.

Note CC, p. 950.—Vassal Mutes.

This little piece of superstition was suggested by the following incident. The Author of Waverley happened to be standing by with other gentlemen, while the captain of the Selkirk Yeomanry was purchasing a horse for the use of his trumpeter. The animal offered was a handsome one, and neither the officer, who was an excellent jockey, nor any one present, could see any imperfection in wind or limb. But a person happened to pass, who was asked to give an opinion. This man was called Blind Willie, who drove a small trade in cattle and horses, and what seemed as extraordinary, in watches, notwithstanding his having been born blind. He was accounted to possess a rare judgment in these subjects of traffic. So soon as he had examined the horse in question, he immediately pronounced it to have something of his own complaint, and in plain words stated it to be blind, or verging upon that imperfection, which was found to be the case on close examination. None present had suspected this fault in the animal; which is not wonderful, considering that it may frequently exist, without any appearance in the organ affected. Blind Willie, being asked how he made a discovery imperceptible to so many gentlemen who had their eyesight, explained, that after feeling the horse's limbs, he laid one hand on its heart, and drew the other briskly across the animal's eyes, when, finding no increase of pulsation, in consequence of the latter motion, he had come to the conclusion that the horse must be blind.

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION.

No I

THE following notices were recommended to my attention, in the politest manner possible, by John Christian, Esq of Milntown, in the Isle of Man, and Unrigg, in Cumberland, Dempster at present of the Isle of Man. This gentleman is naturally interested in the facts which are stated, as representative of the respectable family of Christian, and lineally descended from William Dhône, put to death by the Countess of Derby. I can be no way interested in refusing Mr Christian this justice and willingly lend my aid to extend the exculpation of the family.

'HISTORICAL NOTICES OF EDWARD AND WILLIAM CHRISTIAN

TWO CHARACTERS IN 'PEVERIL OF THE PEAK' *

THE venerable Dr Dryasdust in a preparatory dialogue, apprises the Eidolon or apparition of the Author that he stood 'much accused for adulterating the pure sources of historical knowledge' and is answered by that eminent son of genius that he has done some service to the public if he can present to them a lively fictitious picture for which the original anecdote or circumstance which he made free to press into his service, only furnished a slight sketch, 'that by introducing to the busy and the youthful,

Truths severe in fairy fiction dress'd

and by creating an interest in fictitious adventures ascribed to a historical period and characters the reader begins next to be anxious *to learn what the facts really were* and how far the novelist has justly represented them

The adventures ascribed to 'historical characters' would however, fail in their moral aim, if fiction were placed at variance with truth, if Hampden, or Sydney for example, were painted as swindlers or Lady Jane Grey, or Rachel Russel, as abandoned women

'Oddzooks!' must one swear to the truth of a song? although an excellent joke, were a bad palliation for such a case Fancy may be fairly indulged in the illustration but not in the perversion of fact, and if the fictitious picture should have no general resemblance to the original the flourish of

Truths severe in fairy fiction dress'd

were but an aggravation of the wrong

The family of CHRISTIAN is indebted to this splendid luminary of the North for abundant notoriety

The William Christian represented on one part as an ungrateful traitor, on the other as the victim of a judicial murder, and his brother (or relative) Edward, one of the suit of a Duke † of Buckingham, were so far real historical persons. Whether the talents and skill of Edward in imposing on Fenella a feigned silence of several years, be among the legitimate or supernatural wonders of this fertile genius, his fair readers do not seem to be agreed Whether the residue of the canvas filled up with a masterly picture of the most consummate hypocrite, and satanic villain ever presented to the imagination, be consistent with the historical character of this individual, is among the subjects of research to which the novelist has given a direct invitation in his prefatory chapter

English history furnishes few materials to aid the investigation of transactions chiefly confined to the Isle of Man Circumstances led me, many years ago, to visit this ancient Lilliput; whether as one of those 'smart fellows worth talking to,' in consequence of a tumble from my barouche, 'as a ruined miner, or as a disappointed speculator,' is of no material import It may be that temporary embarrassment drove me into seclusion, without any of the irresistible inducements alluded to, and want of employment, added to the acquaintance and aid of a zealous local antiquary gradually led to an examination of all accessible authorities on this very subject among others So it happened, that I had not landed many hours before I found the mournful ditty of William Dhône (*brown or fair haired William*) this very identical William Christian) twanged through the demi nasal, demi guttural trumpet of the carman, and warbled by the landlady's pretty daughter, in short, making as great a figure in its little sphere as did once the more important ballad of Chevy Chase in its wider range the burden of the song purporting that William Dhone was the mirror of virtue and patriotism and that envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, operate the destruction of the wisest and the best

Themes of popular feeling naturally attract the earliest notice of a stranger and I found the story of this individual, though abundantly garbled and discoloured on the insular records, full of circumstances to excite the deepest interest, but which to be rendered intelligible must be approached by a circuitous route in which neither elfin page, nor maiden fair can be the companion of our walk

The loyal and celebrated James, seventh Earl of Derby, was induced by the circumstances of the times, to fix his chief residence in the Isle of Man from 1643 to 1651 ‡ During this period he composed, in the form of a letter § to his son Charles (Lord Strange), an historical account of that island with a statement of his own proceedings there, interspersed with much political advice for the guidance of his successor full of acute observation, and evincing an intimate acquaintance with the works of Machiavelli, which it appears by a quotation ‖ that he had studied in a Latin edition The work, although formally divided into chapters and numbered paragraphs, is professedly desultory,¶ and furnishes few means of determining the relative dates of his facts, which must accordingly be supplied by internal evidence, and in some cases by conjecture.

He appears to have been drawn thither, in 1643, by letters ** intimating the danger of a revolt the 'people had begun the fashion of England in murmuring, 'assembled in a tumultuous manner, desiring new laws they would have no bishops, pay no tithes to the clergie, despised authority, rescued people committed by the governor, etc etc

The earl's first care was to apply himself to the consideration of these insurrectionary movements, and as he found some interruption to his proceedings in the conduct of *Edward Christian* †† an attempt shall be made, so far as our limits will admit, to extract the earl's own account

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* [This pamphlet was printed at London without date, in small 8vo. A copy is preserved in the Abbotsford Library.]

† Was the Duke described [illegible] the companion of Charles II. in his Spanish romance?

‡ His countess resided at Latham House (her heroic defence of which is well known) until 1644 or 5 when she also retired to the Isle of Man A contemporary publication the *Mercurius Aulicus* by John Birkenhead says the Countesse it seems stole the Earl's breeches when he fled long since into the Isle of Man, and hath in his absence played the man at Latham This insinuation is certainly unjust but the earl seems to consider some explanation necessary why he left the land when every gallant spirit had engaged himself for king and country Danger of revolt and invasion of the island constitute the substance of this explanation There is reason however to conjecture that he had been disappointed of the command he had a right to expect when he brought a considerable levy to join the king at York Any explanation [illegible] might be listened to except a doubt of his loyalty and [illegible] military spirit which were above all impeachment

§ Published in Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, in 1779.

‖ Peck p 446—fortiter calumniari aliquid adhærebit

¶ Peck p 446 'Loth to dwell too long on one subject,' skip [illegible] to some other matter

** Peck, 4[illegible]

†† For a history of this family, established in the Isle of Man as early as 1422, see Hutchinson's *History of Cumberland*, vol. iii. p. 146 They had previously been established in W[illegible].

of this person 'I was newly* got acquainted with Captain Christian, whom I perceived to have abilities enough to do me service I was told he had made a good fortune in the Indies, that he was a Mankesman borne 'He is excellent good companie, as rude as a sea captain should be, but refined as one that had civilised himself half a year at court, where he served the Duke of Buckingham 'While he governed here some few years he pleased me very well, etc etc 'But such is the condition of man, that most will have some fault or other to blurr all their best vertues, and his was of that condition which is reckoned with drunkenness, viz *covetousness*, both marked *with age* to increase and grow in man 'When a prince has given all and the favourite can desire no more, they both grow weary of one another †

An account of the earl's successive public meetings short, from the limits of our sketch is extracted in a note ‡ from the headings of the chapters (apparently composed by Peck) In the last of these meetings it appears that Edward Christian attempted at its close to recapitulate the business of the day 'Asked if he did not agree thus and thus mentioning some things (says the earl) he had instructed the people to aske, which happily they had forgot The earl accordingly rose in wrath, and, after a short speech bade the court to rise and no man to speak more Some (he adds) 'were *committed to prison* and there abided until upon *submission* and assurance of *being very good* and *quiet*, they were released, and others were put into their rooms – I thought fit to make them be *deeply fined*, since this they all come in most submisse and *loving manner* § Pretty efficient means of producing *quiet* if the despot be strong enough and with it such *love* as suits a despot's fancy! Among the prisoners were *Edward Christian* and his brother William of Knockrushen the latter was released in 1644, on giving bond, among other conditions, *not to depart the island without licence*

Of Edward the earl says, I will return unto Captain Christian, whose business must be heard next week (either in 1644, or early in 1645) '*He is still in prison*, and I believe many wonder thereat as savoring of injustice, and that his trial should be deferred so long Also his business is of that condition that it *concerns not himself alone* It is a Jurie of the people do passe upon him (being he hath so cajoled them to believe he suffers for their sakes), it is likely they should quit him and then might laugh at us, whom I had rather he had betrayed I remember one said it was much safer to take men's lives than their estates for their children will sooner much forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimonie ‖ Edward *died in custody* in Peel Castle in 1650 ¶ after an imprisonment of between seven and eight years and so far at least no ground can be discovered for that gratitude which is afterwards said to have been violated by this family, unless, indeed, we transplant ourselves to those countries where it is the fashion to flog a public officer one day and replace him in authority the next

The insular records detail with minuteness the complaints of the people relative to the exactions of the Church, and their adjustment by a sort of public arbitration in October 1643 But it is singular, that neither in these records, nor in the earl's very studied narrative of the modes of discussion, the offences, and the punishments, is one word to be found regarding the more important points actually at issue between himself and the people The fact, however, is fully developed, as if by accident, in one of the chapters (xvi) of this very desultory but sagacious performance

There comes this very instant an occasion to me to acquaint you with a special matter, which, if by reason of these troublesome and dangerous times, I cannot bring to passe my intents therein, you may in your better leisure consider thereof and make some use hereafter of my present labors in the matter of a certain holding in this country, called the tenure of the straw,** whereby *men thinke their dwellings are their own auncient inheritances*, and that they may passe the same to any, and dispose thereof *without licence* from the Lord, but paying him a bare small rent like unto a fee farme in England wherein they are much deceived

William the Conqueror, among his plans *for the benefit of his English subjects* adopted that of inducing or compelling them to surrender their allodial lands, and receive them back to hold by feudal tenure The Earl of Derby projected the surrender of a similar right, in order to create tenures more profitable to himself—a simple lease for three lives or twenty one years The measure was entirely novel although the attempt to prevent †† alienation without licence from the Lord for purposes of a less profitable exaction may be traced together with the scenes of violence it produced through many passages in the ancient records, which would be inexplicable without this clue

The earl proceeded certainly with sufficient energy and considerable skill to the accomplishment of his object In the very year of his arrival, Dec 1643, he appointed commissioners ‡‡ to compound for leases, consisting of some of his principal officers (members of council) who had themselves been prevailed on by adequate considerations to surrender their estates and are by general tradition accused of having conspired to delude their simple countrymen into the persuasion that having no title deeds their estates were insecure, that leases were title deeds, and although nominally for limited terms declared the lands to be descendible to their eldest sons It is remarkable that the names of *Ewan* and *William Christian* two of the council, are alone excluded from this commission

We have already seen two of the name committed to prison The following notices, which abundantly unfold the ground of the earl's hostility to the name of Christian, relate to Ewan Christian, the father of William Dhône, and one of the deemsters excluded from the commission.

One presented me a petition against Deemster §§ Christian, on the behalf of an infant who is conceived to have a right unto his Farme Rainsway (Ronaldsway), one of the principal holdings in this country, who, by reason of his eminencie here, and that he holdeth much of the same tenure of the straw in other places, he is soe observed, that certainly as I temper the matter with him in this, soe shall I prevail

* This is an example of the difficulty of arranging the relative dates the words *newly* thus employed at the earliest in 1643 refers to 1628 the date of the appointment of E Christian to be governor of the Isle of Man which office he had till 1635 (Sacheverell's *Account of the Isle of Man* published in 1702 p 100) the earl being then Lord Strange but apparently taking the lead in public business during his father's lifetime

† Peck p 444 There is apparently some error in Hutchinson's genealogy of the family in his *History of Cumberland* 1st brother John born 1602 2nd died young 3rd William born 1608 4th Edward Lieut Governor of the Isle of Man 1629 (according to Sacheverell p 100 1628) This Edward's birth cannot be placed earlier than 1609 and he could not well have made a fortune in the Indies have frequented the court of Charles I and be selected as a fit person to be a governor at the age of 19 or 20 The person mentioned in the text was obviously of *mature age* and *Edward the governor* appears to have been the younger brother of *William Christian* a branch of the same family possessing the estate of Knockrushen near Castle Rushen, who, as well as Edward was imprisoned in Peel Castle in 1643

‡ Peck 338 *et seq* Chap viii The Earl appoints a meeting of the natives every man to give in his grievances upon which some think to outwit him, which he winks at being not ready for them therefore cajoles and divides them, on the appointed day he appears with a good guard, the people give in their complaints quietly and retire Chap ix Another meeting appointed when he also appears with a good guard Many busy men speak only Mankes which a more designing person (probably Captain Christian a late governor) would hinder, but the Earl forbids it, advice about it appearing in public, the Mankesmen great talkers and wranglers; the Earl's spies get in with them and wheedle them Chap x The night before the meeting the Earl consults with his officers what to answer, but tells them nothing of his spies, compares both reports, and keeps back his own opinion sends some of the officers who he knew would be troublesome out of the way about other matters, the (present) governor afresh commended, what counsellors the properest Chap xi The Earl's carriage to the people at his first going over, his carriage at the meeting to modest petitioners, to [illegible], to the most confident, and to the most dangerous, *viz* them [illegible]ood behind and prompted others. All things being agreed, [illegible] Christian cunningly begins disturbance the Earl's reply and speech to the people Christian is stroke blank, several people committed to prison, and fined, which quiets them.'

§ Peck, 442.

‖ Peck, [illegible]

¶ Feltham's *Tour*, p 161 places this event (while [illegible] in Peel Castle) on the authority of a tombstone, in 1660, 'John Greenhalgh being governor Now John Greenhalgh ceased to be governor in 1651 the date is probably an error in the press for 1650

** In the transfer of real estates both parties came into the common law court and the granter in the face of the court, transferred his title to the purchaser by the delivery of a straw, which being recorded was his title The same practice prevailed in the transfer of personal property Sir Edward Coke iv 69, when speaking of the Isle of Man says, upon the sale of a horse or any contract for any other thing they make the stipulation perfect per *traditionem stipulæ* (by the delivery of a straw) Perhaps a more feasible etymology of *stipulation* than the usual derivation from stipes (a stake or landmark) or stips (a piece of money or wages)

†† Among those instances in which the commands of the lord proprietor have (in the emphatic words of the commissioners of 1791 p 67) been *obtruded* on the people as laws,' we find [illegible] the prohibition to dispose of lands without licence of [illegible] is prefaced by the broad admission that, 'contrary to [illegible] and laudable order, and diverse and sundry general restraints [illegible] the inhabitants *have*, and *daily do*, notwithstanding the said [illegible], *buy*, *sell*, *give*, *grant chop* and *exchange* their farms, *lands*, *tenements* etc *at their liberties and pleasures*' Alienation fines were first exacted in 1643 Report of Commissioners of 1792 App A, No 71, Rep of Law Officers

‡‡ The governor, comptroller, receiver, and John Cannel, deemster

§§ Deemster, evidently Anglicized, the person who dooms the law: a designation [illegible] unknown among the natives, who continue to call this officer [illegible] with the name of those judges and laws so often mentioned in the Histories of Ireland.

with others.'* . . . 'By policie † they (the Christians) are crept into the principal places of power, and they be seated round about the country, and in the heart of it, they are matched with the best families,' etc.

The prayer of the petition ‡ formerly mentioned was to this effect, that there might be a fair tryal, and *when the right was recovered that I would graunt them a lease thereof—this being in the tenure of the straw* '. 'Upon some conference with the petitioner, I find a motion heretofore was made by my commissioners, that the Deemster should give this fellow a summe of money But he would part with none, nevertheless now it may be he will, and I hope be so wise as to assure unto himself his holding by compounding with me for the lease of the same, to which, if they two agree, I shall grant it him on easy terms I or if he break the ice, I may haply catch some fish §

The issue of this piscatory project was but too successful Ewan bent to the *reign of terror*, and gave up Ronaldsway to his son William, who accepted the lease, and named his own descendants for the lives Still the objects attained were unsubstantial, as being contrary to all law, written or oral, and the system was incomplete, until sanctioned by the semblance of legislative confirmation

We have seen that the earl had in the island a considerable military force, and we know from other sources,‖ that they lived in a great measure at free quarters We have his own testimony for stating, that he achieved his objects by imprisoning, until his prisoners '*promised to be good*, and successively filling their places with others, until they also *conformed to his theory of public virtue* And the reader will be prepared to hear, without surprise, that the same means enabled him, in 1645 to arrange a legislature ¶ capable of yielding a forced assent to this notable system of submission and loving kindness

This is perhaps the most convenient place for stating, that in the subsequent surrender of the island to the troops of the Parliament, the only stipulation made by the islanders was, 'that they might enjoy their lands and liberties as they formerly had In what manner this stipulation was performed, my notes do not enable me to state The restoration of Charles II, propitious in other respects, inflicted on the Isle of Man the revival of its feudal government, and the affair of the tenures continued to be a theme of perpetual contest and unavailing complaint, until finally adjusted in 1703, through the mediation of the excellent Bishop Wilson, in a legislative compromise, known by the name of the Act of Settlement, whereby the people obtained a full recognition of their ancient rights, on condition of doubling the actual quit rents and consenting to alienation fines, first exacted by the Earl James in 1643 **

In 1648 William Dhône was appointed receiver general, and in the same year we find his elder brother, John (assistant Deemster to his father Ewan), committed to Peel Castle on one of these occasions, which strongly marks the character of the person and the times, and affords also a glimpse at the feeling of the people, and at the condition of the devoted family of Christian The inquisitive will find it in a note, †† other readers will pass on

The circumstances are familiarly known, to the reader of English history, of the march of the Earl of Derby, in 1651, with a corps from the Isle of Man for the service of the king; his joining the royal army on the eve of the battle of Worcester; his flight and imprisonment at Chester, after that signal defeat; and his trial and execution at Bolton in Lancashire, by the officers of the Parliament, on the 15th October of that year

Immediately afterwards, Colonel Duckenfield, who commanded at Chester on behalf of the Parliament, proceeded with an armament of ten ships, and a considerable military force, for the reduction of the Isle of Man

William Christian was condemned and executed in 1662-3, for acts connected with its surrender, twelve years before, which are still involved in obscurity, and it will be most acceptable to the general reader that we should pass over the intermediate period,‡‡ and leave the facts regarding this individual, all of them extraordinary, and some of peculiar interest, to be developed by the record of the trial, and documents derived from other sources

A mandate by Charles, eighth Earl of Derby, dated at Latham in September 1662, after descanting on the heinous sin of rebellion, 'aggravated by its being instrumental §§ in the death of the lord, and stating that he is himself concerned to revenge a father's blood,' orders William Christian to be proceeded against forthwith, for all his illegal actions at before, or after, the year 1651 (a pretty sweeping range) The indictment charges him with being the head of an insurrection against the Countess of Derby in 1651, assuming the power unto himself, and depriving her ladyship his lordship, and heirs thereof

A series of depositions appear on record from the 3rd to the 13th October, and a reference by the precious depositaries of justice of that day, to the twenty four Keys ‖‖ 'Whether upon the examination taken and read before, you find Mr W Christian, of Ronaldsway, within compass of the statute of the year 1422 —that is to receive a sentence *without quest*, or to be tried in the ordinary course of law This body, designated on the record o many of the Keys as were then present, were in number seventeen but not being yet sufficiently select to approve of *it me without trial*, made their return, to be tried by course of law

On the 26th November, it is recorded that, the governor and attorney general having proceeded to the jail 'with a guard of soldiers to require him (Christian) to the bar to receive his trial he refused and denied to come, and abide the same —(admirable courtesy to invite, instead of bringing him to the bar) Whereupon the governor demanded the law of Deemster Norris who then sat in judication. Deemster John Christian having not appeared, and Mr. Edward Christian ¶¶ his son and assistant having also *forborne to sit* in this Court, he, the said Deemster Norris, craved the advice and assistance of the twenty four Keys, and the said Deemster and Keys deemed the law therein, to wit, that he is at the mercy of the Lord for life and goods

It will be observed that seven of the Keys were formerly absent, on what account we shall presently see All this was very cleverly arranged by the following recorded order, 29th December— *These of the twenty four Keys are removed of that Company in reference to my Honourable*

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* Peck 447

† *Ib* 448

‡ I have ascertained the date of this petition to be 1643

§ *Covetousness* is not attributed to the head of this family but the earl makes himself merry with his gallantry Natural children it seems, took the name of their father and not of their mother as elsewhere, and the deemster did not get soe many for lust's sake as to make the name of Christian flourish Of him or a successor of the same name it is related that he won £500 at play from the Bishop of Sodor and Man, with which he purchased the manor of *Ewanrigg* in Cumberland still possessed by that family

‖ Evidence on the mock trial of William Dhône

¶ We shall see by and by a very simple method of packing a judicial and legislative body by removing and replacing *seven individuals* by one and the same mandate

** Report of 1791 App A No 71

†† A person named Charles Vaughan is brought to lodge an information, that, being in England he fell into company with a young man named Christian who said he had lately left the Isle of Man, and was in search of a brother, who was clerk to a parliament officer, that in answer to some questions he said, 'The earl did use the inhabitants of that isle very hardly, had estreated great fines from the inhabitants had changed the ancient tenures, and *forced* them to take leases That he had taken away one hundred pounds a year from his father and had kept his uncle in prison four or five years But if ever the earl came to England (he had used the inhabitants so hardly) that he was sure they would never suffer him to land in that island again' An order is given to imprison John Christian (probably the reputed head of the family, his father being advanced in years) in Peel Castle until he entered into bonds to be of good behaviour [illegible] Insular Records. The [illegible] is said to have been the son of William Christian of [illegible].

‡‡ Some readers may desire an outline of this period The lordship of the island was given to Lord Fairfax who deputed commissioners to regulate it affairs one of them (Chaloner) published an account of the island in 1656 He puts down William Christian as receiver general in 1653 We find his name as governor from 1656 to 1658 (Sacheverell p 11) in which year he was succeeded by Chaloner himself Among the anomalies of those times it would seem that he had retained the office of receiver while officiating as governor, and Episcopacy having been abolished, and the receipts of the see added to those of the exchequer he had large accounts to settle for which Chaloner sequestrated his estates in his absence and imprisoned and held to bail his brother John for aiding what he calls his escape his son George returned from England, by permission of Lord Fairfax to settle his father's accounts Chaloner informs us that the revenues of the suppressed see were *not appropriated* to the private use of Lord Fairfax who 'for the better encouragement and support of the ministers of the gospel, and for the promoting of learning hath conferred all this revenue upon the ministers and also for maintaining free schools *i e* at Castletown, Peel Douglass and Ramsay Chaloner pays a liberal tribute to the talents of the clergy and the learning and piety of the late bishops

§§ See the remark in Christian's dying speech that the late earl had been executed eight days before the insurrection

‖‖ The court for criminal trials was composed of the governor and council (including the deemsters) and the keys, who also, with the lord, composed the three branches of the legislative body; and it was the practice in cases of doubt to refer points of customary law to the deemsters and keys

¶¶ The grandson of *Ewan* It appears by the proceedings of the king in council 1663 that '*he did, when the court refused to admit of the deceased William Christian's plea* of the Act of Indemnity, *make his protestation* against their *illegal proceedings* and did withdraw himself, and came to England to solicit his Majesty, and implore his justice'

Lord's order in that behalf,' enumerating seven names, not of the seventeen before mentioned, and naming seven others who 'are sworn* in their places' The judicature is further improved by transferring an eighth individual of the first seventeen to the council, and filling his place with another proper person. These facts have been related with some minuteness of detail for two reasons; 1st, Although nearly equalled by some of the subsequent proceedings, they would not be credited on common authority; and 2nd, They render all comment unnecessary, and prepare the reader for any judgment, however extraordinary, to be expected from such a tribunal

Then come the proceedings of the 29th December—The Proposals, as they are named, to the Deemsters,† and twenty four Keys now assembled, 'to be answered in point of law' 1st, Any malefactor, etc, being indicted, etc, and denying to abide the law of his country in that course (notwithstanding any argument or plea he may offer for himself), and thereupon deemed to forfeit body and goods etc, whether he may afterwards obtain the same benefit etc etc, to which, on the same day, they answered in the negative It was found practicable, on the 31st, to *bring* the prisoner to the bar to hear his sentence of being '*shot to death that thereupon his life may depart from his body*, which sentence was executed on the 2nd of January 1663

That he made 'an excellent speech at the place of execution, is recorded, where we should little expect to find it in the parochial register th[illegible] of that which has been preserved as such in the family of a clergyman (and appears to have been printed on or before 1776‡) rests chiefly on internal evidence and on its accordance in some material points, with facts suppressed or distorted in the records, but established in the proceedings of the Privy Council It is therefore given without abbreviation and the material points of evidence in the voluminous depositions on both trials§ are extracted for reference in a note‖

* The commissioners of 1791 [illegible] the manner in which the keys were first elected [illegible] notable precedent [illegible] perhaps not fallen under their observation

† Hugh Cannel was now added as a second deemster

‡ One of the copies in my possession is stated to be transcribed in that year from the printed speech the other as stated in the text

§ Both trials the first is for the same purposes as the English grand jury with this most essential difference that evidence is admitted *for the prisoner* and it thus becomes what it is frequently called the first trial the second if the indictment be found is in all respects like that by petty jury in England

‖ This testimony will of course be received with due suspicion and confronted with the only defence known that of his dying speech It goes to establish that Christian had placed himself at the head of an association bound by a secret oath to withstand the Lady of Derby in her designs until she had yielded or condescended to their grievances among which grievances during the earl's residence [illegible] incidentally noticed [illegible] that was in the isle and their free quarterage that he had represented her ladyship to have deceived him by entering into negotiations with the Parliament contrary to her promise to communicate with him in such a case that Christian and his associates declared that he was about to sell them for twopence or threepence apiece that he told his associates that he had entered into correspondence with Major Fox and the Parliament and received their authority to raise the country that in consequence of this insurrection her ladyship appointed commissioners to treat with others *on the part of the country* and articles of agreement were concluded (see the speech) which no where now appear that on the appearance of Duckenfield's ships standing for Ramsay Bay one of the insurgents boarded them off Douglass to give intelligence of the condition of the country the disposable troops marched under the governor Sir Philip Musgrave for Ramsay, that when the shipping had anchored a deputation of three persons—viz John Christian Ewan Curphey and William Standish—proceeded on board to negotiate for the surrender of the island (where William was does not appear) The destruction of the articles of agreement and the silence of the records regarding the relative strength of the forces leave us without the means of determining the degree of merit or demerit to be ascribed to these negotiators or the precise authority under which they acted but the grievances to be redressed are cleared from every obscurity by the all sufficient testimony of the terms demanded from the victors '*that they might enjoy their lands and liberties as formerly they had*' and that it was demanded whether they asked any more but nothing else was demanded that this examinant heard of. The taking of Loyal Fort near Ramsay (commanded by a Major Duckenfield, who was made prisoner) and of Peel Castle appear on record, but nothing could be found regarding the *surrender of Castle Rushen or of the Countess of Derby's subsequent imprisonment.* Had the often repeated tale, of William Christian having 'treacherously seized upon the lady and her children with the governors of both castles in the middle of the night' (Rolt's *History of the Isle of Man* published in 1773 p 89) rested on the slightest semblance of truth we should inevitably have found an attempt to prove it in the proceedings of this mock trial In the absence of authentic details the tradition may be adverted to that her lady[illegible] on learning the proceedings at Ramsay, hastened to embark in a vessel she had prepared but was intercepted before she could reach it. The same uncertainty exists with regard to any negotiation [illegible] past with the officers of the Parliament as affirmed by the [illegible]; the earl's first [illegible] after his capture and before his trial says [illegible] truly, as matters [illegible] will be best for you to make

¶ The last speech of William Christian, Esq, who was executed 2nd January 1662-3 —

'Gentlemen, and the rest of you who have accompanied me this day to the gate of death, I know you expect I should say something at my departure; and indeed I am in some measure willing to satisfy you, having not had the least liberty, since my imprisonment, to acquaint any with the sadness of my sufferings, which flesh and blood could not have endured, without the power and assistance of my most gracious and good God, into whose hands I do now commit my poor soul, not doubting but that I shall very quickly be in the arms of his mercy

I am, as you now see hurried hither by the power of *a pretended court of justice*, the members whereof, or at least the greatest part of them, are by no means qualified, but very ill befitting their new places. The reasons you may give yourselves

'The cause for which I am brought hither, as the *prompted* and *threatened* jury has delivered, is high treason against the Countess Dowager of Derby for that I did, as they say, in the year fifty one, raise a force against her for the suppressing and rooting out that family How unjust the accusation is, very few of you that hear me this day but can witness, and *that the then rising of the people*, in which afterwards I came to be engaged, did not at all, or in the least degree, intend the prejudice or ruin of that family, *the chief whereof being, as you well remember, had eight days or thereabout before that action happened* But the true cause of that rising as ¶ the *jury did twice bring in*, was to present grievances to our Honourable Lady, which was done by me, and afterwards approved by her Ladyship under the hand of her then secretary, Mr Trevach, who is yet living, *which agreement hath since, to my own ruin and my poor family's endless sorrow, been forced from me* The Lord forgive them the injustice of their dealings with me, and I wish from my heart it may not be laid to their charge another day!

You now see me here *a sacrifice ready to be offered up for that which was the preservation of your lives and fortunes, which were then in hazard, but that I stood between you and your* (then in all appearance) *utter ruin* I wish you still may, as hitherto enjoy the sweet benefit and blessing of peace, though from that minute until now I have still been prosecuted and persecuted, nor have I ever since found a place to rest myself in But my God be for ever blessed and praised, who hath given me so large a measure of patience!

'What services I have done for that Noble Family, by whose power I am now to take my latest breath, I dare appeal to themselves whether I have not deserved better things from some of them than the sentence of my bodily destruction, and seizure of the poor estate my son bought to enjoy, being purchased and left him by his grandfather It might have been much better had I not spent it in the service of my Honourable Lord of Derby and his family, these things I need not mention to you, for that most of you are witnesses to it I shall now beg your patience while I tell you here, in the presence of God, that I never in all my life acted anything with intention to prejudice my sovereign lord the King, nor the late Earl of Derby, nor the now Earl, yet notwithstanding, *being in England at the time* of his sacred Majesty's happy restoration, I went to London, with many others, to have a sight of my gracious King, whom God preserve, and whom until then I never had seen But I was not long there when I was arrested upon an action of twenty thousand pounds, and clapped up in the Fleet, unto which action, I, being a stranger, could give no bail, but was there kept nearly a whole year How I suffered God he knows, but at last, having gained my liberty, I thought good to advise with several gentlemen concerning his Majesty's gracious Act of Indemnity, that was then set forth, in which I thought myself concerned, unto which they told me, there was no doubt to be made but that all actions committed in the Isle of Man, relating in any kind to the war, were pardoned by the Act of Indemnity, and all other places within his Majesty's dominions and countries Whereupon [illegible] having been forced to absent myself from my [illegible] and children near three years, being all that time under persecution, I did with great content and satisfaction [illegible] into this Island, hoping then to receive the com[illegible] and sweet enjoyment of my friends and poor family. [illegible], alas! I

conditions for yourself children and friends, in the manner as we have proposed or as you can further agree with Col. Duckenfield, who, being so much a gentleman born, will doubtless for his own honor deal fairly with you.' He seems also to have hoped at that time that it might influence his own fate; and the eloquent and affecting letter [illegible] before his execution repeats the same [illegible], pp 74 and 84.

¶ This [illegible], it not to be [illegible] the record of [illegible]

have fallen into the snare of the fowler, but my God shall ever be praised,—though he kill me, yet will I trust in him

'I may justly say no man in this Island knows better than myself the power the Lord Derby hath in this Island subordinate to his sacred Majesty, of which *I have given a full account in my declaration presented to my judges, which I much fear will never see light,* which is no small trouble to me*

'It was his Majesty's most gracious Act of Indemnity gave me the confidence and assurance of my safety, on which, and an appeal I made to his sacred Majesty and Privy Council, from the unjustness of the proceedings had against me, I did much rely, being his Majesty's subject here, and a denizen of England both by birth and fortune And *in regard I have disobeyed the power of my Lord of Derby's Act of Indemnity, which you now look upon, and his Majesty's Act cast out as being of no force* I have with greater violence been persecuted yet nevertheless I do declare, that no subject whatever can or ought to take upon them Acts of Indemnity but his sacred Majesty only, with the confirmation of Parliament

* 'It is very fit I should say something as to my education and religion I think I need not inform you for you all know, I was brought up a son of the Church of England which was at that time in her splendour and glory and to my endless comfort I have ever since continued a faithful member witness several of my actions in the late times of liberty And as for government, I never was against monarchy which now, to my soul's great satisfaction, I have lived to see is settled and established I am well assured that men of upright life and conversation may have the favourable countenance of our gracious King under whose happy government God of his infinite mercy long continue these his kingdoms and dominions And now I do most heartily thank my good God that I have had so much liberty and time to disburden myself of several things that have laid heavy upon me all the time of my imprisonment in which I have not had *time or liberty to speak or write* any of my thoughts, and from my soul I wish all animosity may after my death be quite laid aside and my death by none be called in question, for I do freely forgive all that have had any hand in my persecution and may our good God preserve you all in peace and quiet the remainder of your days

Be ye all of you his Majesty's liege people loyal and faithful to his sacred Majesty and according to your oath of faith and fealty to my Honourable Lord of Derby *do you likewise in all just and lawful ways observe* his commands and know that you must one day give an account of all your deeds And now the blessing of Almighty God be with you all and preserve you from violent death and keep you in peace of conscience all your days!

'I will now hasten for my flesh is willing to be dissolved and my spirit to be with God, who hath given me full assurance of his mercy and pardon for all my sins of which his unspeakable goodness and loving kindness my poor soul is exceedingly satisfied

Note †—Here he fell upon his knees, and passed some time in prayer, then rising exceedingly cheerful he addressed the soldiers appointed for his execution saying Now for you, who are appointed by lot my executioners, I do freely forgive you He requested them and all present to pray for him, adding There is but a thin veil betwixt me and death, once more I request your prayers for now I take my last farewell

The soldiers wished to bind him to the spot on which he stood He said, 'Trouble not yourselves or me for I, that dare face death in whatever form he comes, will not start at your fire and bullets, nor can the power you have deprive me of my courage At his desire a piece of white paper was given him, which with the utmost composure he pinned to his breast, to direct them where to aim, and after a short prayer addressed the soldiers thus— Hit this, and you do your own and my work And presently after, stretching forth his arms, which was the signal he gave them, he was shot through the heart and fell

Edward Christian, the nephew, and George, the son, of the deceased, lost no time in appealing to his Majesty in Council against this judicial murder, and George was furnished with an order 'to pass and repass,' etc, 'and bring with him such records and persons as he should desire, to make out the truth of his complaint.' Edward returned with him to the Island for that purpose, for we find him, in April 1663, compelled, in the true spirit of the day, to give bond 'that he would at all times appear and answer to such charges as might be preferred against him, and *not depart the Isle without licence.*' George was prevented, by various contrivances, from serving the king's order, but on presenting a second petition, the Governor, Deemster, and Members of Council were brought up to London by a Sergeant-at-Arms, and these six persons, together with the Earl of Derby, being compelled to appear, a full hearing took place before the king in person, the Chancellor, the Lord Chief-Justice, Lord Chief Baron, and other Members of Council, judgment was extended on the 5th August, and that judgment was on the 14th of the same month ordered 'to be printed in folio, in such manner as Acts of Parliament are usually printed, and his Majesty's Arms prefixed

This *authentic document* designates the persons brought up as '*Members of the pretended Court of Justice*, declares 'that the general Act of Pardon and Amnesty did extend to the Isle of Man, and ought to have been taken notice of by the Judges in that Island, *although it had not been pleaded*, that the Court *refused to admit* the deceased William Christian's *plea* of the Act of Indemnity, etc 'Full restitution is ordered to be made to his heirs of all his estates, real and personal Three ‡ other persons who were by the same Court of Justice imprisoned and their estates *seized and confiscated without any legal trial* are ordered, together with the Christians, to be restored to all their estates, real and personal, and to be fully repaired in all the charges and expenses which they have been at since their first imprisonment, as well in the prosecution of this business as in their journey hither or in any other way thereunto relating The mode of raising funds for the purposes of this restitution is equally peculiar and instructive these sums of money are ordered to be furnished by the Deemsters, Members and Assistants of the said Court of Justice, who are directed 'to raise and make due payment thereof to the parties

And to the end that the blood that has been unjustly spilt may in some sort be expiated etc the Deemsters are ordered to be committed to the King's Bench to be proceeded against etc etc and receive condign punishment [It is believed that this part of the order was afterwards relaxed or rendered nugatory] The three members of Council were released on giving security to appear, if required and to make the restitution ordered 'And in regard that Edward Christian being one of the Deemsters or judges in the Isle of Man *did when the Court refused to admit of the deceased W Christian's plea of the Act of Indemnity, make his protestation against their illegal proceedings and did withdraw himself and come to England to solicit his Majesty and implore his justice*, it is ordered that the Earl of Derby do forthwith by commission etc, restore and appoint him as deemster so to remain and continue, etc [which order was disobeyed] And lastly, that Henry Howell, deputy governor, whose fault hath been *the not complying with, and yielding due obedience to the orders of his Majesty and this Board sent unto the Island* [O most lame and impotent conclusion] be permitted to return to the Isle, and enforce the present Order of the King in Council

Of the Earl of Derby no further mention occurs in this document The sacrifices made by this noble family in support of the royal cause drew a large share of indulgence over the exceptionable parts of their conduct, but the mortification necessarily consequent on this appeal, the incessant complaints of the people and the difficulty subsequently experienced by them in obtaining access to a superior tribunal receive a curious illustration in an order of the king in council dated 20th August 1670, on a petition of the Earl of Derby, 'that the clerk of the council in waiting receive no petition, appeal or complaint *against the lord or government of the Isle of Man*, without having first good security from the complainant to answer costs damages, and charges

The historical notes of this kingdom ‖ of Lilliput are curious and instructive with reference to other times and different circumstances and they have seemed to require little comment or antiquarian remark, but to condense what may be collected with regard to Edward Christian, the accomplished villain of Peveril, the insinuations of his accuser ¶ constitute in themselves an abundant defence

* This apprehension was [illegible]
† This note is annexed [illegible]

‡ Ewan Curphey Samuel Ratcliffe and John Caesar men of considerable landed property

§ Tradition in accordance with the dirge of William Dhone [illegible] that the order to stop proceedings and suspend the sentence [illegible] on the day preceding that of his execution

‖ Earl James although studious of kingcraft, assigns good [illegible] for having never pretended to assume that title, and [illegible] 'Nor doth it please a king that any of his subjects should [illegible] love that name, were it but to act in a play —Peck, [illegible]

¶ Peck, *passim*

When so little can be imputed by such an adversary, the character must indeed be invulnerable. Tradition ascribes to him nothing but what is amiable, patriotic, honourable, and good, in all the relations of public and private life. He died, after an imprisonment of seven or eight years, the victim of incorrigible obstinacy, according to one, of ruthless tyranny, according to another vocabulary; but resembling the character of the novel in nothing but unconquerable courage.

Treachery and ingratitude have been heaped on the memory of William Christian with sufficient profusion. Regarding the first of these crimes: if all that has been affirmed or insinuated in the mock trial, rested on a less questionable basis, posterity would scarcely pronounce an unanimous verdict of moral and political guilt, against an association to subvert such a government as is described by its own author. The *peculiar* favours for which he or his family were ungrateful, are not to be discovered in these proceedings; except, indeed, in the form of 'chastisements of the Almighty—blessings in disguise.' But if credit be given to the dying words of William Christian, his efforts were strictly limited to a redress of grievances --a purpose always criminal in the eye of the oppressor. If he had lived and died on a larger scene, his memory would probably have survived among the patriots and the heroes. In some of the manuscript narratives he is designated as a *martyr* for the rights and liberties of his countrymen; who add, in their homely manner, that he was condemned without trial, and murdered without remorse.

We have purposely abstained from all attempt to enlist the passions in favour of the sufferings of a people, or in detestation of oppressions, which ought, perhaps, to be ascribed as much to the character of the times as to that of individuals. The naked facts of the case (unaided by the wild and plaintive notes in which the maidens of the isle were wont to bewail '*the* heart-rending death of fair-haired William*') are sufficient of themselves to awaken the sympathy of every generous mind; and it were a more worthy exercise of that despotic power over the imagination, so eminently possessed by the Great Unknown, to embalm the remembrance of two such men in his immortal pages, than to load their memories with crimes, such as no human being ever committed.

I am enabled to add the translation of the lament over the fair-haired William Christian. It is originally composed in the Manx language, and consists of a series of imprecations of evil upon the enemies of Christian, and prophecies to the same purpose:—

On the Death and Murder of Receiver-General William Christian, of Ronaldsway, who was Shot near Hango Hill, January 2, 1662.

1.

In so shifting a scene, who would confidence place
In family power, youth, or in personal grace?
No character's proof against enmity foul;
And thy fate, William Dhône, sickens our soul.

2.

You are Derby's receiver of patriot zeal,
Replete with good sense, and reputed genteel;
Your justice applauded by the young and the old;
And thy fate, etc.

3.

A kind, able patron both to church and to state—
What roused their resentment but talents so great?
No character's proof against enmity foul;
And thy fate, etc.

4.

Thy pardon, 'tis rumoured, came over the main,
Nor late, but conceal'd by a villain † in grain;
'Twas fear forced the jury to a sentence so foul;
And thy fate, etc.

5.

Triumphant stood Colcott, he wished for no more,
When the pride of the Christians lay welt'ring in gore,
To malice a victim, though steady and bold;
And thy fate, etc.

6.

With adultery stained, and polluted with gore,
He Ronaldsway eyed, as Loghuecolly before,
'Twas the land sought the culprit, as Ahab before;
And thy fate, etc.

7.

Proceed to the once famed abode of the nuns,
Call the Colcotts aloud, till you torture your lungs,
Their short triumph's ended, extinct is the whole;
And thy fate, etc.

8.

For years could Robert lay crippled in bed,
Nor knew the world peace while he held up his head,
The neighbourhood's scourge in iniquity bold;
And thy fate, etc.

9.

Not one's heard to grieve, seek the country all through,
Nor lament for the name that Bemacan once knew;
The poor rather load it with curses untold;
And thy fate, etc.

10.

Ballaclogh and the Criggans mark strongly their sins,
Not a soul of the name's there to welcome you in;
In the power of the strangers is centred the whole;
And thy fate, etc.

11.

The opulent Scarlett on which the sea flows,
Is piecemeal disposed of to whom the Lord knows;
It is here without bread or defence from the cold;
And thy fate, etc.

12.

They assert then in vain, that the law sought thy blood,
For all aiding the massacre never did good;
Like the rooted-up golding deprived of its gold,
They languished, were blasted, grew wither'd and old.

13.

When the shoots of a tree so corrupted remain,
Like the brier or thistle, they goad us with pain;
Deep, dark, undermining, they mimic the mole;
And thy fate, etc.

14.

Round the infamous wretches who spilt Cæsar's blood,
Dead spectres and conscience in sad array stood;
Not a man of the gang reached life's utmost goal;
And thy fate, etc.

15.

Perdition, too, seized them who caused *thee* to bleed,
To decay fell their houses, their lands and their seed,
Disappear'd like the vapour when morn's [illegible] with gold;
And thy fate, etc.

16.

From grief all-corroding, to hope I'll repair,
That a branch of the Christians will soon grace the chair,
With royal instructions his foes to console;
And thy fate, etc.

17.

With a book for my pillow, I dreamt as I lay,
That a branch of the Christians would hold Ronaldsway;
His conquests his topic with friends o'er a [illegible];
And thy fate, etc.

18.

And now for a wish in concluding my song,—
May the Almighty withhold me from doing what's wrong;
Protect every mortal from enmity foul;
For thy fate, William Dhône, sickens our soul! ‡

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* The literal translation given to me by a young lady.

† The person named in the next stanza is said to have intercepted a pardon sent from England for William Christian, found, it is alleged, in the foot of an old woman's stocking. The tradition is highly improbable. If Christian had [illegible] executed against the tenor of a pardon actually granted, it would not have failed to be charged [illegible] high aggravation in the subsequent proceedings of the Privy Council.

‡ It may be recollected that these verses are given through the medium of a [illegible] translation, and are deprived of the aid of the music, otherwise [illegible] think the memory of William Dhône little [illegible] by his native bard.

No. II.

At the Court at Whitehall, the 5th August, 1663.

George Christian, son and heir of William Christian, deceased, having exhibited his complaint to his Majesty in Council, that his father, being at a house of his in his Majesty's Isle of Man, was imprisoned by certain persons of that Island, pretending themselves to be a Court of Justice; that he was, by them accused of high treason, pretended to be committed against the Countess Dowager of Derby, in the year 1651; and that they thereupon proceeded to judgment, and caused him to be put to death, notwithstanding the Act of General Pardon and Indemnity, whereof he claimed the benefit: and his appeal to his Majesty, and humbly imploring his Majesty's princely compassion towards the distressed widow and seven fatherless children of the deceased: His Majesty was graciously pleased, with the advice of his Council, to order that Thomas Noris and Hugh Cannell, the two judges (by them in that island called Deemsters), and Richard Stevenson, Robert Calcot, and Richard Tyldesley, three of the members of the pretended Court of Justice, and Henry Howell, deputy of the said island, should be forthwith sent for, and brought up by a sergeant-at-arms here, before his Majesty in Council, to appear and answer to such accusations as should be exhibited against them; which said six persons being accordingly brought hither the fifteenth day of July last, appointed for a full hearing of the whole business, the Earl of Derby then also summoned to appear, and the Lord Chief-Justice of the King's Bench, and the Lord Chief-Baron of his Majesty's Exchequer; with the King's Council, learned in the laws, required to be present, and all the parties called in with their counsel and witnesses, after full hearing of the matter on both sides, and the parties withdrawn, the said judges being desired to deliver their opinion, did, in presence of the King's Council, learned in the laws, declare that the Act of General Pardon and Indemnity did, and ought to be understood to, extend to the Isle of Mann, as well as into any other of his Majesty's dominions and plantations beyond the seas; and that, being a publique General Act of Parliament, it ought to have been taken notice of by the judges in the Isle of Mann, although it had not been pleaded, and although there were no proclamations made thereof. His Majesty being therefore deeply sensible of this violation of his Act of General Pardon, whereof his Majesty hath always been very tender, and doth expect and require that all his subjects in all his dominions and plantations shall enjoy the full benefit and advantage of the same; and having this day taken the business into further consideration, and all parties called in and heard, did, by and with the advice of the Council, order, and it is hereby ordered, that all persons any way concerned in the seizure of the estate of the said William Christian, deceased, or instrumental in the ejection of the widow and children out of their houses and fortune, do take care that entire restitution is to be made of all the said estate, as well real as personal, as also all damages sustained, with full satisfaction for all profits by them received since the said estate hath been in their hands; and that, whereas the said William Christian, deceased, was one of the two lives remaining in an estate in Lancashire, that the detriment accruing by the untimely death of the said William Christian therein, or in like cases, shall be estimated, and in like manner fully repaired. That in regard of the great trouble and charges the complainants have been at in pursuit of this business, ordered, that they do exhibit to this Board a true account, upon oath, of all expenses and damages by them sustained in the journies of themselves and witnesses, and of all other their charges in the following of this business.

And whereas Ewan Curghey, Sammual Radcliffe, and John Casar, were by the same Court of Justice imprisoned, and had their estates seized and confiscated, without any legal trial, it is ordered, that the said Ewan Curghey, Sammual Radcliffe, and John Casar, be likewise reinstated to their estates, real and personall, and fully repaired in all the charges and expenses which they have been at since their first imprisonment, as well in the prosecution of this business, as in their journey thither, or any other way whatsoever thereunto relating. The which satisfaction, [illegible], and all the sums of money to be raised by virtue of this order, are to be furnished by the Deemsters, Members, and Assistants of the said Court of Justice, who are hereby ordered to raise all such the said sums, and thereof to make due payment, and give full satisfaction unto the parties respectively hereby appointed to receive it.

And to the end, the guilt of blood which hath been unjustly spilt, may in some sort be expiated, and his Majesty receive some kind of satisfaction for the untimely loss of a subject, it is ordered, that the said Thomas Norris and Hugh Cannell, who decreed this violent death, be committed, and remain prisoners in the King's Bench, to be proceeded against in the ordinary course of justice, so to receive condign punishment according to the merit of so heinous a fact.

That Richard Stevenson, Robert Calcott, and Richard Tyldesley be discharged from further restraint, giving good security to appear at this Board whensoever summoned, and not depart this city until full satisfaction be given, and all orders of this Board whatsoever relating to this business fully executed in the island. And in regard, that upon the examination of this business, it doth appear that Edward Christian, being one of the Deemsters or Judges in the Isle of Mann, did, when the Court refused to admit of the deceased William Christian's plea of the Act of Indemnity, make his protestation against their illegal proceedings, and did withdraw himself, and come into England to solicit his Majesty, and implore his justice, it is ordered, that the Earl of Derby do forthwith, by commission in due and accustomed manner, restore, constitute, and appoint the said Edward Christian one of the Deemsters or Judges of the said island, so to remain and continue in the due execution of the said place.

And lastly, it is ordered that the said Henry Howell, Deputy-Governor, whose charge hath been the not complying with, and yielding due obedience to, the orders of his Majesty and this Board, sent into this island, giving good security to appear at this Board whensoever summoned, be forthwith discharged from all further restraint, and permitted to return into the island; and he is hereby strictly commanded to employ the power and authority he hath, which by virtue of his commission he hath in that island, in performance of, and obedience to, all commands and orders of his Majesty and this Board in this whole business, or any way relating thereunto.

(Signed by)

Lord Chancellor.	Earl of Carbery.
Lord Treasurer.	Lord Bishop of London.
Lord Privy Seal.	Lord Wentworth.
Duke of Albemarle.	Lord Berkeley.
Lord Chamberlain.	Lord Ashley.
Earl of Berkshire.	Sir William Crompton.
Earl of St. Alban.	Mr. Treasurer.
Earl of Anglesey.	Mr. Vice Chamberlain.
Earl of Sandwich.	Mr. Secretary Morice.
Earl of Bath.	Mr. Secretary Bennett.
Earl of Middleton.	

Richard Browne,
Clerk of the Council.

No. III.

At the Court at Whitehall, August 14th, 1663.

Present:

The King's Most Excellent Majesty.

Lord Chancellor.	Earl of Middleton.
Lord Treasurer.	Earl of Carberry.
Lord Privy Seal.	Lord Bishop of London.
Duke of Buckingham.	Lord Wentworth.
Duke of Albemarle.	Lord Berkeley.
Lord Chamberlain.	Lord Ashley.
Earl of Berkshire.	Sir William Crompton.
Earl of St. Alban.	Mr. Treasurer.
Earl of Sandwich.	Mr. Vice Chamberlain.
Earl of Anglesey.	Mr. Secretary Morice.
Earl of Bath.	Mr. Secretary Bennett.

To the end the world may the better take notice of his Majesty's royal intention, to observe the Act of Indemnity and General Pardon inviolably for the publique good and satisfaction of his subjects it was this day ordered, that a copy of the order of this Board of the 5th inst, touching the illegal proceedings in the Isle of Mann against William Christian, and putting him to death contrary to the said Act of General Pardon, be sent unto his Majesty's printer, who is commanded forthwith to print the same in the English letters, in folio, in such manner as Acts of Parliament are usually printed, and his Majesty's Arms affixed.

Richard Browne.

GLOSSARY TO PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

A, in.
Abencerrages and Zegris, rival Moorish families of Granada, in Spain.
Abiit, evasit, erupit, he has gone forth, he has gone away, he has broken forth.
Adad, possible variation of *egad*.
Ad valorem, according to the value.
Ail, come in the way of, prevent.
Aîné, elder brother.
A la mort, vanquished, overcome.
Allons, forward.
Alsatia, a sanctuary in Whitefriars, London.
Ame damnée, the tool, scapegoat.
An, if, and.
Angelo, Henry, an Italian riding and fencing master of London (18th cent.).
Angle, fishing-rod.
Antiphoner, book containing antiphons.
Arcanum, the secret of transmuting base metal into gold.
Archbishop of Granada. See *Gil Blas*, Bk. vii. c. 4.
Artamenes, a romance by Mdlle. Scuderi.
A vendre et à pendre, to do exactly as you please with.

Baggage, a young woman.
Bale, misery, calamity.
Bandoleer, shoulder belt.
Barcelona, handkerchief of soft twilled silk.
Barnacles, spectacles.
Barns-elms, favourite place of resort near Mortlake, Surrey.
Bartholomew Fair, held 24th August, at Smithfield, London, down to 1855.
Bass-viol, a stringed instrument, now replaced by the violoncello.
Baton, to die under the, *i.e.* to be beaten to death.
Beaufet, beauffet, sideboard, refreshment bar.
Belly-timber, food.
Betterton, English actor (1635–1710).
Bilboa, famed Spanish sword.
Blake, famous admiral under Cromwell (1598–1658).
Body of me, popular oath.
Bon vivant, a jolly fellow, an epicurean.
Borée, bourrée, a kind of dance.
Bouilli, boiled meat.
Budget, bag.
Buskin, a high boot with thick soles.

Cabala, a secret system of theology and magic current amongst the Jews.
Caius, the words here attributed to Caius occur in *King Lear*.
Camilla, goddess famed for the swiftness of her movement.
Canaglia or *Canaille*, rabble, mob.
Carabine, a kind of fire-arm.
Caroche, a coach of a stately and luxurious kind.
Cartel, written challenge, letter of defiance.
Carwitchet, fun, conundrum.
Cast, a 'lift' by way of conveyance.
Casting-bottle, bottle for sprinkling perfumed waters.
Caxton, the first great English printer (1422–1491).
Cedant arma togæ, let arms give place to peace.
Chaufette, foot-warmer, chafing dish.
Chaussée, chassé, a step in dancing.
Chère Comtesse, etc., dear Countess of D——, powerful queen of Man, our very august sister.
Chimney-board, a board used to close up a fire-place in summer.
Ciceroni, guides.
Cock-a-leekie, soup made of a cock boiled with leeks.
Cock and pie, oath consisting of an adjuration of the Deity and the Roman Catholic service book.
Conceive, understand.
Congée, bow.
Consult, consultation.
Conticuere omnes, all were silent.
Corking-pin, used in attaching a woman's head-dress to a cork mould.
Corso, fashionable carriage drive.
Counter, the breast of a horse.
Coupe-jarrets, paid assassins.
Couranto, a lively dance.
Courbette, curvet.
Crambo, game which consisted in finding rhymes to a given word.
Cross silver, coin marked with a cross.
Cuckolds and Roundheads, a popular Royalist song.
Cum privilegio parliamenti, with privilege of parliament.

[illegible]
Dummer, she who dams up water.
Decoy, a contrivance for luring wild-fowl.
Demoivre, French mathematician, author of *The Doctrine of Chances* (1667–1754).
Dog bolt, a fool, a butt.
Dogger, a fishing-vessel.
Dorimant, a dandy of the period, one of the characters in Etheredge's *Man of Mode*.
Dramatis personæ, characters of the drama.
Drawcansir, a blustering bully who in battle kills every one on both sides. See George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, *The Rehearsal* (1671).
Drift, an excavation made in a nearly horizontal direction.
Dulcis Amaryllidis ira, the wrath of sweet Amaryllis.
Dum vivimus, vivamus, while we live, let us live well.
Dunstable lark, nothing more than a plain, simple lark.

Edict of Nantes, revocation of, an edict favourable to the Huguenots, revoked by Louis XIV. in 1685.
Eidolon, phantom.
En cavalier, like a gallant knight.
Engoué, infatuated with.
En Signor, like a lord.
Entrechat, caper performed by a dancing-girl.
Entrée, entry.
Entre-mets, a side dish, a sweetmeat.
Estramaçon, a term in sword-play.
Etherege, Sir George, dramatist (1635–1691).
Et sic de cæteris, and so on for the rest.

Eveillez-vous, belle endormie, awake, fair sleeper.
Execution dock at Wapping. The bodies of the criminals were left to be overflowed by three tides.

Faire la cuisine, to do the cooking.
Faitour, traitor, rascal.
Farthingale, sort of crinoline.
Fern-seed was supposed to have the power of rendering people invisible.
Fico, a fig.
Flambeaux, torches borne by liveried footmen prior to the age of lamps
Foreclose, enforce a mortgage.
Fox, old slang for sword
Frampal, unruly, ill-conditioned.
Fuga dæmonum, flight of devils
Frumps, gossip, here sulky fit.
Fuoruscito, exile, outlaw.

Galfridus minimus, wee little Geoffrey.
Gamut, the scale, range, or compass of a thing.
Ganz ist verloren, all is lost.
Governor of Tilbury.

Governor No 'tis not I would not hear thee plead in vain The father softens—but the governor is fixed'
Sheridan, *The Critic*, II 2

Grammont, celebrated French wit (1621–1707) at the court of Charles II.
Gresham College, a London college founded by Sir Thos. Gresham.

Hunsmogan, equivalent to Dutch.
Haud equidem, etc., I am astonished rather than envious.
Hays, an old country dance.
Herring-buss, boat used in the herring fishery.
Hey pass, 'Presto, change,' favourite expressions of jugglers.
Hinc illæ lachrymæ, hence those tears.
Hogan-Mogan, Dutch.
Hog in Armour, the device of a signboard in Hanging Sword Court, Fleet Street, London. It was sometimes known as 'The Pig in Misery.'
Houri, a nymph of the Mahommedan Paradise.
Huck-a-back, coarse, rough stuff.
Hundsfoot, rascal.
Hustle-cap, a game of chance and skill played with halfpence.

Immodicum surgit, etc., his enormous nose protrudes like a spear.
In fresco, in the open air
In hoc signo, by this sign.
In terrorem, a deterring warning.
Intra parietes, between walls.

Jacobus, gold coin—20s first issued by James I. of England.
Jeu de mots, play on words.
Jew's trump Jew's harp
Jocose hoc, this by way of fun
Junketing, picnicking high jinks.

Kit, small violin used by dancing masters.
Knave, servant.
Knipperdolings, another name for Anabaptists.

La belle cousine, the fair young lady.
Lachrymæ Christi, red wine grown on the slopes of Vesuvius.
Laus propria sordet, self praise is no recommendation.
Lawson, Sir John, Vice-Admiral of the Commonwealth, killed in battle off Lowestoft, 3rd June 1665
Lee, Nathaniel, English dramatist (died 1692)
Le Nôtre, French architect (1613–1700), who planned Saint James' and Greenwich Park.
Le prix j..., the price.
Lewkenor's Lane, now called Charles Street, Drury Lane.
Liber pater, the god of wine.
Licentia exeundi, leave to go out
Lignum-vitæ, sort of hard wood.
Limbo patrum, perhaps the fools' paradise of Book III., *Paradise Lost*, is referred to.
Lingua Franca, mixed language spoken by Europeans in the East.
Looby-land, Lubberland.

Madge-houlet, the owl is called *madge* (from magistrate), owing to its air of wisdom.
Maire de palais, mayor of the palace
Mall, a game of ball played in a smooth alley bounded on either side, and with an iron arch at the end
Malmsey noses, red by reason of Malmsey wine.
Malum in se, evil in itself
Mandane, heroine of Mdlle Scudéri's romance, *Cyrus the Great* (1650).
Marignan, town 12 miles from Milan where the French defeated the Swiss (1515)
Martello towers, towers built for coast defence.
Martialist warrior, military man.
Maunna, must not.
Mauvaise plaisanterie, unfortunate joke.
Meal-tub Plot, a fictitious conspiracy concocted by Dangerfield The scheme was concealed in a meal tub in the house of Mrs. Collier (1685).
Mêlée, crush, tumult.
Meyrick, Dr, author of a work on ancient armour (1830).
Micher, a truant, thief.
Minauderies, affectations.
Montague House, on the site now covered by the British Museum.
Montero cap, huntsman's cap provided with flaps.
Morion, semi-open helmet.
Morpheus, god of sleep.
Mort bleu, 'sdeath!
Morte d'Arthur, a compilation of Arthurian tales.
Mote, place of meeting.
Mum, 'species of fat ale, brewed from wheat and bitter herbs' (*Antiquary*).

Nantes, Edict of. See *Edict of.*
Nantz, a kind of brandy
Naunt, a corruption of 'mine aunt.'
Nepenthe, a care-dispelling drug
Non apparentibus, etc. (p. 920), that which cannot be proved is the same as that which does not exist.

Obnoxious, liable.
Obstupui, etc, I was thunderstruck, and my hair stood on end.
October, ale brewed in October, good ale
Odds, corruption of god's
Oddzooks, corruption of god's hooks.
Old Noll, contemptuous epithet applied to Cromwell by the Cavaliers
Ombre, Spanish game of cards.
Oroondates, a character in La Calprenède's romance, *Cassandra* (1642)
Osprey, sea-eagle.

Palmer, ... champion in the age of chivalry.
Par excellence, preeminently.
Par voie de fait, by force of arms.
Pas seul, dance by a single performer.
Passio hysterica, hysteria.
Paterero, kind of ancient cannon
Pendables, gallows-birds.
Penthouse, properly a sloping roof
Peri, a fairy being Persian mythology.
Per saltum, at a jump
Petite maîtresse, ... woman of ...

gance in dress and manners.

Petronel, sort of large horse-pistol.

Piccoluomini, an Italian word signifying 'little man.'

Pineal gland, the seat of the soul, according to some philosophers.

Pink, a vessel or boat with a narrow stern.

Pink, to stab with a rapier.

Pinner, flap of a head-dress.

Plats, dishes.

Plumer la poule, etc. (p. 880), to pluck the fowl without making it cry.

Point of fox. See *Fox.*

Posse comitatus, men summoned by the sheriff to enforce a law.

Posso tirare, I can shoot.

Post obit, after death.

Precisian, Puritan.

Prink, to put on pompous airs, to dress ostentatiously.

Projection, lit. a term in alchemy signifying the transmuting of a metal.

Prolusion, a preliminary performance.

Properare in medium rem, to hasten to the point.

Provant rapier, sword supplied from the army stores.

Punctilio, point of form or behaviour.

Purcel, English musical composer of the 17th century.

Pynson, Richard, an English printer of the 16th century.

Quadrille, game played by four persons with forty cards.

Quem ego, whom I.

Quocunque jeceris stabit, in whatever way you place it, it will stand.

Ratafia, a beverage of ardent spirits flavoured with fruit.

Regale, treat, entertainment.

Rencontre, meeting.

Reynard, fox.

Ring in the Park, fashionable place of resort in Hyde Park; probably the ornamental ground attached to the Banqueting House.

Roi fainéant, a do-nothing king. Name given to the degenerate kings of the Merovingian dynasty.

Roquelaure, surtout or cloak named after the inventor.

Rose Coffee-house, the Russel Street Coffee-house, London where Dryden had a chair reserved for him.

Rosicrucian, society of religious mystics and alchemists.

Rouse, draught of jollity.

Roxalana, Elizabeth Davenport, so called from the character she assumed in 'The Siege of Rhodes.'

Ruffle, *s.* disturbance; *vb.* to swagger.

Rummer, drinking-cup, a large glass.

Saint Bartholomew's Day. See Note F.

Saint Bridget, Irish saint.

Sallyport, passage out of a fortress.

Salmagundi, mixture of various meats, radishes, endive, etc.

Saraband, a Spanish dance.

Sarsenet, plain silk.

Schelm (German), rogue.

... (1607–1701).

Sea-coal, old name for coal.

Sedley, Sir Charles, a writer of songs and plays (1639–1701).

Semiramis, famous queen of Assyria (d. 1274 B.C.).

Seven wise masters, seven sages who flourished in Greece about the 7th century B.C.

Shot, expense.

Skelder spungeous, swindle.

Slaver, saliva.

Solus, alone.

Sombrero, a broad-brimmed hat.

Soupe d'écrivisses, lobster soup.

Souper au petit couvert, supper without ceremony.

Squab, a young pigeon.

St. Evremond, French courtier, wit, and littérateur (1613–1703).

Stance, station.

Still-room, store-room.

Stingo, old beer.

Stricken, whole, entire.

Super naculum, an allusion to the custom of turning the glass upside down and draining it on the thumb-nail, to prove that every drop of the liquor has been drunk.

Suzeraintè, rights as lords paramount.

Sylphid, a little sylph. A word current among the Rosicrucians.

Syncopé, contraction, amalgamation.

Tabor, a small drum.

Tandem triumphans, at length triumphant.

Tantivy, at a violent gallop.

Tappice, to squat, crouch.

Tekeli, Emeric, Hungarian Protestant leader (1658–1705).

Termagant, turbulent person.

Thames Street, street in old London, running parallel to the Thames.

The king shall enjoy his own again, popular Cavalier song.

Tilbury. See *Governor of Tilbury.*

Tilt, awning.

Tour de son métier, one of his tricks.

Tout est verlore, etc., All is lost. *La Tintelore!* By God! All is lost.

Trap-ball, game played with a trap, bat, and ball.

Traverse, to use the postures of opposition, as in fencing.

Trencherman, a hearty feeder.

Trepan, snare.

Trollop, slut.

Trunnion, ring fixed to the shank of an anchor.

Tu me la pagherai, you shall pay me back for it.

Tutbury, village in Staffordshire.

Twiggen, encased in twigs.

Vail, lower.

Valdarar, perhaps Valdarfer, a printer of Milan, 15th century.

Verjuice, a kind of vinegar.

Vicit Leo ex tribu Judæ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered.

Victoria, etc. (p. 905), Victory, victory, truth is great, and it will conquer.

Videlicet, namely.

Vogue la galère, come what may.

Voie de fait, act of violence.

Volte-face, wheel-round.

Wannion, vengeance.

Wassail, ale or wine spiced.

Weasand, windpipe.

Weather-headed, sheepish-looking; possible corruption of wether-headed.

Wench, young woman, handmaid.

Whinger, *whinyard*, sword, hanger.

Whinstone, trap or greenstone.

Wrack, ruin, destruction.

Yelk, yolk.

York Buildings, the palace of the Dukes of Buckingham.

Zechin, gold Byzantine coin, about [illegible]

Zefris. See [illegible]rages.

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